Disability Action Committee

18 Feb 2015
14.00-16.00
Faculty Boardroom, Faculty Building

Minutes

Present
Mr John Neilson Chair and College Secretary and Registrar (JN)
Professor Jo Haigh Co-Director, Grantham Institute (JH)
Ms Dawn Beaumont Faculty IT Support Manager (DB)
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)
Ms Caroline Davis Head of Communications (CD)
Mr Christopher Kaye ICU Deputy President (Welfare) (CK)
Mr Dimitrios Karponis ICU Disabilities Officer (DK)
Mrs Louise Lindsay Director of HR (LL)
Ms Claire O’Brien Director of Occupational Health (COB)
Ms Leyla Okhai Equality & Diversity Manager (LO)
Mr Dean Pateman Academic Registrar (DP)
Ms Sarah Shemilt Chair of Able@Imperial (SS)
Professor Richard Thompson Senior College Consul (RT)
Mr Roddy Slorach Joint Trade Unions Representative (RS)
Ms Caroline Davis Minute taker

Apologies
Michael Bearpark Reader in Chemistry, FoNS (MB)
Dr Benita Cox Principal Teaching Fellow (BC)
Professor Peter Cheung Vice Dean of the Faculty Engineering (PC)
Lorraine Craig
Ms Wendy Gould Programme Director & Deputy Faculty Operations Officer-Medicine (WG)
Professor Jenny Higham Vice-Dean Education Medicine (JH)
Mr Richard Martin Faculty Operating Officer, Engineering (RM)
Professor Denis Wright Director of Student Support (DW)
Mr Jon Tucker Faculty Operating Officer, Business School (JT)

Agenda Item

1. Matters Arising

1.1 (re minute 1.2) LO updated Committee regarding the results of the Time to Change Health Check audit. Results will be presented at the next meeting.

1.2. (re minute 1.7) LO and LL updated Committee that Wednesday 15 April is the confirmed launch date for the HR Booklet.
2. Revised Terms of Reference and Membership

2.1 The Chair asked the Committee to look at the revised Terms of Reference and Membership (Appendix 2). It was agreed that LO would make the necessary amendments to the document. LL asked the Chair whether it would be worthwhile inviting a Trade Union Representative. LO agreed that this would be helpful. LL confirmed she would be happy to ask the joint Trade Union who they would like to nominate. It was also discussed that membership should be extended to members of the ICT staff, in relation to specific projects or updates.


3.1 The Chair and LO informed the Committee that the updated DAC action plan is now more concise and focused. CK highlighted that students may not want to declare a mental health disability if they are not currently experiencing ill health. MB agreed that more awareness about mental health is needed for students. It was agreed that the Student Union and MB would discuss what may work best for students. The average disclosure rate for students is currently 7.2%, which is around the national average for STEM subjects. LL and LO emphasised that even though staff declaration had improved, there was more work to be done. LO to update the action plan to reflect national HEI disclosure.

3.2 MB informed the Committee that questionnaires were completed by students who had seen an advisor, from DAS. The feedback received was good or excellent.

3.3 KC aims to improve the usage of Disabled GO and promote awareness. The audit of Harlington, St Mary’s and Charing Cross has been updated. It was discussed that new College staff webpage could be used as a vehicle for this.

4. Fire Evacuation and PEEPs

4.1 Prior to discussing PEEPs, COB updated the Committee on Occupational Health as a service. Occupational Health has seen a 25% increase on the number of consultations in the last quarter. COB informed the group that there are now more self-referrals with work related issues.

4.2 COB, LO, KC and Adrian Dorrington, Head of the Fire Office are working together to ensure all disabled staff have personal emergency and evacuation plans (PEEPs) as required. Prior to an employee starting employment, there could be a question on the HR10 form, asking what adjustments should be made to help those in the event of an evacuation. They can then be provided with a PEEP as soon as possible. KC explained that there are difficulties in making NHS Trust buildings more accessible as the College cannot mandate the NHS to make changes for staff. Having spare wheelchairs in case staff needed to use them, was discussed. COB and KC felt that this was not a good idea and strongly advised against this.

