Disability Action Committee

08 Oct 2014 14.00-
16.00
Faculty Building
South Kensington campus

Minutes

Present
Mr John Neilson Chair and College Secretary and Registrar (JN)
Ms Dawn Beaumont Faculty IT Support Manager (DB)
Mr Jonathan Blatchford Web Accessibility Officer (JB)
Mrs Mary Bown Head of Disability Advisory Services (MB)
Ms Trudy Breuss Campus Operations Officer Medicine (TB)
Mr Kevin Cope Head of Building Operations (KC)
Dr Benita Cox Principal Teaching Fellow (BC)
Ms Caroline Davis Head of Communications (CD)
Professor Jenny Higham Vice-Dean Education Medicine (JH)
Mrs Louise Lindsay Director of HR (LL)
Mr David Mooney Dyslexia Support Tutor, DAS (DM)
Ms Claire O'Brien Director of Occupational Health (COB)
Ms Leyla Okhai Equality & Diversity Manager (LO)
Mr Dean Pateman Academic Registrar (DP)
Professor Steven Rose Vice Dean Natural Sciences (SR)
Ms Sarah Shemilt Chair of Able@Imperial (SS)
Professor Richard Thompson Senior College Consul (RT)
Mr Jon Tucker Faculty Operating Officer, Business School (JT)
Professor Denis Wright Director of Student Support (DW)
Ms Emmanuelle Gold Minute taker

Apologies
Professor Peter Cheung Vice Dean of the Faculty Engineering (PC)
Ms Wendy Gould Programme Director & Deputy Faculty
Operations Officer-Medicine (WG)
Professor Jo Haigh Co-Director, Grantham Institute for Climate
Change & Environment (JH)
Mr Christopher Kaye ICU Deputy President (Welfare) (CK)
Mr Richard Martin Faculty Operating Officer, Engineering (RM)

Agenda Item

1. Matters Arising

1.1 (re minute 1.4) KC discussed the different needs for disabled staff across all the campuses and talked about improvements that will be taking place in the future. KC stated that it was important that South Kensington Campus was not considered in isolation. KC
explained that some improvements were difficult to implement as there is no specific funding in place for disabled infrastructure, and in addition there are College staff in NHS Trust buildings and vice versa which adds a degree of complexity. Charing Cross Campus has good provision in place with improved disabled parking. The Chelsea and Westminster Campus is well catered for, although wheelchair provision needs to be looked at over the next twelve months. The Hammersmith Campus has good wheelchair access to the majority of its areas, but the Commonwealth Building needs considerable improvements in terms of accessible routes from one area of the building to another. Silwood Park has fewer disabled provisions and ways are being thought of to improve this. The outside of Silwood is difficult for those with mobility issues, as some external areas are not paved or tarmacked.

1.2. (re minute 1.6) LO updated Committee of the progress of the Mindful Employer Charter. She confirmed an application for a ‘Time to Change’ health check and said this would help with the College signing the Mindful Employer Charter.

1.3 (re minute 2.4) JT stated that he was happy to coordinate ideas people had following the presentation by the Meridian group at the last meeting.

1.4 (re minute 4.4) The Chair informed the group that the actions from the Staff Survey would be incorporated into a new DAC action plan following the E&DC meeting taking place at the end of the month.

1.6 (re minute 5.4) LO informed the group that the news story was published in The Reporter.

1.7 (re minute 7.2) LO informed the group about the launch of 90 minute power workshops for Two Ticks in October. This had been advertised through the LDC newsletter and also through HR. LO expects 12-16 people per workshop.

2. Disability Advisory Service update

2.1 MB gave an update regarding students declaring a disability (please see appendix 2). Figures are not as high as the DAS would expect. It has been estimated that 20% of students are not declaring their disability. However, the figures show some improvements from May 2013 to June 2014. It was discussed that it is difficult to gauge exact numbers as figures are not in one place (the group also discussed figures on the ‘Disability Breakdown’ document); nevertheless, the figures match the national figures comparably.

