

Student Welfare Committee

Thursday 10 October 2013

14.00 – 17.00

SALC 10

Sherfield Building, South Kensington Campus

Minutes

Present: Professor Denis Wright (Chairman), Dr Sharon Bolton, Mrs Mary Bown, Dr Vasa Curcin, Dr Michael Emerson, Dr Sarah Freedman, Mr Gerry Greyling, Mr Brett Harmony, Mr Andrew Keenan, Dr Julie King, Miss Marissa Lewis, Ms Rosie Summerhayes, Dr Lynda White, Rev Andrew Willson

In attendance Mrs Sue Mannion, Ms Lynda Chandler (Secretary)

Apologies: Dr Simon Archer, Mr Nigel Cooke, Professor Maggie Dallman, Professor Debra Humphris, Ms Claire O'Brien, Miss Sarah Parkes, Miss Kelly Swaby

Not in attendance: Dr Mike Bluck, Mr Charles Gallagher, Dr Michael Jones, Mrs Leigh Turvey

Agenda Item

1. Apologies for absence

Ms Chandler (Secretary) read apologies from those listed.

2. Welcome new members

2.1. The Chairman welcomed Dr Julie King as the new Director of ELSU, Miss Marissa Lewis as the incoming ICU Deputy President (Welfare) and Ms Rosie Summerhayes as the new Head of Student Counselling.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting – Friday 21 June 2013

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting subject to the following amendments:

- (i) Miss Parkes was erroneously listed as in attendance.
- (ii) Minute 7(iii) should have been attributed to Ms O'Brien and not Miss Parkes.

4. Matters arising

- (i) Minute 3(ii): Dr Curcin advised that the start of session in UG Halls had been quieter this year with some areas taking a more responsible approach. He felt it was not necessary to have the previously discussed alcohol awareness campaign at this time but that a unit content awareness campaign at events and in bars would be more appropriate. Miss Lewis stated that drinking would pick up during exam periods.

A discussion followed about the 127 Under 18 students who were not permitted to attend the welcome events and the Student Union was thanked for organising an alcohol free event at short notice. Over 500 students attended, many over 18. It was noted that a number of students at this event had been drinking prior to arrival. The committee agreed that more non-alcohol events would be widely welcomed.

- (ii) Minute 3(iv): The Chairman confirmed that the visiting student GP registration advice is now more prominent on the Imperial College Health Centre web home page and Registry is adjusting the form for completion. **[Note: the online visiting student form has now been modified]** Dr Bolton confirmed the International Student Support Office is already advising students to register but that this won't pick up students coming in via local supervisor arrangements.
- (iii) Minute 3(v): Mrs Bown confirmed that the space identified at Hammersmith for DAS was not suitable for wheelchair access, was too remote and would require a costly alarm system to be installed. DAS are temporarily using the same space as the Counselling Service however despite promoting the service no appointments have been booked so far. The next available appointments are mid-November.
- (iv) Minute 3(vii): The Chairman advised that he has been talking to Nick Roalfe regarding space identified (with the Librarian) on Level 2 of the Library at South Kensington for the DAS assisted technology suite. This comprises of two interconnecting air-conditioned rooms with 24/7 swipe card access. This would also free up space for DAS use in Sheffield building.
- (v) Minute 3(viii): The Chairman presented paper B outlining clearer student guidance and links to the Imperial College Health Centre. He commented that the updated Imperial College Health Centre web page does not tell students where the nearest GP surgeries are. Dr Freedman said she would send the Chairman the relevant NHS Choices URL. Dr Freedman advised that the Health Centre only takes students from certain campuses and the paper should be amended to reflect this where mentioning the extended catchment area. Dr Bolton confirmed she would send the URL for students visiting for less than six months to the Chairman for inclusion in the paper. **[Note: the above amendments to the web page were made after the meeting]**
- (vi) Minute 7(ii): the Chairman confirmed he would take the postgraduate welfare room action forward. Dr Curcin asked whether the house in the Secret Garden could be used. Mrs Mannion advised that this accommodation was currently rented out through College Fund. The Chairman will enquire about the possibility of using one of the rooms as a welfare room.

Action: DW

- (vii) Minute 7(iv): Referencing Paper C the Chairman highlighted key points and asked for any comments to be sent to him by the end of October. Dr Curcin said the paper should include a list of those responsible for contacting missing students. Mr Greyling advised that the missing student detail had been prompted by a requirement by the US Federal Loan organisation to have a policy in place. The Chairman commented that there could be various reasons for missing students such as delays relating to UKBA and visas. He also advised that the policy does not cover under 16 students as an additional procedure is required, confirming

that the College does not have a Tier 4 Children's License and students who are under 16 and require such a visa could not be admitted to College.

