

Disability Action Committee

Wednesday 23 May 2018

10:00 – 12:00

Boardroom, Faculty Building, South Kensington Campus

Minutes

Present:

Mr John Neilson	Chair and College Secretary (JN)
Mr Mark Allen	Careers Consultant (MA)
Mr David Ashton	Academic Registrar (DA)
Ms Mary Bown	Head of the Disability Advisory Service (MB)
Ms Sally Campbell	Faculty Centre Safety Compliance Manager, Medicine (SC)
Dr Lorraine Craig	Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), Engineering (LC)
Prof Stephen Curry	Assistant Provost (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) (SC)
Ms Beth Richardson	Secretary (BR)
Mr Mike Horner	ICT Service Line Manager for Education (MH)
Ms Kani Kamara	Acting Head, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre (KK)
Prof Peter Lindstedt	Senior Consul (PL)
Ms Sara Muir	Head of Building Operations (SM)
Ms Elizabeth Nixon	Internal Communications Manager (EN)
Ms Claire O'Brien	Director of Occupational Health (CO)
Mr Fintan O'Connor	ICU Deputy President (Welfare) (FOC)
Mr Jon Tucker	Faculty Operating Officer, Business School (JT)
Ms Hannah Bannister	Director of Student Services (HB)
Louise Lindsay	Director of Human Resources (LL)
Camille Reltien	Co-Chair, Able (CR)

Agenda Item

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 JN welcomed the Committee to the meeting, and informed the group that Professor Sara Rankin, and Rebecca Cameron would also be in attendance at various points during the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Mr Richard Martin, Ms Wendy Gould, Ms Mary Bown, Ms Lindsay Comalie, and Mr Hisham Aty Abdel.

2.0 Minutes and Matters Arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were deemed to be an accurate record of events.
- 2.2 There were no matters arising.
- 2.3 The action tracker was considered. The following points were noted:
- (re: 7 June 2017, minute 3.2) It was noted that PRQC had set up a working group to outline the life cycle of PhD students and financial implications, with the aim to identify where necessary support could be offered.
 - (re: 28 February 2017, minute 2.3) It was noted that Sara Muir had contacted Shauna Murphy regarding a suitable counselling room at Charing Cross.
 - (re: 20 October, minute 3.6) It was noted that the summer time table for exams had been agreed and that the Queen's Tower Rooms were being utilised, so that many less exams had to take place in raked lecture theatres.
 - (re: 20 October 2017, minute 4.3) It was noted that a calendar of events had been uploaded on EDIC's webpage.
 - (re: 22 March 2018, minute 4.2) It was noted that the disability awareness campaign is to re-launch in September with a focus on declaration rates.

3.0 Review of DAC Plan 2017-18

- 3.1 JN highlighted that the plan was to be reviewed and updated ahead of the next meeting, adding that the plan would be informed by the EDI strategy.
- 3.2 JN confirmed that the 2017-18 plan had been updated to reflect the changes made since the previous meeting.

4.0 Feedback on the latest version of the EDI Strategy

- 4.1 SC introduced the latest version of the EDI Strategy, and highlighted the detailed feedback received from MB, particularly the comment on the use of the term "people with disabilities" which MB had suggested should be "disabled people".

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- 4.2 SC continued and advised that the strategy had been circulated amongst many different groups including the EDI Strategy Group and the EDI forum, adding that the paper had also been posted on SC's blog, and that he welcomed the opportunity to share it with the DAC.
- 4.3 SC explained that the paper included headlined points, followed by further detail that added context. SC highlighted the use of bullet points, and suggested moving these points to the end of the document and framing them as action points, adding that they may also need more definition as means to measure the outcomes.
- 4.4 LL raised the point about the term "disabled people" and asked members of the group to confirm whether this was correct. KK and FO confirmed that "disabled people" is the accepted term. CS added that she had completed a lot of research and told the group that "disabled people" should be used, and highlighted the social model to disability and the idea that it is society that disables people, and using the term "people with disabilities" reiterates this.
- 4.5 SC highlighted the Reasonable Adjustment Fund and the effective processes put in place for students, which he mentioned as being fairly different to the staff process which is not centralised and is hosted by departments, potentially creating some inconsistencies in process. KK highlighted the difficulties around replicating the student process.
- 4.6 LL confirmed the staff Reasonable Adjustments Fund as being at £20K.
- 4.7 NH asked whether there was any evidence to suggest that staff had been denied reasonable adjustments. SC confirmed that he was aware of some cases where the process had proved difficult for staff members, KM added that she was aware of some cases where staff did not wish to disclose their disability with their line manager, but needed to do so because they required a budget code for equipment.
- 4.8 CO raised the issue of excluding line managers, if a central pot were to be created highlighting the low cost arrangements that are often made following discussions with an individual's line manager. SC said that he strongly agreed with including line managers in these arrangements.
- 4.9 The Committee discussed the need for guidance rather than completely excluding the line manager. CO spoke again about departments providing low cost equipment in some cases rather than going through the process of applying for funds via the Reasonable Adjustment Fund. CO also highlighted the Calibre programme and spoke about the sense of empowerment these adjustments gave staff. JT said that line managers need to know where to go if one of their members of staff required reasonable adjustments to enable them to do their job.
- 4.10 Overall, the Committee recommended that a centralised Access to Work Fund should not replace the funding of reasonable adjustments for staff by departments. There was a need for much more clarity about the purpose of the central staff Reasonable Adjustments Fund.
- 4.11 SC suggested that departments should report on spend. NH said that she would be happy for this to be a one-off exercise rather than a regular requirement.
- ACTION SC**
- 4.12 CS relayed some information she had researched about similar processes in other universities, stating that there is often a central fund, and if the cost of equipment is

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between £500 and £1,500, the fund would cover half of the funds, anything above £1,500 would be covered by the central fund, and anything below £500 is covered by the department. CO said that this was reflective of the way the Access to Work fund operates.

