

Student Welfare Committee

Friday 21 June 2013

10.00 – 13.00

SALC 6

Sherfield Building, South Kensington Campus.

Minutes

Present: Professor Denis Wright (Chairman), Mr David Allman, Dr Simon Archer, Dr Sharon Bolton, Mrs Mary Bown, Mr Nigel Cooke, Dr Vasa Curcin, Dr Michael Emerson, Mr Charles Gallagher, Mr Brett Harmony, Miss Rebecca Lane, Miss Sarah Parkes, Dr Lynda White

In attendance Dr Mark Daniels, Professor Debra Humphris, Miss Marissa Lewis, Ms Claire O'Brien, Ms Lynda Chandler (Secretary)

Not in attendance: Dr Mike Bluck, Dr Michael Jones, Mr Andrew Keenan

Agenda Item

1. Apologies for absence

- (i) Ms Chandler (Secretary) read apologies from those listed above.

Welcome new members

- (ii) The Chairman welcomed Miss Marissa Lewis as the incoming ICU Deputy President (Welfare).
- (iii) The Chairman confirmed that this would be the last meeting Miss Rebecca Lane and Mr David Allman will be attending and thanked them for their valued contribution.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting - Wednesday 25 February 2013

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

- (i) Mr Andrew Keenan was erroneously shown as having sent his apologies for the February meeting but should have been shown as in attendance.
- (ii) Dr Daniels requested that minute 6 (ii) is changed to read that the Health Centre will stop seeing non-registered Postgraduate students from 1 March.
- (iii) Minute 4(v): Nigel Lawson should read Nigel Lewis.

3. Matters arising

- (i) Minute 4(i): Dr White advised that letters have been produced for use by Registry, Senior Tutors and Post Graduate Tutors outlining advice for students about to withdraw. A second letter is also available giving advice for all other forms of absence and Tier 4 students relating to access to facilities. The advice will also be on the Registry web pages and the URL will be sent to Departments.

Dr Daniels advised that the minimum time for students returning from interruption to be assessed at the Health Centre is 2 weeks prior to October start and 4 weeks for January starters.

- (ii) Minute 4(v): Miss Lane confirmed that Miss Lewis will liaise with Wardens during the summer period to launch a campaign (on alcohol awareness) in time for start of session. Dr Curcin stated that most problems occurred at the start of the year and mainly although not exclusively within two departments. A discussion took place about producing a leaflet to go out to students with other materials. Talks should take place with departments and societies in September requesting some events are more closely regulated.

Action: VC/ML

- (iii) Minute 4(vi): Mr Cooke provided verbal year-on-year ICU attendance analysis as follows:

2010-11: 522 students seen: 136 – Housing related
 214 – Appeals related
 77 – Money advice
 16 – Employment related
 13 – Academic related

2011-12: 489 students seen

2012-13: 518 students seen to date

The breakdown for 2011-12 and 2012-13 are comparable with 2010-11. Mr Cooke confirmed that the majority of housing queries were from second or third year students with landlord disputes.

- (iv) Minute 4(vii): Dr Daniels advised that students who are on a course which is 6 months or longer and have the necessary residency papers and are in full-time education at a border agency recognised University are entitled to full NHS care. [Note: those on pre-degree language courses may not be eligible]

Students who are here for less than 6 months are entitled to be registered with a GP and will receive primary care free of charge. In terms of secondary care (which may include some investigations), visiting nationals from the European Economic Area in possession of a Form E128, E112 or European Health Insurance (EHIC) or nationals from any state with which the UK has a reciprocal agreement are eligible to receive free NHS care. However they may not be entitled to free treatment for a pre-existing condition or where it is reasonable to delay treatment until the visitor returns home. Those from outside the EU or from areas where there is no reciprocal arrangement may be charged for their secondary care and are advised to obtain insurance prior to their arrival to cover this eventuality. Those from the EU without the appropriate forms are advised similarly.