- (viii) Minute 7(vi): the Chairman confirmed that Professor Humphris is taking this action forward

Action: DH

5. Annual Reports

- (i) Student Hub (Paper D): Mrs Mannion summarised the report highlighting the new services provided which had all been well received. The Imperial Home Solutions service, featuring 692 agents and private landlords, received 51,000 viewings. Over 800 postgraduate students had requested a password.
- (ii) ICU Student Advisory Service: Miss Lewis summarised the report in the absence of Mr Cooke. **[Note: Report subsequently submitted]** Miss Lewis presented a paper (E) updating progress on actions taken following the December 2012 Student Experience Survey. The Chairman advised that this report was not a requirement as part of the annual report process but was a welcome update for the Committee, adding that he would be useful to receive further, monthly updates. The Chairman commented that good progress had been made in some areas and that some of the recommendations from the Student Experience Survey will never be completed because of their ongoing nature.

Mr Greyling asked for clarification on recommendation 6 relating to emergency loans, stating that College already has a system in place. It was agreed this action would be closed.

Relating to recommendation 13, Mr Greyling also explained the current process for considering Access to Learning Fund applications, stating that a Board system delayed the process. Mr Greyling will meet with Miss Lewis to discuss this point further.

Action: GG/ML

Relating to recommendation 31, Mr Greyling updated Committee members on the progress of the new scholarships database. Following discussion Mr Greyling agreed to meet with the Union to discuss an annual bursary survey.

Action: GG/ML

Relating to recommendation 34, Miss Lewis commented that students were not comfortable with the commercial aspect of the private accommodation promotions. Mrs Mannion stated she was not aware of this and agreed to meet Miss Lewis to discuss further.

Action: SM/ML

Relating to recommendation 5, Mr Harmony commented that this had also been raised at the Overseas Student Society.

- (iii) Imperial College Health Centre (Paper F): Dr Freedman summarised the report stating they will be interviewing this week for the vacant Psychotherapist post. Waiting times for appointments for low intensity is 4 weeks, for high is 8 weeks and 1 week for psychotherapy appointments. Dr Freedman asked whether promotion of the Exam Performance Workshops had taken place. The Chairman confirmed it would be going to Senior Tutors, Postgraduate Tutors and Wardens shortly but he was currently awaiting approval to send an all student email for w/c

14 October. Dr Curcin advised he would promote it via the Halls Facebook page. Mrs Bown and the Union were also giving out flyers. Following a discussion on using social media to promote the session the Chairman suggested the Union might be able to come up with some innovative ideas for distribution.

The Chairman agreed to send out a letter regarding vaccinations.

Action: DW

Dr Freedman advised that the NHS funding for the Tuesday late clinics may be withdrawn at some point, in which case the service will have to be cancelled. The Chairman asked for data on usage to be sent to him to flag this up at the next planning round so that some contingency could be made.

Action: SF

Dr Freedman advised that the attendance of teams at each of the halls on campus to capture new students at the start of term had been a big success, confirming 1734 forms had been completed. She expressed her thanks to the Wardens. Feedback had been very positive stating the Wardens were helpful and welcoming. She also thanked the Student Hub for their help. More forms had been completed in the first three days than by then end of October last year. On average 73% of halls were captured with just under 50% at Wilson House.

Following a discussion on how to capture the remaining students it was agreed the Wardens would send a list of all residents email addresses to the Health Centre. Wardens and Health Centre will meet to fine-tune the process for next year.

Action: ML/SF

Dr Freedman confirmed discussions regarding the new telephone system were ongoing. The Chairman agreed to contact Telecommunications to find out why the Health Centre cannot remain in the College system.

Action: DW

Dr Freedman clarified that Polly McDonald will be offering three Life Coach sessions per week, starting in November.

The Health Centre are looking at their communication processes with a view to surveying students. Their new web pages are getting 300 hits a day and Dr Freedman would welcome any comments regarding the look and content.

Following a discussion regarding mitigating circumstances and special exam requirements in relation to GP letters it was agreed that interested parties would meet to draft more formal guidelines.

Action: MB/SF/SW/ME

Dr Freedman commented that there were a number of late or non-attendance incidents with late attendees getting giving staff a hard time when they have to wait to be seen. The Health Centre is writing to all DNA students.

- (iv) Student Counselling Service (Paper G): Miss Summerhayes summarised the report stating they were also looking at the possibility of on-line counselling, updating their web information and increased collaboration with other College services.

