

Notes from Scientific Council meeting

Date: 8.2.2022

The meeting was held online

Present: Ivan Čepička, Vladimír Hampl, Astrid Holzer, , Petr Horák, Martin Kolísko, Petr Kopáček, Miroslav Oborník, Alena Zíková,

Guests: Julius Lukeš, Libor Grubhoffer, Ryan Rego, Natasha Rudenko, Martin Strnad

Excused: Martin Kváč

- The Scientific Council (SC) discussed a proposal by the Director of the Institute of Parasitology (IoP) to change the leadership of the Laboratory of Molecular Ecology of Vectors and Pathogens.

- Prof. Julius Lukeš explained his decision as a continuation of the restructuring of research groups dealing with tick biology in general. He also mentioned that the current head of the laboratory, Prof. Libor Grubhoffer, is running for the second time for the position of director of the BC and will also take over the chairmanship of the Learned Society. Due to his immense workload and other commitments, he does not have time to attend to the day-to-day operations of his laboratory. To increase the productivity of the lab, prof. Julius Lukeš proposes that the lab be headed by Ryan Rego, a long-time researcher in the same group.

- Prof. Libor Grubhoffer explained the history of his laboratory, the main research priorities, and the impact on the current structure of laboratories dealing with tick-borne diseases. He also mentioned the establishment of a sister laboratory at the Faculty of Science led by Dr. Janko Sterba, which was initially considered a joint entity but only recently became fully independent. Prof. Libor Grubhoffer agrees with the proposed change in leadership and promised to initiate a fruitful discussion with the new leader and the current lab members. We expect that Prof. Libor Grubhoffer will continue his scientific activities as Professor Emeritus.

- Dr. Ryan Rego explains his short- and long-term vision for the lab. He would like to focus on applying molecular, biochemical, and bioinformatics tools to understand what are the molecular driver for the tick's competency to transmit pathogens that vary at the species and strain level. He also mentioned efforts to collaborate with the public/private sector to use their knowledge to diagnose, treat, and predict the spread of ticks and tick-borne diseases.

- Dr. Ryan Rego also cited some weaknesses and hurdles he foresees. First, the group is supported by a few grants, but there is an urgent need to increase funding for this group. Dr. Rego is aware of this and will be submitting numerous grant applications in the future to increase the likelihood that he will receive funding. This would allow him to increase staffing for the group, especially at the postdoctoral and graduate levels. He also mentioned that the lack of PhD students was one of the biggest hurdles, whereupon the director of the institute, Prof. Julius Lukes, offered to cover part of the salary of a PhD student.

- Dr. Natasha Rudenko regretted that she was not invited to the discussions that led to the appointment of Dr. Rego as the head of the laboratory. Prof. Libor Grubhoffer and Dr. Ryan Rego promised an open discussion in the future.

- SC offers its full support to Dr. Ryan Rego and the entire lab.

- SC approved the appointment of a selection committee for the Director position. The committee includes: Dr. Martin Kolísko, Prof. Martin Kváč, Dr. Alena Zíková, Dr. Vladimír Hampl. The BC director proposed Prof. František Marec.

- SC discussed the advertisement for the position of Group Leader of the Laboratory of Fish Protistology. Dr. Astrid Holzer is responsible for finalizing the advertisement and publishing it in various platforms such as Research Gate, Nature Jobs.

- SC has nominated the following scientists to serve on the selection committee for the advertised Fish Protistology Lab Group Leader position: Dr. Astrid Holzer, Dr. Martin Kolísko, Prof. Julius Lukeš, Prof. Miroslav Oborník, Prof. Tomáš Scholz, Prof. David Modrý, Dr. Alena Zíková.