Imperial College Health Centre will register students here for less than 6 months, where they live within the Health Centre's IC registration area (<http://www.imperialcollegehealthcentre.co.uk/regareas.php>) but will advise those who do not live within this area to register with local GPs as there is no NHS funding for them. The summary guidance reference is: <http://www.onel.nhs.uk/downloads/For-health-professionals/GP-centre/Practice-management/CQC/NHSL-GP-Patient-registrations-operating-procedures%20-0712.pdf>.

Dr Bolton advised that there were approximately 100 visiting students and they were always advised to take out insurance cover. However, many are invited by

staff and do not always go through the official route so miss out on important information. The Chairman confirmed he will check the advice provided on relevant forms.

Action: DW

Dr Bolton commented that postgraduate language students may lose out depending on where they live and asked who was responsible for telling them they need to find an alternative GP. The Chairman advised that he has a meeting arranged with Sarah Freedman to discuss this issue. Dr Daniels advised they should register with a GP nearer to where they live.

- (v) Minute 4(x): Mrs Bown advised that the room identified at Hammersmith was not suitable for use by DAS for advisory sessions as it would need to be booked out for every appointment, was in the basement, had a glass window in the door and was isolated so Facilities would need to be asked to install a panic alarm. The DAS is currently looking at the possibility of offering Skype as an alternative. Dr Curcin asked if any research had been published on using Skype for such purposes. Mrs Bown confirmed that she did not know but that a lot of dyslexia support was already done by this method.

Occupational Health also require space. The Chairman asked that Mrs Bown should pursue identifying dedicated space compatible with provider requirements.

Action: MB

- (vi) Minute 4(xii): The Chairman advised that a lump sum had been approved in the planning round to cover disability assessments which would solve one issue relating to the College Hardship Fund. Professor Humphris confirmed that the College's budget for welfare had increased overall. Mr Allman remarked that Imperial College's welfare support had come a long way in the last 15 years.
- (vii) Minute 4(xiii): Mrs Bown confirmed she had received 26 responses from the DSA student survey regarding moving facilities to the Library; 19 agreed the move would be good whilst 7 said no, quoting the Library being too busy, unsuitable lighting and noise. Professor Humphris advised she would follow up other possible options that might be available after Translations Studies moves.

Action: DH/DW/MB

- (viii) Minute 6(ii): Dr Curcin confirmed that Health Centre representatives would be available at each halls cluster to register students during moving in. Dr Daniels thanked Dr Curcin for his help in setting this up. The Chairman requested that someone also be available for students at outlying halls or alternatively that they are advised to register at South Kensington.

Dr Daniels confirmed that the Health Centre would still be open on the first Saturday and Sunday of term until 5pm and that they intend moving the late clinics to the second week of term.

Professor Humphris noted that it was currently difficult for students to find information regarding the Health Centre on the web and recommended looking at Leicester and/or Leeds University web pages as a good example.

Action: DW

Mr Gallagher advised that the Health Centre would also be represented at the Student Hub during welcome week.

- (ix) Minute 8.5.3 from the meeting held 17 October 2013: Dr Daniels updated members confirming that the NHS counselling budget at the Health Centre will not now be cut.

4. Update on International Student Support Activities

The International Student Support Team have been running monthly trips as part of their welfare programme helping to improve International student experience. Attendance had been good and there will be two further trips over the Summer, with more available in the Autumn. Dr Bolton asked that if members knew of any students (UG, PG, EU, non-EU, Erasmus) who might need a day away, they should be directed to the International web pages <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/international/current/welfareandsocial/uktravel/diytrips>.

PhD parents coffee mornings have also been set up with a mailing list of 60 so far. The first meeting was held in May using Chaplaincy accommodation provided by Rev Willson. This is a good group for new arrivals and it is hoped they will eventually take over and it run for themselves, setting up Facebook groups and photo sharing opportunities. Members commented this was a good outlet for providing information on parents services and builds on the idea of Imperial College being a community.

5. Developments in the Student Counselling Service

Mr Allman confirmed that Rosie Summerhayes will be taking over from him when he steps down. Rosie's current post will be advertised. From 2013/14 there will be 1.2fte more counsellor time available, which will bring Imperial College to the recommended level of counselling provision for the sector.