The Chairman commented that the report identified the biggest disparities in users of the service were linked to gender and to fee status, rather than level of study.

- (v) Student Financial Support (Paper H): Mr Greyling summarised the report and advised the Committee that the dyslexia assessment funding had moved to DAS from 2013-14. He commented that there appeared to be a correlation between the drop in applications in the previous year and the lack of free promotion space in Felix, although the fund is promoted widely across College through a variety of other media.

The Chairman stated that College needs a campaign to raise income to the College Hardship Fund. Dr Curcin said he would discuss the possibility of engaging alumni via various Halls networks with other Wardens.

Action: VC

Following a discussion of the possibility for Halls and the Student Union to raise funds via charity events it was agreed that Mr Greyling would meet with all parties to discuss further.

Action: GG/VC/ML

- (vi) International Student Support (Paper I): Dr Bolton summarised the paper stating that an updated version will be circulated post meeting with additional figures. Thanks were given to all services who participated in events during the welcome activities. Dr Bolton highlighted the new student experience activities stating the next round of trips will be available to book w/c 14 October.

The Chairman noted that they had received good satisfaction results. Mr Harmony asked why they had not been part of the ISB survey this year and was advised that it runs alternate years.

- (vii) Early Years Education Centre (Paper J): The Chairman summarised the report on behalf of Professor Dallman. Mr Greyling summarised the Student Subvention Fund and the revised framework for 2013-14 as this is managed by the Student Financial Support team.

- (viii) Disability Advisory Service (Paper K): Mrs Bown summarised the report stating they were worried they would run out of money for assessments as more students now arrive from schools without SpLD screening. It would appear the Imperial College subjects suit students identified with ASD from the increase of cases made known to DAS. Mrs Bown highlighted the Departmental Disability Officer Network meetings used to deliver training and discussion on service provision. She would welcome suggestions for other possible sessions. She also tabled examples of literature about DSA services that were included in the welcome packs, although, due to budget constraints, they were in black and white rather than the colour versions shown. Mr Greyling offered to help with production of the flyers for next year.

Mrs Bown advised that they currently do not have an International SpLD Mentor and the existing Mentor in post is already fully booked despite providing an additional day.

- (ix) English Language Support Unit (Paper M): Dr King summarised the report, raising concerns at ongoing issues finding accommodation for summer visiting lecturers.

The Chairman advised he would invite Paul Noke to attend a meeting with interested parties to discuss further.

Action: DW/JK/BH/KS

Dr King sent thanks to David Mooney from DAS for the training sessions provided to ELSU staff.

- (x) Wardens (Paper N): Dr Curcin summarised the report highlighting the serious incident in Beit at the start of session where students accessed the roof via an unsecured fire door which took three months to rectify. He further raised concerns over the lack of pastoral support for students in GradPad and the level of support required for students in Parsons House. Dr Emerson commented that as postgraduates had been through the system already they were aware of the usefulness of disclosure.

Following a discussion on the reported increase in the use of prescription drugs it was agreed that there should be a campaign warning against such use.

Dr Curcin raised concerns that Wardens had not been made aware of the changes to the College's Minors Policy over the summer.

- (xi) Chaplaincy (Paper O): Rev Willson tabled and summarised the report highlighting the new Mindfulness Meditation sessions which fit in well with the student life cycle. Rev Willson is happy to take referrals from Student Counselling.

6. Student Mental Health Policy and Procedure

The Chairman advised that in conjunction with DAS and other support areas he is drawing together all the relevant information to draft the policy.

7. Minor's policy for under 16 (Paper L)

The Chairman advised that the Minor's policy for under 16s had been amended to include Appendix 2 – Declaration in respect of students who will be under the age of 16 on entry.

8. Guidelines for students on use of social media

Dr White advised that the new College Tutor, Mr Colin Kerr, will be drafting guidelines for students on the use of social media and will be hoping for student input via the Student Union.

Dr Curcin asked what had motivated this action and it was confirmed that there had been some cases nationally where students had abused other students and staff via social media.

8. AOB:

- (i) The Secretary apologised to those who did not received the meeting papers via the College File Exchange facility. She advised that the system had been updated since last year and it may be necessary for members to contact the ICT Service Desk to update their computer settings to receive the files.
- (ii) Dr Bolton reminded the Committee that at a previous meeting it had been suggested that members meet informally between the officially set dates in an

effort to reduce meeting durations and maintain momentum. The Chairman suggested an extra SWC meeting in December or January and asked the Secretary to pole members for their views.

Action: DW

9. Date of next scheduled meeting

Date: Tuesday 11 February 2014

Time: 14:00-16:00

Room: SALC 10