



Wellbeing Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 26 May 2020, 3 p.m.
Meeting held remotely (via Teams Channel)

Minutes

Present:

Dr Andy Rice (Chair)
Celia Burns (Secretary)
Jo de Bono
Caroline Stewart

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2020 were approved for publication on the Committee website.

3. Situation Update

Committee members each gave an update on how they were doing with regard to working from home.

4. Update on Action Items

i) *Graduate Union Initiative on Departmental and Faculty Welfare*

CS reported that she had responded to the author of the paper, advising them that we already have a member of staff undertaking the welfare role and that we have signposted this on the website. Her email bounced back and it seems that the author is no longer the Vice-President of the Graduate Union. As this was the Vice-President's own initiative and the Committee has taken the requested action, it was decided that we would take no further action.

ii) *Other departments' wellbeing initiatives*

JD reported that she had reflected on the action to produce and circulate a summary of what she had learned from the other departments and she did not think this was appropriate, as she had gathered the information on a very informal basis. If she were to circulate the information, she felt that she would need to go back to the departments to ask for their consent; and that this is something that should be done in a more structured way by the people responsible for wellbeing at the University level. JD said that the only thing mentioned by other departments that we do not

currently do was passes for the Botanic Garden, which we have added to our list of future discussion topics.

iii) West Cambridge counsellor

Before the Committee presented the idea of a counsellor to the Head of Department Team, JD was going to gather some information around collaboration with other West Cambridge departments, the University Counselling Services, and Colleges. This item was discussed under 'Discussion Items,' item 9(iii), below.

iv) List of future discussion items

Botanic Garden passes and health and safety issues related to working remotely have now been added to the list of future discussion items.

v) Staff Review and Development (SRD) Process

JD reported that she had taken the online SRD training and had found it reasonably comprehensive, however, she felt that the training was aimed at Professional Services Staff (PSS), particularly those who have not had an appraisal before or not for a long time. The training recommends doing the process every two years but JD felt that annually would be better, and it would be good to make it more of an ongoing process and part of the department's culture. It was agreed that a link to the University's training should be included in any future correspondence about appraisals.

The Committee discussed the SRD process in general. It was felt that the concept of a regular appraisal should be promoted (currently there is a process for appraisals but they do not happen regularly) and the Committee agreed to review the process and training on the PSS side before addressing the academic staff side. ACR noted that the academic staff appraisals focus on support and career development rather than performance management, and suggested that the process with PSS should have the same emphasis. JD confirmed that the online training was about support, encouragement and building confidence.

The Committee also noted the potential for enriching staff's experience through secondments and job swaps, for example, and the current *ourcambridge* theme, 'Supporting our staff'. In addition, the Committee noted the lack of continuity between appraisals and how they could be 'joined up' in terms of reviewing what has happened since the last appraisal and having a mid-cycle review meeting.

The Committee acknowledged that reviewing and improving the SDR process was a huge task and beyond the scope of this Committee. It was agreed to invite the HR Manager, Quo Pham, to a discussion about the process at the next meeting, where we could feed in the Wellbeing Committee's point of view and stimulate the discussion.

Action: CB

vi) Wellbeing Advisory Lunch

JD reported that she had requested the write-up of the lunch and would upload it to the Wellbeing Committee Teams channel.

Action: JD

vii) *ICE Wellbeing at Work course*

JD will try to do this the next time the course is offered.

Action: JD

viii) *Private Teams Channel*

ACR has set up the private Teams channel for the Committee.

5. Future Discussion Items

The list of future discussion items was not reviewed due to lack of time in the meeting.

6. Graduate Student Forum (GSF) Wellbeing Report

The recent GSF meeting took place on 20 May so the minutes should be available in time for the next Wellbeing Committee meeting.

CS reported that she had attended the recent Postgraduate Education Forum meeting, where Lise Gough reported that her team had been offering wellbeing virtual chat slots for postgraduate students and the update has been very good.

7. Research Staff Forum (RSF) Wellbeing Report

CB and CS reported that at the recent meeting on 21 May, the RSF Chair had noted the various resources that had been circulated by the University, including Big White Wall and Qwell; and the meeting participants had confirmed that they are meeting with their groups informally on a regular basis. No concerns or problems had been raised.

ACR noted that the Wellbeing Committee could use the GSF and RSF to both gather wellbeing information and reinforce any wellbeing messages we are sending out. It was agreed that the Chair of the RSF would be asked to make any departmental announcements on the subject of wellbeing (as is already the case in the GSF).

Action: CB

8. Student Wellbeing Internal Audit—Executive Summary

The Committee agreed to carry this item over to a future meeting.

9. Discussion Items

i) *Virtual Tea/Coffee Breaks*

CS reported that the tea/coffee breaks are still taking place, but now with only three or four regular participants. It was felt that staff are probably meeting in their own groups, but it is important that no one fall down the gaps. As there does not seem to be a need for a host, JD has enabled Zoom to allow the breaks to take place without a host.

It was agreed that the Zoom meeting would be kept open for now. CS would remind staff about the breaks and, at the same time, remind them about JD and CS being available to chat. The Committee would revisit the issue in a month's time, and in the meantime, CS agreed to drop in to the meetings occasionally.

ii) *Wellbeing Clinic*

CS and JD had still not received any requests for slots. It was agreed that CS would draft an email to staff to remind them of their availability. It was felt that the wellbeing aspect may have been putting people off so, in addition, it was agreed to ask the Head of Department to mention this initiative at a Wednesday meeting, and to emphasise that booking a slot is the equivalent of knocking on CS's or JD's door. We will review this at the next meeting.

Action: JD

iii) *Counsellor initiative*

JD reported that she has emailed Daniela Manca, Secretary of the West Cambridge Advisory Board, to raise the issue as the Board is currently considering facilities that will go into the Shared Facilities Hub. JD has also emailed the Head of the University Counselling Service to see what costs might be involved in having a counsellor for one day per week. She is waiting for a response.

The issue of how important it would be to have the counsellor in the CL building was briefly discussed. It was noted that feedback from events like Pilates and aerobics seemed to suggest that using a venue away from the building deterred people from showing up. On the other hand, having an appointment for counselling might make it more likely for a staff member to turn up for a session at a venue away from the building. It would be useful to know people's thoughts before presenting the counsellor initiative as a suggestion for a Hub facility.

JD will find out who the wellbeing contacts are in the West Cambridge departments. JD agreed to post the list on the Teams page once it is available, and contact them individually to check:

- that they are the correct person and whether there are other people that should be added to the list; and
- whether they are amenable to having a meeting, primarily about the shared counsellor initiative but also for anything else that might come up.

CB agreed to arrange the meeting.

Action: JD and CB

10. Next Discussion Item

It was agreed that the following items would be discussed at the next meeting:

- a) Staff Review and Development (discussion to include the HR Manager, 20 minutes)
- b) Counsellor for the West Cambridge site

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting via Teams at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, 23 June 2020.