

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES  
Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

Minutes of the 50<sup>th</sup> Faculty meeting held in the Seminar Room (S01) at  
11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 17, 2003

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The following were present:

Prof. Jayant B. Udgaonkar (Chairman)  
Dr. U.S. Bhalla  
Dr. Sumantra Chattarji  
Prof. Gaiti Hasan  
Prof. Sudhir Krishna  
Prof. M.K. Mathew  
Prof. Satyajit Mayor  
Prof. Veronica Rodrigues  
Dr. Apurva Sarin  
Dr. G.V. Shivashankar  
Prof. O. Siddiqi  
Dr. R. Sowdhamini  
Prof. K. VijayRaghavan  
Ms. N.N. Shantha (Non-member Secretary)

Prof. M.M. Panicker could not attend the meeting. The meeting was preceded by presentation of work by Prof. Madan Rao.

Agenda Item No. 1.

Confirmation of the minutes of the 49<sup>th</sup> meeting held on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Since the minutes were not circulated, this will be taken up in the next meeting.

Agenda Item No. 2

Personnel to run research facilities

Prof. Jayant Udgaonkar brought up for discussion the question of whether additional technical support staff was needed for running research facilities. In the past two years, NCBS had acquired several new instruments including a DNA microarray scanner, real-time PCR machine, mass spectrometer, and cell sorter, and currently temporary JRF level personnel were being used to manage these facilities. He felt that many faculty members were not using instruments they had expressed an interest in using, for example to do proteomics on the mass spectrometer, because of the lack of trained expert personnel to get them going. He said the advantages of having professionals managing the equipment were that students would be properly trained, so that the instruments would be used correctly and properly by them. Also the use of the instrument by outsiders would be facilitated.

Professor Siddiqi said if we need a professional for running each facility, we have to see how the facility is being used, and we should examine how many people are using the equipment seriously.

According to Dr. Shivashankar, appointing a professional per equipment was not necessary, but the need was for one or two persons who can run the 5-6 facilities efficiently. They must be very well trained.

According to Prof. Mayor if we have a good person, the burden of teaching can be shifted from the concerned faculty member. The technical staff can teach the student how to handle the equipment efficiently, and conduct training programs.

Prof. VijayRaghavan said at first we should assess how many persons we need, so that our facilities were more broadly used. If we have one well-trained technical person for running each facility, perhaps we should think of starting a 3-years diploma course for training students.

### Agenda item No. 3

Extension to Prof. Indira Chowdhury

Prof. VijayRaghavan reported that Prof. Indira Chowdhury had completed one year at NCBS. She is working for the TIFR archives and documenting an oral history of biology in TIFR. She has presented her work on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Her salary was being paid by Jadavpur University. The oral history will take one and half years at least to complete. The TIFR Archives met recently, and they and the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education are happy to support her salary for the next year, to finish the biology archives and to organise training programs for those in Mumbai for archival work in other subjects. She will also organize lectures under History, Science and Philosophy series. At present she is also teaching an advanced course on 'Writing course for science students'. Prof VijayRaghavan said that Dr Chowdhury spent 6-months on getting organized and now she is on track and knows what is required.

Prof. Siddiqi expressed his views on her work. An oral archive's history should represent many people who have been involved and it should contain what actually happened and not just the views of 3-4 people. That requires lot of time and it should be combination of oral and documentary. She should collect the background history of TIFR.

Prof. VijayRaghavan said a good historian should have access to all materials, and that it was difficult to get relevant papers released in TIFR. Prof. Udgaonkar enquired about the realistic period for completion of a good solid archive project, and whether completion was possible within 3-5 years period. Based on Bangalore, it would be even more difficult to collect the relevant information.

Agenda Item No. 4

Trieste Course

Prof. VijayRaghavan reported that the Trieste Course held at the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics on 'Genes, Genomics and the Development of Behaviour' during the period July 14-August 1, 2003 was very exciting in terms of the range of countries represented. The infrastructure and location made it easy to organize introductory courses there. He would like to conduct a similar experimental and practical course next year at NCBS as a follow-up. This will help in attracting better students from the lecture course to attend an advanced experimental course. This course will also be advertised in Indian universities and other institutions for wider publicity so that we will get good participants. He hoped to conduct this in alternative years so that lecture courses will be held at Trieste, and lab courses at NCBS.

Agenda Item No. 5

Other items

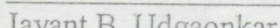
1. Personnel for Mechanical Workshop

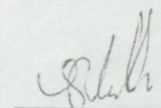
Dr. Shivashankar mentioned the need to have one good person for running the Mechanical workshop on a permanent basis. He felt that a temporary person can not run the workshop on a long term basis.

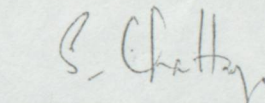
2. Collaboration with RRI

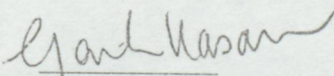
Prof. Madan Rao brought up the possibility of some of the RRI people spending 6 months at NCBS for stronger collaboration in Physics and Biology. Dr. Shivashankar suggested some of the good faculty applicants to NCBS can be pointed towards RRI.

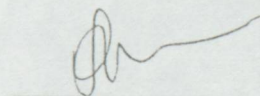
The meeting concluded at 1.30 p.m.

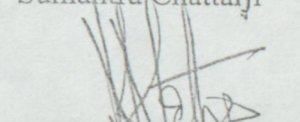
  
Jayant B. Udgaonkar

  
U.S. Bhalla

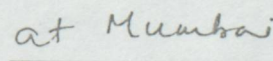
  
Sumantra Chattarji

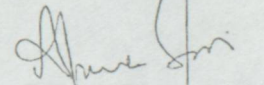
  
Gaiti Hasan

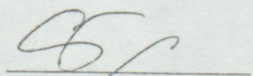
  
Sudhir Krishna

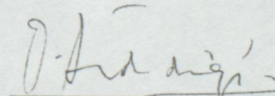
  
M.K. Mathew

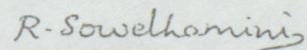
  
Satyajit Mayor

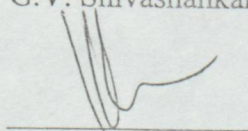
*at Mumbai*  
  
Veronica Rodrigues

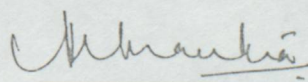
  
Apurva Sarin

  
G.V. Shivashankar

  
O. Siddiqi

  
R. Sowdhamini

  
K. VijayRaghavan

  
N.N. Shantha