



Wellbeing Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 28 July 2020, 4 p.m.
Meeting held remotely (via Teams Channel)

Minutes

Present:

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

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2020 were approved for publication on the Committee website.

3. Situation Update

Committee members each gave a brief update on how they were doing in relation to the coronavirus situation.

4. Update on Action Items

i) Virtual Tea/Coffee Breaks

CS reported that Zoom had malfunctioned at a recent meeting, resulting in the host being in a separate meeting to the other participants. The Committee agreed to arrange to have one of the 20 available Educational Zoom accounts (which would probably be more reliable) allocated to the Tea/Coffee Break group, and to delegate the setting up of the account to one of the regular attendees.

Action: CS

ii) Wellbeing Clinic/Virtual 'Corridor'

There had still not been any uptake on these slots, but the Committee agreed to continue to offer them. Informal feedback received by the Committee had shown that there are staff members who could benefit from this service but who are not aware of it. JD agreed to ask the Head of Department to mention the slots at this week's Wednesday meeting.

Action: JD

With CS and JD planning to take leave in August, the Committee agreed to continue offering and advertising the slots over that period but to schedule the slots around CS's and JD's availability. The Committee also agreed to arrange for a Wellbeing Committee email account to be set up so that in addition to sending meeting requests to CS and JD, they could also be sent to the Committee email address and therefore monitored by other Committee members in the absence of CS and JD.

Action: JD

iii) West Cambridge shared counsellor initiative

JD will report at the next meeting on the list of wellbeing contacts in the West Cambridge departments and their amenability to having a meeting to discuss the shared counsellor initiative (and anything else that might come up).

iv) Central HR's Review of the Staff Review and Development (SRD) Process

Quo Pham, HR Manager, had agreed to share the feedback from central HR's recent SRD review with the Committee if it was available for sharing. CB agreed to follow this up with Quo.

Action: CB

v) SRD processes for academic-related staff and professional services staff

Following the Committee's recommendation in June 2020 for the SRD processes for academic-related staff and professional services staff to be reviewed and re-implemented, Quo Pham agreed to address this issue with central HR and come back to the Committee with further information in September 2020.

vi) Continuation of Wednesday meetings

Committee members had noted that it would be good if the Wednesday meetings could continue over the summer break, chaired by a DHD when necessary. CS had brought this up with the HoD Team, and there would be an additional meeting this week. However, due to annual leave and workload issues, continuing the meetings through August would not be possible. An exceptional meeting could be held if necessary.

vii) Avoidance of formal meetings over various periods during the summer

Committee members had highlighted the Vice-Chancellor's encouragement to Departments and Institutions to adopt a policy of avoiding formal meetings over various periods, and CS had agreed to bring this up at a HoD team meeting, suggesting that we follow the policy of avoiding formal meetings on Mondays and Fridays and designate a week in August where there would be no formal meetings. CS reported that the HoD Team were in favour of not having meetings in August as well as avoiding Mondays and Fridays during September if possible. JD agreed to talk to the HoD about communicating this to the department.

Action: JD

5. Graduate Student Forum (GSF) Wellbeing Report

The Committee received the minutes of the 19 May GSF meeting which had focused mainly on student wellbeing, along with a report which had been produced for the Wellbeing Committee. AR noted that the concerns raised appeared to be operational

rather than wellbeing-related, and highlighted the open-door drop-in initiative, which seemed to be working well with PhD students.

The Committee discussed the suggestions proposed by students:

1. Having a 'wellbeing buddy'
2. Having more one-to-one or small group online chats
3. Having an easily accessible single page with all wellbeing resources
4. Organizing 'swap' meetings, for example for people close to submission of conference papers to review each other's submission. The AI group is already doing this.

The Committee agreed to feed back to the GSF that we thought all their suggestions were good and to ask that they explore ways to facilitate suggestions 1, 2 and 4.

Action: CB

JD agreed to highlight suggestion 4 to the HoD as something the AI group was doing that the Committee felt was useful and suggested she share with others at the Wednesday meeting.

Action: JD

With regard to suggestion 3, the Committee agreed that we would feed back to the GSF the link to the existing Wellbeing Resources page (<https://www.cst.cam.ac.uk/local/personnel/wellbeing>) and invite any feedback on that from the GSF (for example if they have suggestions for additional resources).

Action: CB

6. Research Staff Forum (RSF) Wellbeing Report

The Committee had previously received the minute from the RSF's Easter term meeting, and the next meeting would be held in Michaelmas term. AR noted that at its Easter term meeting, the RSF had not made any suggestions for the Wellbeing Committee to consider. It was agreed that we should ask the RSF to consider this again at its meeting in Michaelmas term and be encouraged to make suggestions for the Wellbeing Committee to consider at future meetings.

Action: CB

7. Student Wellbeing Internal Audit—Executive Summary

Committee members agreed to discuss the Executive Summary at a future meeting, once circumstances are more normal.

8. Discussion Items

i) Counsellor for the West Cambridge site

JD reported that Daniella Manca, Secretary of the West Cambridge Advisory Board, had discussed with the Secretary of the Board the initiative to have a Counsellor available in the Shared Facilities Hub. The Secretary of the Board had agreed to the initiative in principle and had noted that there would be meeting rooms available which would be suitable for counselling. The Board was in discussion with the University Counselling Service. JD agreed to get back to Daniella in September for an update.

Action: JD

9. Next Discussion Item(s)

The Committee agreed to defer the selection of the next discussion item until the next meeting.

10. Any Other Business

Staff survey about Department members' experience since lockdown

Committee members had received in confidence some feedback relating to the lockdown situation. Prompted by this feedback, the Committee discussed the possibility of running a staff survey to gauge how staff members have been coping since lockdown and in present conditions. It was agreed the aim would be mainly to understand the diversity or similarity of experiences in the Department and to consider what we can do with any issues of particular concern. The Committee recognised there should not be high expectations of them being able to change or resolve any concerns raised.

The Committee agreed to have one survey to cover all members of the Department and to include survey questions to cover issues such as members' workload, how they feel they have been treated (by both the department and the University), their mental outlook/predictions for October, and how much pressure they feel they are under (e.g., how much teaching prep, grants, papers, etc, they are able to accomplish).

The Committee agreed that the survey should be anonymous. The Committee also acknowledged the difficulty in ensuring anonymity. It was also noted that it would be a big job to administer and it would be challenging to get accurate feedback due to the subjective nature of the questions.

AR agreed to set up a document of suggested survey questions for the Committee to review, contribute to and subsequently decide whether to proceed with the survey.

Action: AR

The discussion about the survey also raised issues about workload and line management, and the Committee agreed to invite the Workload Committee to consider these issues.

Action: AR

11. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting via Teams at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, 1 September 2020.