

Faculty of Natural Sciences Undergraduate Wellbeing Student Staff Committee

Date: Weds 14 June 2018

Time: 12.30-14.00

Location: RSM 301C

MINUTES

Present:

Shervin Sabeghi (SS) – Chair	RCSU Welfare Officer
Anita Hall (AH)- Co-Chair	Faculty Senior Tutor
Abhijay Sood (AS)	RCSU Academic Affairs Officer
Felix Thompson (FT)	Chemistry Wellbeing Dept. Rep
Amelia Barron (AB)	Chemistry Student Experience Officer
Yasmin Andrew (YA)	Physics Student Liaison Officer
Chris Ford (CF)	Maths Senior Tutor
Pietro Spanu (PS)	Life Sciences Senior Tutor
Stuart Haslam (SH)	Life Sciences Senior Tutor
Stephen Connolly (SC)	Life Sciences Undergraduate Liaison Officer
Michael Edwards (ME)	RCSU President
Becky Neil (BN)	RCSU Vice-President Operations
Rebecca Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager

Apologies:

Natasha Boyd (NB)	Biology Dept. Wellbeing Rep
Chenyu Lin (CL)	Maths Y3 and Wellbeing Dept. Rep
Fintan O'Connor (FO)	ICU Deputy President (Welfare)
Tiah Cudjoe-Cole	Biochemistry Wellbeing Dept. Rep

1. Welcome and Apologies

SS welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies, as above, were noted.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Review of Action Tracker

The action tracker was reviewed and the following updates noted:

Item 6. Funding for Community Building

SS noted that he would be discussing the matter of community funding in his handover meeting with new Wellbeing Reps.

Item 7. Biochemistry Student Survey

RM noted that the survey questions had not been sent to her by the Biochemistry Reps.

Item 8. Earlier publication of Biology timetable

RM had raised this with the Life Sciences DUGS on 21 March. His response was as follows:

'We are endeavouring to improve the timeliness of timetable posting for 2018-19. This is sometimes problematic for elective courses as they change on a yearly basis and being too restrictive would

compromise our ability to modify and innovate. Timetables are published when finalised and the drip feed description may come from students requesting draft timetables from staff before they are finalised and then being unsatisfied when they are indeed changed, an issue we had predicted in discussing with students at our SSCs.'

4. Personal Tutoring Review

AH presented her Discussion Document on FoNS Personal Tutoring to the committee.

She asked the committee to comment, or to send comments following the meeting, on the first section of the document, which contained a summary of feedback related to personal tutoring taken from the NSS, the FoNS/RCSU Student Survey and the 2016 College Personal Tutors Working Group report.

AH noted that the final page of the discussion document outlined a draft response to the above-mentioned feedback, in the form of a letter, and again asked for any comments on this. She noted that the training sessions listed would start in September.

SS asked AH how many staff have personal tutor duties explicitly listed in their workload models, and was it feasible for this to be included for all. AH noted that she felt it was. FT noted that for Chemistry, as far as he was aware, only more senior members of staff would have this included.

SS asked the committee for any comments or questions and the following were raised:

FT noted that feedback seemed to have improved since 2016 to the more recent RCSU/ FONS survey and questioned what had been put in place that might have caused this. AH noted that the questions in 2016 and 2018 did differ but there was an apparent improvement in feedback on pastoral care from students in some but not all Departments. Something that has helped tutors in Life Sciences at least is having timetabled personal tutorial slots.

PS asked AB and FT whether any specific thought had been given to personal tutoring provision with the imminent move to White City. He noted that LS faced challenges with PT provision where staff were based in Silwood Park, and also that there were issues with identifying suitable physical space sessions and that this required a lot of forward planning.

In response, AB noted that the Department were working on timetabling personal tutoring slots, with the aim of maximising staff time at SK. She noted that she has spoken to the DUGS in Life Sciences about their experience of managing a split site.

BN asked how Departments matched personal tutors with students. AH noted that this would vary across Departments. SH noted that in Life Sciences, they aimed to ensure an even distribution of gender and Home/ EU and overseas students across groups. PS added that allocation in LS was not entirely random. The LS Senior Tutors also confirmed that they were of course required to ensure that student under 18 were matched with a PT who had been DBS checked.

SS asked AH how she was planning to run the training sessions she had mentioned and whether she had concerns about the number of personal tutors who would need to attend if the training were to become mandatory. AH confirmed that the sessions would be short, around 45 mins to 1 hour, and would involve active learning. She also confirmed that sessions would cover mental health support and appropriate signposting; other support and signposting; and the sharing of good practice.

