



ltsn
Learning and Teaching
Support Network

**Departmental
Contact Briefing No. 1**
4th June, 2001

Bioscience

Hello to everyone, and I hope I find you enjoying our typical British summer despite the pressure of exam organisation and marking.

I am currently waiting for the third issue of the LTSN Bioscience *Bulletin* to be delivered to our office (unfortunately a little late, unusually) and have decided to summarize the latest developments in the Centre and how they may involve you as departmental contact. A number of you may already have signed up for the LTSN-Bioscience JISC mail list, which is a monthly update of the Centre's activities: I encourage you to join if not. Details can be found on our website:

<http://bio.ltsn.ac.uk/>

Events

We have two national events coming up which I would like to bring to your attention:

• **Benchmarking and the New Method for Academic Review**

Tuesday, September 11th, 2001, University of York

The programme and registration form will be present as an insert within all the Bulletins delivered to you (and can also be found on our website under Events). In the morning, Prof. Gus Pennington, HESDA, will be running an interactive session focussing on this new method for academic review. Feedback from colleagues at previous dialogue sessions indicate that this will be an interesting and stimulating discussion. After lunch, members of the two subject benchmarking panels (Bioscience, or Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural and Food Sciences) will lead a discussion on the implications of subject benchmarking for our community. This will provide a timely opportunity to give feedback to the panel whilst they are still in the consultation stage. For those with a more general interest in benchmarking, Prof. Pennington will be our guide through the current progress on subject benchmarking across the HE sector. Cost is £25 (including lunch).

• **Enhancing Bioscience Student Learning Through C&IT**

Tuesday 25th September, 2001, University of Bristol

A one-day seminar on the theme of using C&IT to enhance student learning. The workshops and presentations will cover: using IT for study support, IT for lecture delivery and the use of images in biology education. The full programme will be available soon. Registration is free of charge and can be completed on-line.

http://bio.ltsn.ac.uk/NV/regional_launches.html

In addition, we have further regional events planned, to which all are welcome.

- Introductory visit and workshop at the University of Ulster.
20th September, 2001
- Further visits to Swansea and Birmingham are also planned (Details available or soon to be available on our website under Events)

Developing Networks

As you may already know, the first round of Teaching Development Grants have been awarded (4 in total) and the projects are underway. Details of the successful first round grant holders can be found on our website (under News), or in Bulletin 3. There is now a new round of Teaching Development Grants available, with the closing date set at 20th July, 2001. Anyone interested is invited to ring the Centre for further information or visit our website (under News).

Now that these grants are up and running, we are turning our attention to two further initiatives which we hope will develop the learning and teaching Bioscience network. Further details can be found in Bulletin 3 or on our website under News.

- **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)- Call for Co-ordinators**

Discussion with our community during our regional workshops has underlined the desire for the development of Special Interest Groups, allowing members the chance to discuss, identify and swap innovative ideas, problems and good practices that will be beneficial to the wider community as well as to members of that group. Each SIG will have a Co-ordinator who will facilitate and co-ordinate activities carried out by the group. LTSN Bioscience will provide admin. and organisational support, exchange and circulation of reference material, support of communication networks and dissemination of information and results. A remuneration will be made available to the Co-ordinator to allow the individual to attend a conference of their choice.

At this stage we invite proposals for SIG topics under the general headings of: **Assessment, Problem Based Learning, Practical Classes** and **Ethics**. Suggestions for other topics for future rounds of proposals are welcomed. Proposal forms can be downloaded from our website or are available from Trish Walker, LTSN Bioscience, 0113 233 3001, itsnbioscience@bmb.leeds.ac.uk

Deadline for submission of proposals is 29th June, 2001

- **Call for Discipline Consultants**

We are also looking for Discipline Consultants who will assist the work of the Centre by: advising on current and new aspects of learning and teaching in their discipline; starting a register of expertise for their discipline; and assisting the Centre in dealing with discipline-specific enquires that cannot be fully answered by existing staff. The Centre will provide admin. support as required, and financial support will be available to allow the individual to attend a conference of their choice.

At present we are responsible for around 20 disciplines in the area of Bioscience. The full list of disciplines is listed on the Discipline Consultant flyer and can also be found on our website. Suggestions for other areas are also welcomed. Proposal forms can be obtained as above.

Deadline for submission of proposals is 29th June, 2001

Resources

I sometimes worry that I am becoming a bore when I start considering the collection of resources that the Centre holds. Everytime I meet a Bioscientist, I urge them to visit the website, let us know if they cannot find what they are looking for, and add to the resources we hold by letting us know about learning and teaching resources they have come across.

You can help me greatly by keeping your eyes and ears open in your department, and encouraging your colleagues to become involved. The latent biochemist lurking in my head tells me we could easily set up a positive feedback loop in the development of the following:

- **Website**

The website has been redesigned, and I would appreciate feedback from you all on its content and ease of use. This is an ongoing project, and we wish to develop our website and knowledgebase in a way that is of most use to you. Please revisit and please talk to us!

- **The Knowledgebase**

Although we are constantly on the lookout, the most efficient way to populate the Knowledgebase is through the community network. We now have the CTI-CLUES records courtesy of Dr Simon Heath, and the number of records are growing all the time. We aim to not only hold information on how to obtain these resources, but also reviews and how best the resources can be used in different learning and teaching situations. Your contributions are very welcome and are essential to the success of the Knowledgebase.

And finally....

To those of you who have yet to register with the Centre, please make me very happy and do so via the website (you will find the link on the front page of the Knowledgebase), or email me with your details. I think I may be obsessing about our Contacts database a little too much, but humour me....

Wishing you all a good summer,
Regards,

Yolande Knight and all at LTSN Bioscience