During a discussion about welfare provision in general the Chairman stressed the importance of the College Hardship Fund and the fact that sources of income have reduced and are still diminishing. He suggested that the CHF should be a more clearly highlighted as a recipient of 'giving to Imperial'.

6. ICU Student Advisory Service Update

- (i) Mr Cooke confirmed the Advice Centre Review was carried out in line with the Union Strategic Review and a paper will go to the Board of Trustees next week. He gave an update of the new management system emphasising how it will help targeting different groups of students, thanking Committee members for their help. Members agreed the system was a credit to the Service and it was leading the way Imperial College should be moving towards in information management.
- (ii) Miss Lane confirmed that the full response to the Student Experience Survey was available on line via <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/sesresponse>. Emails would be sent out with a follow-up action plan to address any issues. Feedback on achievements required before the next survey in November-December 2013.

7. AOB:

(i) Exam Stress Workshops

The Chairman reported that the Health Centre ran five exam stress workshops, three in the autumn term and 2 in the spring term. Despite extensive promotion attendance was variable and about 20% of those signed up did not attend. Six departments were not represented at all; Medicine and Physics had the most students attending. Dr White agreed that the DNA's were worrying and stated that it is crucial that sessions were timed according to the exam timetable. It was

agreed that more publicity is required. Funding is available for a total of eight workshops next year. The Chaplaincy also runs non-faith meditation events which are well attended.

Miss Lane stated that the information needs to be pulled together and sent to the Union to promote. She also suggested that the name of the sessions is reviewed to something more positive. A general discussion followed regarding displaying posters in prominent locations, such as the Library due to its 24hr access. It was suggested that workshops be renamed Exam Performance Workshops.

(ii) **Welfare Rooms/Places**

The Chairman raised the issue that there is no welfare accommodation specifically available for Postgraduates at South Kensington and this needs to be addressed. Mrs Bown commented that there also needs to be rest rooms available for students with medical conditions. Professor Humphris agreed to take this forward.

Action: DH

(iii) **Mental Health Strategy**

Miss Parkes advised that she had recently presented a report on Mental Health Strategy, mainly staff focussed, and that she would be attending a seminar in September that would be more student focussed.

(iv) **Wilson House – Wardening Provision**

Dr Curcin stated that traditionally Wardens had been consulted on the provision proposals for new halls accommodation but that had not been the case for Wilson House, and that the current provision was not suitable for either the Warden or Assistant Warden. He stated that as a result a Warden who is without a hall in 2013/14 had declined to become Warden at Wilson, and will no longer therefore be a Warden. He stressed that there needs to be a good team in such a large Hall and Wardens needed to be involved at the planning stage. The Chairman advised that the Assistant Warden's accommodation has now been moved to another part of the hall and is substantially larger but there was currently no intention to change the Warden's flat. Interviews for Wardens were being carried out at the beginning of July and the handover of Wilson House is scheduled to be on 25 September, three days before moving-in day. He confirmed that he and Professor Humphris will be looking at the policy regarding Wardening, a draft of which will be available by the next SWC meeting.

Action: DW

(v) Mr Allman expressed his appreciation of Professor Humphris' attendance on the Committee.

(vi) **Credit Control Communications**

Mr Cooke raised issues with invoices going out to students at exam time being stressful and affecting student life. He had proposed a formal agreement with Credit Control for a standard default statement to go out that if students were struggling financially to go to the Student Advice Centre but Credit Control had not been receptive to this idea. A discussion followed regarding previous issues with the tone of the Finance department's communications with students. Professor Humphris agreed to talk to Graham Woodward regarding the tone, timing and lack of links to student support.

Action: DH

(vii) **Committee Dates for 2013-14**

The Secretary confirmed the Student Welfare Committee dates for 2013-14 as follows:

- Thursday 10 October 2013 – 13:00-15:00 – SALC10
- Tuesday 11 February 2014 – 10:00-13:00 – Venue TBC
- Tuesday 17 June 2014 – 10:00-13:00 – SALC10

8. Date of next meeting

Date: Thursday 10 October 2013

Time: 13:00-14:00

Room: SALC10