- 4.13 LL said that a report could be produced to summarise what had been spent, and what was the purpose of the centralised fund.

ACTION LL

- 4.14 JN referenced the first bullet point on page 13 of the draft Strategy, which proposes a formal mechanism for support for disability, and monitoring responses. JN said that this could be quite an onerous task, the group also expressed privacy issues. SC stated that there is no current mechanism for recording the outcomes, and therefore no way of gauging consistency, adding that the information could remain anonymous.
- 4.15 CO said that keeping a record would be a good step to take, especially in terms of informal arrangements, as in some cases, relationships between line managers and staff can deteriorate, or an individual may have new line management and this arrangement may not continue, therefore recording such information would protect these arrangements. KK added that most arrangements were informal, and it can cause a huge amount of stress for an employee if they feel this arrangement cannot continue.
- 4.16 PL asked about the level of detail required in recording this information, highlighting privacy issues. CO said that the information would be recorded as a means of offering advice and guidance, and that consent would be requested.
- 4.17 JN suggested a working group of experts get together to establish how the information could be recorded effectively. CS said that part of her project involved researching how other organisations record this information, naming a 'passport' system as one mechanism. SC advised that when she had completed this part of work, she would feedback to the group.
- 4.18 SC highlighted the success of the Calibre training, and suggested formulating this into a degree. The group suggested liaising with those involved in the Horizons Programme.

ACTION SC

- 4.19 JN asked for clarity on the Mental Health First Aider targets. CO advised that at the moment there was one MHFA in every 100 members of staff, and that the aim was to have one in 50, adding that there needed to be more male MHFAs.
- 4.20 The student community was also discussed, and whether there was a target to include more student facing MHFAs. CO said it was difficult to arrange training around timetabling, there could be potential for out of office training, but it was difficult to confirm as it is not CO's resource.
- 4.21 JN referenced the bullet point on page 13 of the Strategy, which proposes training those with line management responsibility to deal with disability cases sensitively and appropriately. JN asked whether the training available at the College satisfies this. CO said that she was not aware of any specific training, KM added that the College had previously provided Two Ticks, and disability equality training, however this was not specifically for line managers. CO said that an online course would be ideal, especially

because the content was available i.e Unconscious Bias. Imbedding the information into Imperial Essentials by means of signposting.

5.0 Professor Sara Rankin to present work on Outreach

- 5.1 SR presented her Outreach work, and her project 2eMPower which aims to work with neurodivergent students to introduce them to STEM careers. SR explained that the purpose of the project was to enable neurodiverse individuals to fulfil their potential. SR told the group that it was often the case that neurodivergent individuals have low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. 2eMPower aims to create a more positive outlook, highlighting the literature demonstrating the strengths of 2E individuals.
- 5.2 Professor Rankin's presentation can be found in the accompanying documents (Appendix 6)
- 5.3 NH asked whether any other universities had thought about facilitating similar initiatives. SR explained that the project was fairly recent, and that she would expect other organisations to express an interest once 2eMPower has had wider publicity.

6.0 Update from Imperial College Union

- 6.1 FO told the Committee that any available student feedback on the EDI Strategy was to be sent to the Assistant Provost (EDI) by 25 May 2018.
- 6.2 Students' Union minibus fleet is being refreshed. FO told the Committee that accessibility of the fleet is a priority for any new vehicles purchased.
- 6.3 The new Imperial College Union Disabilities Officer (2018-19) has been appointed, his name is Sam Haselgrove. (samuel.haselgrove15@imperial.ac.uk) He is in post from 1 August 2018. Sam is an undergraduate in the Chemistry Department. Sam will be invited to all DAC meetings held in 2018-19

ACTION BR

7.0 Update from EDIC

- 7.1 KK told the group that the team had received very good support for the Calibre graduation, and that it was well attended. KK confirmed that applications for IMPACT are now open and the link had been circulated.
- 7.2 KM highlighted the various upcoming projects, such as new staff networks. KM also mentioned that a thank you event was due to take place on the 29 June.
- 7.3 Calibre candidate, Rebecca Cameron gave her talk she previously presented at the Calibre graduation ceremony, titled 'The Making of a Mirror' which can be found in Appendix 7. RC also added that since writing the talk, she has been successful in her Pedagogy Transformation bid (5 years of funding to develop an employability module for Faculty of Medicine PGT lab programmes, called Attributes and Aspiration Module), and is now on the waiting list for MHFA training.

8.0 Update from Able@imperial

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- 8.1 CR told the group that the team are currently trying to redesign the Able flyers to give the brand a bit of a fresher more exciting look and that they are due to meet with the central Comms team.
- 8.2 CR told the Committee that the Able team are in the process of planning potential events for next year including:
- A cross Imperial network event (meeting next week to determine what)
 - A possible collaboration with the Imperial Fringe.
- 8.3 CR explained that the objective for next academic year is to raise the network's profile and get members to engage a more.
- 9.0 AOB**
- 9.1 CO told the Committee that she is planning on having discreet conversations with people around the College about sharing their mental health journey, adding that she has already had a few people willing to do so.
- 9.2 JN advised that CS had intended to give an overview of her project relating to reasonable adjustments, but as the meeting had overrun, CS will have the opportunity to provide the update at the next Committee meeting.