



Wellbeing Committee Meeting

9.45 a.m., Friday, 24 September 2021
(via videoconference)

Minutes

Present:

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

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2021 were approved for publication on the Committee website.

3. Update on Action Items

i) Proposed actions in response to the survey results

- *Mandated training:* CS reported that the information on trainings had been added to the Department's HR intranet page and that she would add the information to the induction list too.

Action: CS

ii) Next pulse survey

ACR reported that he had not yet had time to produce graphs showing sentiment over time but would try to do so before the discussion of the results of the next survey.

Action: ACR

iii) Committee self-evaluations

CS reported that she had not yet asked the HoD Team to consider inviting the PSF, RSF and SSCOF committees to each do a self-evaluation. It was agreed that this was not a time-sensitive issue, but CS and JD would try to find a suitable time for it to be discussed by the HoD team, with ACR in attendance too.

Action: CS and JD

iv) *Mediation and conflict resolution*

- *Presentation by Prof Buttery:* Committee members had discussed the possibility of inviting Prof Buttery to do a presentation on conflict resolution at a Wednesday meeting. However, because Prof Buttery is now on sabbatical for a year, it was agreed that CS would send the 28 July 2021 minute on this item to the HoD Team for advice on whether to proceed with the invitation to Prof Buttery.

Action: CS

- *Conveying the information to PhD students:* CS reported that she had not had time to talk to Lise Gough about how to convey the conflict resolution information to PhD students. It was agreed that this item would be retained as an action point and revisited in the Lent Term.
- *Mediation training:* CS and JD reported that they had only had time to quickly look through the Mediation workbook and had not had an opportunity to do any of the training. It was agreed that this item would be carried over to the next meeting when CS and JD would report back. They would also consider if there were other people in the department who it would be appropriate to involve.

Action: CS and JD

- *Review of induction process:* it was noted that review of the induction process (which has not been reviewed for about four years) has been added to the Committee's list of future discussion items.

4. Expected Reports

i) *Research Staff Forum (RSF) wellbeing report*

There was nothing to report as the Michaelmas term meeting has not yet been scheduled.

ii) *Postgraduate Students Forum (PSF) wellbeing report.*

Committee members noted the report sent by Marketa Green following the PSF meeting of 6 May 2021. No wellbeing concerns had been raised. Students had shown an interest in organising some social activities.

5. Discussion Item(s) for This Meeting

i) *Review of the results of the three pulse surveys*

Committee members discussed the results of the December 2020, March 2021, and June 2021 surveys. It was noted that there were no significant differences over time, and it was acknowledged that there might have been more improvement if we had been able to do more to address the issues surveyed. It was felt that there were two main areas to address: saying thank you/recognition (with more support for this from PSS than from UTOs) and workload (with more support for this from UTOs than from PSS). It was agreed that the Committee would ask the HoD Team if the Department wanted to address these two initiatives and if so, how to resource them. ACR suggested that some discussion seminars could be organised, where more senior people could talk about their experiences with how *they* manage workload.

Action: CS

It was agreed that JD would circulate a fourth survey, next week. ACR would circulate a reminder email the week after.

Action: JD and ACR

Following completion of this fourth survey, ACR would package the results, drawing up some comparison graphs over time, and would aim to get people's feedback during a short point at a Wednesday meeting.

Action: ACR

ii) Meeting with newish UTOS re Wellbeing Committee initiatives

Committee members received CB's notes from the meeting. ACR noted that the discussion had been useful, and that people had felt heard. He noted that there was more interest in the issue of workload than for recognition systems (probably as academics have opportunities for *external* recognition), and that something would be implemented regarding workload when time allowed.

iii) Report from the 'Saying Thank You' session

Committee members received CB's notes from the Festival of Wellbeing session. CB noted that her main observation had been the risk of thanks being received as contrived or inauthentic. ACR noted that the session had seemed one-sided in that potential disadvantages or risks of the various initiatives had not been mentioned.

Committee members discussed the positive impact of saying thank you and how a culture of saying thank you might be encouraged in the Department. ACR agreed to talk to fellow Professors about this idea and report back at the next meeting.

Action: ACR

iv) Mental Health First-Aid

The Committee discussed a suggestion to offer a mental health first-aid course to support students. It was agreed that the suggestion should be sent to Eva Kalyvianaki, with a view to her including the course in the Researcher Skills Training, with PhD students receiving points for completing the course.

Action: CB

6. Next Discussion Item(s)

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

- i) Pulse Surveys: Results
- ii) Saying Thank You: ACR's report following his consultation with Professors.

7. Any Other Business

At the beginning of the meeting, ACR offered his congratulations to JD for having organised a very successful and enjoyable garden party on Wednesday.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 2 p.m. on Monday, 22 November 2021, in person if possible (with the agreement that there was no pressure for Committee members to attend in person if they did not feel safe doing so).