



**Wellbeing Committee Meeting
Monday, 11 January 2021
Meeting held remotely via Teams**

Minutes

Present:

Dr Andy Rice (Chair, ACR)
Jo de Bono (JD)
Caroline Stewart (CS)
Celia Burns (Secretary, CB)

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2020 were approved for publication on the Committee website.

3. Situation Update

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

4. Update on Action Items

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

Committee members agreed to pass on this Review to the proposed HR Committee once it is set up. CS reported that she and CB were making progress with the SRD process for academic staff.

Action: CS

ii) Staff survey about Department members' current wellbeing

The initial Wellbeing Committee pulse survey had been launched before Christmas. The responses were discussed under item 6, Discussion Items, below.

iii) Proposal for an HR Committee

JD confirmed that plans are underway for the HoD Team to discuss this proposal.

iv) Linkages with Wellbeing Initiatives in other Departments on the West Cambridge Site

JD had shared with the Committee a positive response she had received from the Department of Physics in response to having shared key takeaways from our recent meetings. The Committee agreed to continue this initiative.

Action: JD

v) *Departmental social offerings*

- (a) *Virtual carol concert*: JD had made some enquiries into a possible virtual carol concert for Christmas but, mainly due to the time lag on Zoom/Teams, etc, unfortunately it had not proved technologically feasible.
- (b) *Post-Wednesday Meeting breakout rooms*: CS reported that she had shared the feedback regarding the breakout rooms with DHoDs in advance of the final Wednesday meeting of 2020, where the breakout room format had been repeated.

5. **Expected Reports**

- i) *Research Staff Forum (RSF): wellbeing-related suggestions*
The RSF had discussed wellbeing at its meeting on 6 November and had provided some suggestions for the Wellbeing Committee to consider (mental health first-aiders and mindfulness taster sessions). These suggestions have been included under Discussion Items below.
- ii) *Research Staff Forum (RSF) wellbeing report*
There was nothing to report as the Lent term RSF meeting had not yet been arranged.
- iii) *Postgraduate Students' Forum (PSF) wellbeing report*
Committee members received a wellbeing report provided by the PSF following its meeting held on 20 November 2020. The report noted that students were experiencing issues related to isolation and loneliness, work and private life balance, disappointment from new students not being able to access the building, and anxiety from uncertainty and unclear guidance.

6. **Discussion Items**

- i) *Results of the Pulse Survey*
Committee members discussed the survey results at length. They noted the very good turnout from Academic Staff as well as the overall positive responses from the Professional Services Staff. A particular area of concern was the strong disagreement with the 'I am treated with respect at work' question in the Academic Staff category. Another striking response was the unmanageable workload among Academic Staff and PhD Students. ACR noted that he had received feedback that some questions had been difficult to answer since responses would differ depending on whether from a Department or University perspective. Committee members agreed that, regardless of what perspective the responses came from, the Department as a bystander has a duty to try and address them.

Committee members agreed to share the survey response charts with members of the department for discussion at the various forums (Wednesday meetings, the Research Staff Forum and Postgraduate Student Forum) and at a separate meeting for Professional Service Staff. The low response rate from PhD students and research staff, making interpretation of the results impossible, would be noted.

Committee members agreed to tweak the survey questions before the next survey, but to respond to the results of the first survey first. The scope of the questions (Department and/or University perspective) would also be addressed before the next survey.

Action: Committee members

Due to lack of time at this meeting, Committee members agreed to consider the following discussion items at a subsequent meeting.

ii) *Saying thank you*

<https://www.ourcambridge.admin.cam.ac.uk/resources/saying-thank-you>.

iii) *Mental health first aiders*

A suggestion from the RSF (item 5 (i) above; minute attached). See

<https://www.sja.org.uk/courses/workplace-mental-health-first-aid/>.

iv) *Mindfulness taster sessions*

A suggestion from the RSF (item 5 (i) above; minute attached).

7. Next Discussion Item(s)

The Committee has agreed to leave discussion of more general wellbeing items until the pandemic situation stabilises, and for now address the more pressing issues relevant to the pandemic as they arise.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be arranged.

Action: CB