

**Department of Immunology and Inflammation, Imperial College London  
Commonwealth Building, Hammersmith Hospital Campus, Du Cane Road, W12 0NN**

**Department of Immunology and Inflammation| EDI Committee**   
**1:00pm, Wednesday 17th April 2024**

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| **Present:** | **Apologies:** |
| Dr Josefin Ahnstroem (JA) | Ms Christina Emmanuel (CE) |
| Professor Marina Botto (MB) | Professor Liz Simpson (LS) |
| Ms Christina Emmanuel (CE) | Mr Edward Wallace **(Secretary)** |
| Dr Magdalena Gierula (MG) |  |
| Ms Rena John-Lewis (RJ-L) |  |
| Dr Christina Malaktou (CM) |  |
| Dr Wayne Mitchell (WM) |  |
| Ms Meesha Patel (MP) |  |
| Dr Tassos Petri (TP) |  |
| Professor Jessica Strid (JS) **(Chair)** |  |
| Ms Cathy Tupman (CT) |  |
| Mx Kass Vezyrgianni (KV) |  |
| Mr Henry Xu (HX) |  |
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|  | **ITEM** | **ACTION** |
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| **1** | **Welcome and apologies for absence (JS)** |  |
|  | *The Secretary was absent from the meeting – minutes were taken after the meeting.* |  |
| **2** | **Updates (various)** |  |
|  | The FoM People and Culture Committee had met the day prior – the main focus was the College’s staff survey, upon which a presentation had been delivered by Suzanne Christopher. The survey had been launched on the day of the FoM meeting and was being run by an external provider – which aided in confidentiality. It was noted that the departmental response rate to the previous such survey was under 50%, and that while there may have been a degree of ‘survey fatigue’, trying to maximise response rates was crucial to maximising the value of any such exercises. There was also discussions regarding the College mentoring system; it was noted that update on this scheme within the Department and other departments within FoM was not very high – RJ-L noted that meetings would take place in the near future to discuss how to improve this.  It was noted that Mental Health Awareness Week was scheduled to run from Monday 13 to Friday 17 May – correspondence on this was due to be circulated around the Department in due course. The Chair also confirmed that WM was running an Imperial cohesion event on 1 May, designed for all EDI practitioners within the College and intended to discuss the new EDI strategy. WM encouraged the Committee members to attend this event if possible. |  |
| **3** | **Away Day EDI Slot (various)** |  |
|  | The Chair confirmed that a 30-minute slot had been set aside for EDI at the upcoming Away Day on Friday 17 May. It was noted that this was a shorter slot than had been mooted in previous EDI meetings, and that holding workshops would be difficult within the allotted time; it was therefore suggested that bringing in people from EDI-focused networks within the College and having them do short presentations would be a good use of the slot. KV agreed that this would be a good alternative approach, which would help to increase awareness of relevant initiatives – it was noted that a lack of awareness rather than a lack of willingness was often more probable in explaining uptake rates of EDI schemes within the College. WM commented that it was important for the benefits of being involved in such groups be adequately communicated – informing people of such schemes would not always be sufficient.  It was noted that a number of the EDI schemes within the College did not have representatives from the Department, which would potentially require representatives from such schemes to join virtually. The Chair enquired whether this would be feasible: CT stated that she wasn’t entirely certain as the event had been set up to be a F2F event, however she or EW could enquire as to feasibility. To maximise the chances of this, anyone intending to speak remotely would have to inform CT or EW as soon as possible.  The possibility of outreach being a topic within the slot was discussed. JA stated that this could be a good topic for discussion because anyone within the College at any level (after a DBS check) could theoretically get involved in this, due to the youth and science level of the intended audience. A great deal of outreach had been done for the Invisible Warrior project, and JA stated that she was happy to talk about that on the day.  WM mentioned that a commonly encountered issue with outreach was that people were uncertain of how outreach time was recognised and allocated within the College. It was noted that this could potentially put people off from getting involved if they felt that it would detract too much from their scientific or teaching work. MB reminded the Committee that postdocs and fellows were entitled to 10 days of development time per year, into which outreach activity could be incorporated – awareness and support of this aspect would have to be increased as few people utilised all of these days. It was, however, noted that this was less clear-cut for other categories of individual within the Department. WM stated that it would be useful to build recognition and understanding of outreach and EDI aspects into other departmental channels, including ARCs.  After discussion, it was agreed that having 5 minute slots within the overall EDI slot for specific EDI Staff Networks, along with 5 minutes for outreach examples and opportunities, would be the provisional agenda for the EDI slot. |  |
| **4** | **PRESS Survey** |  |
|  | The Chair confirmed that the results for the most recent PRESS survey had been received. It was noted that the response rate was under 50%, with the responses themselves being somewhat mixed. There had been improvement in areas which had previously reported deficiencies, and decline in areas hitherto stronger. Satisfaction with supervision and wellbeing was noted to be lower than in the previous survey, while satisfaction in areas like support, professional development and overall experience was higher than in the previous survey.  WM enquired what was currently being done regarding social engagement with PhDs within the Department; HX confirmed that a social event was due to be held at the end of June, with more to follow depending on interest. MB noted that Golly Mobayen, the previous PhD rep, had organised events towards the end of her time in the role, but COVID-19 had caused enormous disruption and had made hosting such events near-impossible for some time; it was also noted that many students had to spend chunks of time in clinic outside the CWB. It was also noted that the students themselves ultimately had to express a desire to organise such events for them to be successful in the long-term.  KV mentioned that the staggered student intakes meant that it was harder to build cohesion, and it would perhaps be beneficial to have regular events scheduled around intake dates when possible. The Chair and MB agreed that this could be a viable approach.  There was discussion within the Committee which contended that people were perhaps more likely to respond when dissatisfied than satisfied, which could particularly skew scores when response rates were low. It was also noted that even a smaller Department like I&I had students who were based elsewhere, like the LMS; when surveys went to students not based within the regular Department footprint, this had the potential to reduce engagement and satisfaction through no-one’s ‘fault’.  In regard to supervision and wellbeing, it was noted that it was important to distinguish between mentoring, support and pastoral care; sending students to schemes supporting an incorrect aspect would not adequately meet their needs. If pastoral care was being sought, CT noted that the Department would have to work with the other close FoM departments to maximise the support that could be provided in this area. HX said he could ascertain whether there was a want for pastoral care within the PhD collective.  KV enquired whether it would be possible to speak to other departments who had scored more strongly than the Department for pointers on how to improve in weaker areas; the Chair and CT said that this would be possible. |  |
| **5** | **AOB** |  |
|  | KV informed the Committee that the Trans STEM Symposium would be taking place on Wednesday 24 April at the Uren Hub in the White City Campus, from 1030 to 1700. They asked any interested parties to get in touch via Teams or e-mail – it was noted that there would be more afternoon slots as some people would have to leave for lab sessions.  MB enquired as to the status of the Department Recognition Awards – CT confirmed that nominations had closed and that she would get in touch with people about convening a panel in due course. It was noted that nominations had been submitted to every category. |  |