2.2. DAS has employed a part-time Autistic Spectrum (AS) facilitator, Gemma Dawkins, who works 0.4FTE. DAS needs an AS facilitator as there are a rising number of students applying to Imperial College on the AS. Due to budget constraints students will now need to contribute towards diagnostic assessments for SpLDs, which amount to £95. This has been introduced for the 2014-15 academic year; however students who have financial hardship will not need to make this contribution.

2.3 The Assistive Technology Steering Group proposes that this group is reformed into an ad hoc task force to undertake specific projects on assistive technology as directed by the DAC.
3. Changes to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) 2016/17

3.1 MB talked about the changes to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), and how it is most likely to affect those who are to receive it (see Appendix 3). For example, students may have to contribute £200 towards the cost of a computer, and printers and other ancillary equipment will not be automatically funded by DSA. A rebalance of costs will need to take place to accommodate the changes.

4. Mental Health Promotion Plans

4.1 CO presented the ‘Identify your Workplace Stressors’ webpage in which there has been c.900 visits since its launch last November. 29 individuals have completed the form, 25 of whom were UK based.

4.2 CO explained that the one day ‘Keeping Cool Under Pressure’ workshop is offered twice yearly (introduced in 2014) and has been well received by participants. The HR CPD day has stress and wellbeing as its focus. The Student Counselling Service ran an introduction to mindfulness for staff which was well received. Activities for the 2014 Stress Awareness day (05/11/2014) are being planned.

4.3 Courses to help combat procrastination and anxiety are currently being developed.

4.4 LO, Chris Allan and Kalpna Mistry will be delivering Mental Health First Aid Courses through 2014/2015. LO has become accredited to deliver Mental Health Light which is half a day introduction. Four sessions are scheduled this academic year with each session able to accommodate up to 25 people.

4.5 Meditation sessions run by the Chaplaincy continue to be well attended with CO looking at the possibility of short drop in sessions.

4.6 JT asked if CO could explore the option of offering some of the courses without putting them under the mental health banner, as this could be stopping some people from attending important personal effectiveness courses.

5. Update from Registry

5.1 DP provided an overview of the data from Registry and actions for the Registry within the Disability Action Plan (2012-2014). DP will discuss current plans and actions with the Chair and LO to create a tailored action plan. The Chair agreed this would be a good way forward.

6. Proposed changes of the Two Ticks Scheme

6.1 LO updated the group that the Two Ticks scheme is likely to be changed and reformed given a recent research project that was carried out in June 2014. However, nothing has been published as of yet regarding the proposed changes. Ms Okhai will provide an update to the group as and when more information is available.

7. AOB

7.1 SS made a request that Able@imperial get a regular slot at the DAC meetings
SS and LO highlighted what Able@imperial are currently doing. SS spoke of the planned events that are due to take place for Disability Awareness month, which includes training, a Calibre taster session and Bernadette Gahan an Able member who will deliver a talk on her personal journey as a disabled staff member. The keynote talk will be on the subject of HIV and AIDS research, given by College academics. It will also be a joint event with I600. SS stated that given the Staff Survey results and few staff members stating they knew of Able, raising the profile of the group was essential. SS, LO, the Chair and Prof Debra Humphris had met over the summer to discuss Able's One Page Plan. Prof Debra Humphris mentioned that a student from the Business School may be able to help with marketing of the staff network. JT and BC said that this was possible and they would be happy to help, and requested the information required be sent to them.

JT asked whether it would be possible for there to be a breakdown of all the various equality networks and recognition marks, to aid understanding and to make it easier for people to know what is available. LL explained that a booklet is being developed which will help staff to understand the provision that is currently available.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Wednesday 18 February 2015
14:00 - 16:00
Faculty Boardroom, Faculty Building
South Kensington campus