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## Wellbeing Committee Meeting

2 p.m., Monday, 22 November 2021  
Room GC22, William Gates Building

### Minutes

#### Present:

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

#### ***New Committee Chair***

A new Chair is currently being sought since Professor Rice is taking unpaid leave from 1 January 2022 to 30 September 2023.

Committee members expressed their appreciation to Professor Rice for his service as Chair of the committee since it was set up in October 2019 and wished him well for his leave. He will be missed very much.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

None.

#### **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2021 were approved for publication on the website.

#### **3. Update on Action Items**

*i) Mandated/recommended training*

CS confirmed she would add this item to the list of induction pack updates.

*ii) Next pulse survey*

See item 6(i) below.

*iii) Committee self-evaluations*

Committee members had considered the proposal to invite the PSF, RSF and SSCOF committees to each do a self-evaluation. It was agreed that this item would be retained for the new Chair to consider.

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. As Prof Buttery is now on sabbatical for a year, it was agreed that an invitation would be made to Prof Buttery on her return from sabbatical (Michaelmas 2022).

**Action: CB**

- *Mediation training:* CS and JD had considered doing some of the mediation training. It was agreed that JD would pursue this, and the Committee would consider whether there were also people from the other staff categories who might benefit from the training.

**Action: JD**

v) *Review of the results of the pulse surveys:*

A fourth survey had been circulated at the end of September. See item 6i below for discussion of the results.

vi) *Culture of saying 'Thank you'*

It was agreed that the issue of how a culture of saying thank you might be encouraged in the Department would be retained for the new Chair to consider.

vii) *Mental health first-aid*

The suggestion to offer a mental health first-aid course to support students has been sent to Dr Eva Kalyvianaki, responsible for Researcher Development, and Lise Gough, with a view to their including the course in the Researcher Skills Training.

#### **4. Wellbeing Suggestion Box**

A suggestion had been received for more team sport activities. JD noted that she had received positive feedback about the cricket at the garden party, and that a proposal had been submitted to the Head of Department for funds (for equipment and pitch hire, etc) to enable more routine cricket events. It was agreed that this proposal should be pursued, and CS and JD agreed to raise it with the HoD Team this week, noting that it might be useful for the organiser to be mentored by a senior member of department (to monitor issues such as health and safety assessments, for example).

**Action: CS and JD**

#### **5. Expected Reports**

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

Committee members noted the report from the RSF meeting held on 19 November. No wellbeing concerns had been reported. RSF members had discussed social events, including the desire for more department-wide events and, in particular, a Christmas event (although this could be held in the new year rather than in December). The Wellbeing Committee noted its support for social events where covid restrictions allow and, in connection with this, CS agreed to consult with Ian Lewis about CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

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

Committee members noted the report from the PSF meeting held on 19 November. Apart from one, PSF student members representing the different research groups had reported that they were not aware of any students suffering from mental issues. Lise Gough had clarified the escalation lines for individuals with mental health issues, and Committee members agreed that it would be useful for the Wellbeing Committee to clarify on the website what the escalation lines are for the different staff and student categories.

**Action: JD and CB**

**6. Discussion Items for This Meeting**

*i) Pulse Surveys:*

Responses were slightly down across all sectors. The two major issues that arose are workload and saying thank you/recognition, with the biggest negative scorer, particularly for UTOs, being workload. The Committee agreed that, beyond the workload issue (which is being addressed by the Workload Committee), there was no strong signal coming from the surveys to warrant a major new wellbeing initiative.

With turnout slightly down across all sectors, a sense of survey fatigue, and no new initiative to monitor the impact of, it was agreed that it did not seem worthwhile continuing with the pulse surveys. The results have been shared with the different staff categories within the department and the Committee agreed that the results could now be left with the HoD Team and the next Chair to consider how to proceed.

*ii) Saying Thank You*

ACR noted that he had not had time to consult with colleagues about this issue. It was agreed that this item would be retained for the new Chair to consider.

**7. Next Discussion Item(s)**

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

- (i) Handover for the new Chair
- (ii) Review of the committee composition

**8. Any Other Business**

***Handover notes for the new Chair***

The Committee discussed what information to hand over to the new Chair and agreed on the following issues.

- *Terms of Reference* (noting the Committee's strategic rather than operational role and suggesting a review of the committee composition).
- *Pulse Surveys* (see item 6i)

- *'Bucket list' of wellbeing discussion items* (saved in the Teams Wellbeing Committee channel)
- *Potential HR Committee* (including the Wellbeing Committee's role in relation to it)
- *Mediation and conflict resolution* (see item 3iv)
- *New Wellbeing Advocate*
- *Committee self-evaluations* (see item 3iii)

Prof Rice thanked the Wellbeing Committee members for their collaboration and support since the Committee was established.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 12 noon on Tuesday, 25 January 2022.