

## Faculty of Natural Sciences Undergraduate Wellbeing Student Staff Committee

Date: Monday 19 March 2018  
Time: 12.30-14.00  
Location: SALC7

### MINUTES

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#### Present:

Shervin Sabeghi (SS) - Chair	RCSU Welfare Officer
Anita Hall (AH)- Co-Chair	Faculty Senior Tutor
Natasha Boyd (NB)	Biology Dept. Wellbeing Rep
Fintan O'Connor (FO)	ICU Deputy President (Welfare)
Peter Hull (PH)	Maths Y2 Wellbeing Rep
Chenyu Lin (CL)	Maths Y3 and Wellbeing Dept. Rep
Felix Thompson	Chemistry Wellbeing Dept. Rep
Ruben Colindres (RC)	Life Sciences (Biochemistry) Y1 Wellbeing Rep
Marek Wolczynski	Life Sciences (Biochemistry) Y2 Wellbeing Rep
Derryck Stewart (DS)	Physics Education Manager
Amelia Barron (AB)	Chemistry Student Experience Officer
Stephen Connolly (SC)	Life Sciences Undergraduate Liaison Officer
Anne-Marie Hilder	Maths UG Liaison Officer
Michael Edwards (ME)	RCSU President
Becky Neil (BN)	RCSU Vice-President Operations
Rebecca Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager
Judy Caddle	FoNS Admin Assistant

#### Apologies:

Abhijay Sood	RCSU Academic Affairs Officer
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#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

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

#### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2017

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to the correction of Sophie Belton being the Y1 rep and Seoyeon Lee a Y2 rep.

#### 3. Review of Action Tracker

These were reviewed and the following updates noted:

**Item 4** – DS confirmed that an email had been circulated to senior tutors in Physics asking them to send reminder emails to students to attend personal tutor meetings. Personal tutors will be discussed in detail at Item No. 6 on the Agenda.

**Item 3** – Feedback on personal tutors from students is also be covered in the FoNS/ RCSU student survey. Abhijay Sood, RCSU Academic Affairs Officer, Emma McCoy, FoNS vice-Dean (Education) and RM are meeting to discuss results and will share feedback to committee.

**Item 1** – PM reported that the proposed ‘Scientists of Imperial’ Campaign launched at end of term.

#### **4. Departmental Wellbeing and Community Fund**

FO’C raised the topic of obtaining support for wellbeing/ community building events within the Departments. He asked reps to how departments currently support funding for an event; if a budget allocated for each department at the start of the year, as in FoE, would be helpful; and what types of events are normally held.

Practice currently varies across the Faculty, with Maths and Biology events being funded on an ad-hoc basis by the Department, and Physics events often being funded via the RCSU.

SS agreed that he would discuss this matter with the new Wellbeing Reps for 2018/19 during the handover period, but the general consensus seemed to be that an up-front budget was not necessarily the best way forward.

**ACTION: SS to discuss the matter of funding for community building events with the new Wellbeing Reps for 2018/19 during the handover period.**

#### **5. Reports from Department Wellbeing Representatives:**

##### **5.1 Chemistry**

A survey relating to pastoral support sponsored by the dept had been circulated to students with a 45% response. The incentive for completing the survey was £5 of printer credit.

Students were asked whether they found it difficult approaching staff and communicating wellbeing problems to them. Feedback from the survey will be used for discussions at Wellbeing Student Staff Committees.

##### **5.2 Life Sciences - Biochemistry**

Biochemistry Reps had also conducted a wellbeing survey, which focussed on the following:

- Academic work/ life balance
- Mental health
- Financial matters such as managing budgets, housing problems etc.

MW and RC agreed to send the survey questions to the committee members.

**ACTION: MW and RC to send the survey questions to the committee members.**

It was noted that the Counselling Service lecture was helpful and should be rescheduled- this was a better way of highlighting the service than relying on email.

MW and RC were also keen to look into organising voluntary field-trips for students.

Finally, it was also noted that there was still strong demand from Life Sciences students for a common room space.

##### **5.3 Biology**

NB reported that students weren’t fully aware of who the Wellbeing Reps were and their role. She felt that the Reps needed promote access to college services especially those relating to supporting students with mental health difficulties. Having sign-posting across the College was an idea.

It was also noted that final year students completing their projects independently can feel isolated and might need to access wellbeing services. To overcome that isolation it was

suggested that having events like a social 'get together' or similar types of events jointly with the Biochemistry during the final year might be beneficial.

NB also noted that some students felt that the late release of lecture timetables was problematic - often students do not know their exact schedule until shortly before the commencement of a lecture course, thus making it difficult to organise their time, book appointments or even access wellbeing services.

SC from the LS department stated the Dept is hesitant to print the timetable in full at the start of the year, as content varies from course to course as compared to the Chemistry and Physics Depts. whose timetables are produced further in advance.

RM agreed to raise 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.

**ACTION: 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.**

#### **5.4 Maths**

CL reported that the Maths Dept had organised a drop-in event/stand entitled 'Time to Talk'. Posters had been printed and students were encouraged to write their feedback on the posters. Consensus was that more social events e.g quizzes, yoga and interaction with staff in the dept would be beneficial. Feedback could be canvassed on events held to improve quality and content.

It was also reported that there had been an 'Under Pressure' Campaign advertised on FB during Wellbeing Week to let students know about events happening on campus. Students had reported they felt under pressure due to exams taking place over a short period (8 exams over 2 weeks) which can be stressful.

A suggestion was put forward that Wellbeing Reps from each department publicise their events to enable everyone to benefit.

#### **5.5 Physics**

DS reported he had informed the Reps of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and had stressed to them the importance of understanding the Policy.

RM agreed to circulate links to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy to the committee.

***ACTION: RM to circulate link to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy.***

The Chair reported that a wellbeing rep for Physics had now been elected and signed up and would be invited to Wellbeing SSC meetings going forward.

### **6. Standing Items - Personal Tutoring**

It was noted that practice varied across Departments in terms of how regular meetings with personal tutors were/ whether they were formally scheduled. AB noted that in Chemistry, tutorials were scheduled in Y1, and that this would be the case for Y 2 also from 2018/19.

Students mentioned that some personal tutors were not supporting them, even though they have scheduled tutorials, and that some also ignored their communications. DS stated that in

Physics, any personal tutor not responding to a communication from a student should have their details forwarded to the Senior Tutor.

#### **7. Chair's Business**

The Chair discussed with the committee whether any aspects of the events or promotions could be improved for next year and asked for suggestions as to what could be done differently.

Suggestions included:

- Ensuring Wellbeing Reps are appointed at start of year
- Reps discussing ideas on how to engage with the community around wellbeing
- Reps to initiate meetings and interaction between themselves and staff
- Promoting the welfare team in each department

It was also suggested that a Wellbeing Network poster template, showing the faces of Wellbeing Reps be developed.

SS also stated it would be helpful for existing Reps to have a handover with incoming wellbeing Reps. He would speak to all Department Reps to ensure a timely handover take place to ensure continuity.

It was also noted that as Dept Reps may Chair meetings, training on this should be provided.

#### **8. AOB**

There was no other business to report.

#### **9. Dates of Future Meetings:**

- Weds 13 June 2018, 12.30-14.00