

Student Welfare Committee

Tuesday 11 February 2014

14:00-16:00

SALC 5

Sherfield Building, South Kensington Campus.

Minutes

Present: Prof D Wright (Chairman), Dr Simon Archer, Dr Michael Bluck, Dr Sharon Bolton, Mrs Mary Bown, Mr Nigel Cooke, Dr Michael Emerson, Dr Sarah Freedman, Mr Gerry Greyling, Mr Brett Harmony, Mr Colin Kerr, Miss Marissa Lewis, Ms Claire O'Brien, Miss Kelly Swaby, Dr Lynda White, Rev Andrew Willson.

In attendance Mr Roddy Slorach, Ms Lynda Chandler (Secretary).

Apologies: Professor Maggie Dallman, Dr Vasa Curcin, Mr Charles Gallagher, Professor Debra Humphris, Dr Julie King, Miss Sarah Parkes, Ms Rosie Summerhayes, Mrs Leigh Turvey.

Not in attendance: Dr Michael Jones, Mr Andrew Keenan

Agenda Item

1. Apologies for absence

Ms Chandler (Secretary) read apologies from those listed.

2 Welcome new members

The Chairman welcomed Mr Colin Kerr as a new College Tutor.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

SF commented that point 5(iii) should have read that interviews were being held for a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist post and not a Psychotherapist post.

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 10 October, 2013.

4. Matters arising:

(i) Minute 4 (ii): Postgraduate Welfare Room

A brief update was provided to the Committee by DW advising that the bungalow in the Secret Garden was currently leased to a Postgraduate student on a 51 week contract and, whilst he would continue to pursue this accommodation option for postgraduate students with mobility difficulties, other possibilities needed to be looked at as well.

Action: DW

(i) Minute 4(viii) (carried forward from Minute 7(vi) October 2013): Credit Control communications to students:

DW updated the Committee advising that although DH had exchanged several communications with the Credit Control team, clarification was required on whether a satisfactory solution had been achieved.

Action: DW

(ii) Minute 5(ii): Access to Learning Fund:

GG confirmed the fund had been promoted in Felix over Christmas and the number of applications had increased. He also advised that Government had announced funding cuts which seemed to focus on widening participation activities, particularly the Access to Learning Fund. Specific details had yet to be published.

Annual Bursary Survey: GG confirmed a survey was running from 27 January to 28 February with a 25% participation rate thus far. Reminders are being sent out every Thursday. The ICU will report on the result to the next Scholarships Panel.

Private Accommodation Promotions: ML confirmed this has been resolved.

(iii) Minute 5(iii): Vaccination Letters:

DW confirmed the letters had gone out and a good response had been received.

Late Clinics: SF advised that the stats for late clinic usage between April and December 2013 (term-time only) had a DNA rate of approx. 10%. Following a discussion about when would be the best time to start the Thursday clinics in the new session, it was agreed it should be after the start of the Autumn term.

Health Centre Registration: It was agreed that SF would provide a list of registered students to Wardens for follow-up.

Action: SF

Health Centre Telephone System: SF confirmed BT is installing a new telephone system on 31 March and they will be able to keep two of the existing numbers. DW suggested it should be possible to redirect the other numbers and that webpages should be updated.

Mitigating Circumstances and Special Exam Requirements: MB advised that a Disabilities Forum Meeting would be taking place on 19 March. She will be meeting with members of the Records team to talk through requirements. A general discussion followed regarding the fairness of the current systems and the Committee agreed that the current Mitigating Circumstances Policy needed updating.

Action: MB/DW

(iv) Minute 5(v): Halls Alumni Network/College Hardship Fund:

MB confirmed that some work had been done on this but that Wardens were finding it difficult to access Alumni data. DW advised he would contact the Alumni Office and report back. Following a discussion on finding funding streams for the College Hardship Fund, SA suggested that the reported £13k printing credit left behind by students when they leave could be channelled to the fund.

Action: DW

Fundraising Charity Events: GG advised this action is outstanding.

Action: GG/VC/ML

At this point DW referenced paper "Development of the College Hardship Fund", highlighting the fund's dwindling income. Following a discussion of the paper's recommendations it was agreed to add Alumni halls networks and charity events to the list of options to increase funding to the College Hardship Fund. The Committee agreed to support the paper's submission to the Vice-Provost Advisory Group to be held on 20 February.

Action: DW

- (vi) **Minute 5(ix): Visiting Lecturer Accommodation:** BH advised he had met with KS and CG and discussions were on-going. DW suggested Rees Hall may be an option. Following a discussion regarding teaching rooms for the Summer course, DW suggested discussing the use of either the ground floor of Sir Alexander Fleming Building or Skempton with CG.

Action: BH

5. Mental Health First Aid Training (Paper B):

CO presented Paper B on behalf of Leyla Okhai. Following a discussion on the benefits and the duration of the training DW advised that the Counselling Service also provides a half day session on mental health as part of the induction training for new lecturers. Having already completed the course, NC commented that it was excellent and he would recommend it. It was accepted that the success of these courses would bring an increase in disclosure rates.

6. Draft Guidance for Students on the use of Social Media (Paper C):

CK gave a background on the need for the guidance and the commented that the draft paper is the result of discussions with Communications and the Student Union. Following a discussion of the draft paper and recent high profile cases, suggestions were made to emphasise references to fitness to practice for medical students, not bringing the College into disrepute and more detailed guidance for administrators of social groups. It was also suggested to include details in line with the Equality Act and highlight that the College monitors social networks. It was generally felt that the paper needed to be firmer in its guidance. DW stated it was a good start and CK invited any further suggestions from the group. DW suggested the paper is circulated to College Tutors to discuss how to take it forward. It was agreed an updated paper should be presented at the next Student Welfare Committee meeting.

Action: CK

7. Draft Hall Warden Policy and Procedure (Paper D):

DW advised that due to the on-going Residences Review the paper was on hold, but that it had been seen by MADSAC and Wardens; with their comments incorporated. A brief update on the progress of the review so far was given by the three members of the Residences Review Committee in attendance. Following a general discussion regarding the paper's content, including accommodation for students with disabilities; ML requested that guidance was added for Hall Seniors.

Following a discussion about reminding students to update their personal details with their GP as well as in Student e-Service, GG suggested SF discuss the issue with him following the meeting.

Action: SF/GG

9. Draft Student Mental Health Policy and Procedure (Paper E):

DW advised that useful comments had been received by MADSAC and that any comments from Committee members would be gratefully received. Following a discussion on the paper's content members agreed that the demands on students are increasing with the pressure to succeed. All members agreed that the way forward is to provide students with skills in building resilience. LW commented that there is a need to look at what happens evenings and weekends when an urgent case presents itself and there is no-one to refer to.

Action: DW

8. AOB:

- (i) GG advised members that Student Financial Support will be running a Student Money Week event, in collaboration with the Student Union, Thursday 13 February in the Junior Common Room.
- (ii) DW suggested it was time to review and separate the student aspects of the single Harassment Bullying and Victimisation Policy.
- (iii) MB and DW reminded the Committee that a separate budget was agreed for SpLD assessments for 2013-14 to reduce the drain on the College Hardship Fund. Projections show that there will be a severe undershoot of funds for this year with a flat budget for 2014-15. DW advised the group that it may be necessary to introduce a small charge to students undergoing assessments. Following a survey of 13 institutions only two did not charge, with the remaining eleven charging between £50-£300 per assessment. Discussions will be on-going.

Action: DW

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 17 June 2014; 10:00-12:00, in SALC 10