SS the asked AH about the processes for managing poor performance of PTs. AH noted that, unofficially, a very small minority were removed from PT duties and could be given other work to

complete to compensate. She noted that almost all staff *were* keen to engage with personal tutoring, but where issues were identified, it would require a discussion with someone more senior.

PS asked what action was taken by Departments where students reported that they did not have a good relationship with their personal tutor and wanted to be reallocated. AB noted that in Chemistry, this occurred very rarely, but tutees were reallocated where it was deemed appropriate. CF noted that this was also a rare occurrence in Maths, and that they would try to avoid reallocation if possible by discussing the issues with the student.

AH noted that there could also be issues where a tutor was absent from College for a period of time, particularly if they did not notify the Department of this. SC noted in that LS he would step into the breach in such cases and where necessary.

FT asked whether the fact that a student could change PT was advertised to students. All department representatives noted that this was not advertised so as not to encourage students to do so where it was not strictly necessary. Reallocation was seen as a last resort where serious issues could not be satisfactorily resolved.

Finally, the committee discussed the introduction of personal tutoring in new students' first week. It was generally felt that students had a huge amount of information to take in in the induction week, and that perhaps personal tutoring sessions might be best left until a few weeks after induction. BN noted, however, that it was important for students to at least receive the names and contact details of those available to support them as soon as they arrived at College.

5. Reports from Department Wellbeing Representatives:

RM confirmed that no reports had been received in advance of the meeting. SS agreed to encourage Reps to submit brief bullet-points prior to each meeting next academic year, particularly if they were not able to be in attendance. Any information provided in advance could also then inform meeting agendas.

5.1 Chemistry

FT, the Chemistry Wellbeing Dep Rep, noted that Wellbeing SSC meetings had taken place at Department level. Issues raised have been specific to Chemistry, so there was nothing to report. He noted that the matter of LGBT+ networks (see Item 7.1) had been discussed.

5.2 Life Sciences- Biochemistry

5.3 Life Sciences- Biology

There were not Wellbeing Reps present from LS, but BN noted that Virginia Fairclough, who has recently been appointed as a Strategic Teaching Fellow, was keen to be involved in wellbeing support within the Department and will be running a welfare fair event in November 2018.

5.4 Maths

There were no Maths Student Reps present.

CH reported that no Maths Wellbeing Dept. Rep had been recruited for 2018/19. SS and ME agreed that they would work to find a Rep outside of the formal ICU election process.

5.5 Physics

There were no Physics Student Reps present.

YA gave an update on the Physics Welfare Week that had taken place in May and had been well attended; it included events such as yoga classes and a pizza party. YA also noted some future opportunities/ events that were being explored, including more yoga

classes; breathing and meditation workshops, including one-to-one sessions to assist with exam anxiety; and the provision of aromatherapy.

YA also noted that the Physics Senior Tutor would be running update sessions for Personal Tutors on 19 June.

Finally, YA outlined the work that had been done and support that was being put in place relating to LGBT+. (See Item 7.1)

6. RCSU Strategy

ME presented an overview of the RCSU Strategy and the three main Objectives: Represent; Engage; Excite- see appended slides and document for details. He asked the members to forward any comments or discussion points on the strategy document to him and agreed to send his presentation slides and the updated strategy document to RM for distribution to the committee.

ACTION: Members to forward any comments or discussion points on the strategy document to ME.

7. Chair's Business

7.1 Departmental LGBT+ Networks

YA confirmed that Physics were in the process of creating a LGBT+ network- work which was being undertaken in collaboration with [Imperial 600](#), and with reference to the recent Stonewall paper 'LGBT in Britain-University Report'. YA agreed to send a summary of the work being undertaken in Physics around LGBT+ networks, plus the recent Stonewall report to RM for distribution to the committee (*see Appendix A and <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-britain-university-report>*).

AB and FT from Chemistry noted that they were also looking into LGBT+ support.

AH noted that she had a budget that could be used towards related activities.

7.2 Reflecting on 2017/18 Wellbeing SSCs

SS asked members to send any comments, suggestions for improvements etc. on this year's Wellbeing SSCs to RM, who will collate and share with the committee.

ACTION: All members to send any comments, suggestions for improvements etc. on this year's Wellbeing SSCs to RM, who will collate and share with the committee.