5. Update from Disability Advisory Service

5.1 MB presented a paper covering the changes likely to be made to disabled students allowance (DSA). If the changes go ahead as proposed, there will be a significant cost increase for the College. There will be no additional funding for HEIs to put reasonable adjustments in place for students. Support for specific
learning differences (SpLDs) is likely to only be provided in “complex circumstances” and then at reducing levels of support to enable independence. MB to provide an additional overview of any changes at the next DAC, to enable the Committee to discuss additional planning and resource gaps.

5.2 MB stated that increased financial support is needed for both international and post graduate students, as they are not funded by DSA in the same way.

5.3 MB provided an overview of the number of students, degree type and disability that have accessed the DAS over the last three years. The number of declarations to DAS has increased over the three year period, with undergraduate students having the highest levels of declaration. Students with SpLDs were the most declared disability, followed by mental health and long standing health conditions. The group discussed why students may not declare to DAS and what could be done about this. CK spoke about the #TalktoDAS campaign and how this raised visibility of DAS as well as encouraging students to get support.

6. Update from Able@Imperial

6.1 SS updated the Committee that the Disability Awareness Month events were well attended, and the joint event for World Aids Day with Imperial 600 was positively received. The profile of staff equality network Chairs was featured in The Reporter in December to raise the profile of all the groups. SS aims to set dates for Able general meetings for those who have a disability or an interest. There will be a ‘Network Away Day’ in May to talk about the Networks collaborating. SS will attend the University of Chester Diversity Festival and represent Able@Imperial.

7. Update from Registry

7.1 DP was not present to update Committee. MB suggested it would be helpful to have a breakdown of the number of students who interrupt their studies due to a disability. DP to update the Committee at the next meeting.

8. Calibre Survey Presentation by Kalpna Mistry (KM)

8.1 KM presented a post-Calibre programme impact evaluation paper covering two cohorts. 83% of delegates responded to the survey, which measured career progression and personal development since completion of the course. 70% of delegates completed the personal project element of the course. The 30% who were not able to cited lack of management support as one of the key issues. 90% of respondents now felt empowered and able to take on additional responsibilities and more challenging tasks as a result of Calibre. For most participants Calibre was about enabling them to make changes to improve their current workplace environments and develop internally. COB thanked KM for an interesting presentation.

8.2 LL asked how much the course costs per cohort. KM and LO informed LL that it is currently £12,000 per cohort. As external delegates are present on the course and are charged £1,500 per place, this has generated c. £6,000-£7,000 per cohort. This year the figure will be lower, as an increased number of internal candidates have come forward. The Chair and LL agreed that this was a positive step forward.

8.3 KM highlighted that part of the course is designed to enable disabled staff to talk about their reasonable adjustments and ask for what they need. The course also helps potential disabled leaders to facilitate relationships with senior staff. Often the barriers can be the relationship with the line managers. LO cited that in the Staff Survey, it was disabled staff who felt that declaring a disability impeded career progression. The Chair and LL both
agreed that the programme is important to the College and should continue.

9. AOB

9.1 KC informed the group that he and LO were meeting to discuss accessibility issues that have arisen. Including bike parking obstructing pavement at St Mary’s campus. In addition, some work will be carried to ensure T-loop systems are fit for all hearing aid wearers. **Mr Cope and Ms Okhai**

9.2 DB discussed the cost of lecture captioning with the Panopto recording programme used in College and how this could done. The main issue with this is cost. The cost to provide captioning for lectures is £3-£7 per minute. DB and MB stated note takers are much less expensive than this. JH asked whether the use of Panopto was compulsory. The Chair explained it is not compulsory, but strongly encouraged. It could not be mandatory, as staff terms and conditions would then have to be changed. DB informed the groups that due to the file sizes of the lecture videos more storage has had to be obtained by ICT. Other ways in which lecture captioning could be done will need to be considered. **Ms Beaumont**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 22 May 10.00-12.00
Faculty Boardroom
Level 4, Faculty Building