8. AOB- there was no other business to report.

9. Dates of future meetings – were confirmed as per Paper 4.

Faculty of Natural Sciences UG Wellbeing Student Staff Committee Actions 2017/18

Item/ Reference	Action	Owner	Meeting Date	Update	Progress
FoNS Wellbeing SSC Meeting- 14 June 2018					
11	All members to send any comments, suggestions for improvements etc. on this year's Wellbeing SSCs to RM, who will collate and share with the committee.	All/ Rebecca Middleton	14/06/18		
10	Members to forward any comments or discussion points on the RCSU strategy document to Michael Edwards.	All	14/06/18		
FoNS Wellbeing SSC Meeting- 19 March 2018					
9	RM to circulate link to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy	Rebecca Middleton	19/03/18	http://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-records-and-data/for-current-students/undergraduate-and-taught-postgraduate/exams-assessments-and-regulations/mitigating-circumstances/	Complete
8	RM to speak with Emma McCoy and the LS DUGS to see whether a draft Biology timetable could be published at least 3-6 months in advance, rather than being released gradually.	Rebecca Middleton	19/03/18	Raised with LS DUGS and EMc on 21 March 2018. Response from DUGS: <i>'We are endeavouring to improve the timeliness of timetable posting for 2018-19. This is sometimes problematic for elective courses as they change on a yearly basis and being too restrictive would compromise our ability to modify and innovate. Timetables are published when finalised and the drip feed description may come from students requesting draft timetables from staff before they</i>	Complete

Item/ Reference	Action	Owner	Meeting Date	Update	Progress
				<i>are finalised and then being unsatisfied when they are indeed changed, an issue we had predicted in discussing with students at our SSCs.'</i>	
7	MW and RC to send the survey questions to the committee members.	Marek Wolczynski and Ruben Colindres	19/03/18		Complete
6	SS to discuss the matter of funding for community building events with the new Wellbeing Reps for 2018/19 during the handover period.	Shervin Sabeghi	19/03/18		Complete
FoNS Wellbeing SSC Meeting 13 December 2017					
5	RM to add item 6.1 'Measuring the effectiveness of the Wellbeing Rep Network' to the agenda of the meeting on 14 March 2018	RM	13/12/17		Complete
4	Where this is not current practice, Senior Tutors to consider sending termly reminder emails to students to attend personal tutor meetings and to reinforce the purpose and importance of the personal tutor/ tutee relationship.	All Senior Tutors	13/12/17		Complete
3	AH and RM to discuss with the vice-Dean (Education) the issue of gathering feedback on personal tutors from students.	AH and RM	13/12/17	Covered in the FoNS/ RCSU Student Survey	Complete
2	RM to send the College documentation of personal tutor roles and responsibilities to members, for dissemination within departments.	RM	13/12/17		Complete
1	PH to send details of the proposed 'Scientists of Imperial' Campaign to RM for dissemination to the committee.	PH	13/12/17		Complete

Appendix A

Physics- LGBT+ Ally Network

- Staff and Research Associates were emailed to ask if they would consider acting as a contact point for physics students who wanted to talk to someone about any LGBT+ related issues
- A consultation between staff, undergraduate and postgraduate student representatives was run to find out what the students would want from such a network and what support the staff **would be** required from college.
- Here is a link to a Best Practice Guide: LGBT+ Inclusivity in Physics and Astronomy kindly forwarded by Jose Eliel: <https://arxiv.org/abs/1804.08406>
- Here is a link to the Stonewall page on Higher Education:
 - o <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/get-involved-education/higher-education>
- Online training is being set-up for allies to take in Term 3. Allies who have taken the online training will be listed on a poster for the undergraduate and postgraduate students to see. Allies will have a rainbow sticker on their door.
- A bespoke training is being set-up for allies by the EDU for (hopefully) Term 1.
- London Pride was celebrated in Physics with rainbow posters. PhySoc set up an information table with factsheets and free rainbow badges for students to pick up.
- Pride in Physics is being run in August in the Physics Department with the Institute of Physics:

Institute of Physics (IOP) Physics Communicators Group Summer Meeting: Pride of Physics

The date is Friday 3rd August, 13:30 – 17:00, and it will be in the Seminar & Learning Centre @ Imperial.

Our aims for the event are:

- o To provide a platform for underrepresented groups in physics
- o To generate discussions around what the IOP and other learned societies could be doing to help support these communities
- o Bring the community of physics communicators together, and work to expand this community

There will be 4 invited 30 minute talks as well as a breakout discussion session. We are just finalising our speakers and are still open to suggestions and ideas: jessica.wade@imperial.ac.uk.