



Imperial College Union Board of Trustees

20/02/2019

AGENDA ITEM NO.	17
TITLE	WBRN – Y2
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	An evaluation of the Wellbeing Representation Network in its second year of running. The evaluation looks at the elections, training, the support available to representatives, the College response, the student response and the next steps of the network.
PURPOSE	To update the Board about the successes and challenges of the Wellbeing Representation Network and take any comments about the next steps.
DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED	No action required.

WBRN Year 2

The Wellbeing Representation Network is in its second year of running and is becoming more embedded into Union and College structures. Some of the highlights of work that reps have been involved in include: ICSM Blooms (a campaign about forming healthy habits), personal tutor review, fortnightly student-staff tea events and many more.

Elections

Department Wellbeing Reps were elected in the Leadership Elections for the first time where most of the positions were filled first time round. This enabled us to begin communication with them in March. We hosted a relatively unsuccessful mingle event for outgoing and incoming Academic and Wellbeing Department Reps, although there is potential for something like this to be successful provided the timing and activity is right.

These are the comparative positions filled for the elections in 2017-18 and 2018-19:

2017-18				2018-19			
% filled	% Faculty	% Dept.	% Year	% filled	% Faculty	% Dept.	% Year
88.17	100.00	94.74	85.71	89.80	100.00	100.00	87.84
NB: Departmental Reps include Vice-Chair Campaigns (FoM) and Vice-Chair Representatives (FoM). Faculty Reps include Wellbeing Officer (CGCU).							
NB: 22.72% of elected Reps were returning Reps.							
NB: The 2018-19 stats are a result of three election cycles.							

Training

The training for WBRs is mandatory - this is communicated at various points during the election process, so all candidates know when they will need to attend a session before they nominate themselves.

Over the summer 2018 the compulsory training was updated to include more role specific information and skills-based information. In addition to these, more sessions were created to cater for the returning reps, who still needed to attend a mandatory session, and for Silwood Welfare Representatives. The Constituent Union Welfare Officer Training sessions were held separately as part of the Officer training in September.

The training evaluation process this year changed to being hosted online via the Qualtrics survey tool. The 10 sessions which ran between Oct – Nov received an overall usefulness average score of 8.6 out of 10.

The feedback suggests students would like more specific information about contacts, what previous reps have done and exactly how to do particular bits of the role e.g. comms, surveys, setting targets, collecting feedback. This will be looked into before the next training set. Training is quite time-consuming, especially when reps don't turn up, but is essential, so exploring other options could be a good idea.

Support for Representatives

Rep teams were given catch-ups with the Wellbeing & Campaigns Coordinator in term one which allows us to monitor issues, feedback and assess how embedded the structure is in the network. The feedback showed most felt prepared for the role from the training, most have regular contact with key staff members and they've been looking at a wide variety of topics. They found it difficult to get feedback from students and they wanted help from ICU with writing surveys. A term 2 catch-up has been scheduled for all rep teams, but there has not been a great response. This is time-consuming but is useful for us to understand how the structure is working as well as safeguard in case students are dealing with complex issues. We are looking into alternative options for this year due to lack of staff resources and if alternatives are more sustainable.

Constituent Union Welfare Officers are the volunteers who should speak to Department WBRs to find out what issues there are and raise these at a faculty level, as well as troubleshooting any institutional knowledge queries the reps might have. This is effective in some areas but there has been less engagement from other areas. It largely depends on how engaged the volunteers are and is difficult to deal with if these positions are unfilled. A better solution to support these senior volunteers could be worth looking into.

Within departments, for the most part, Senior Tutors are the avenue of support for concerns about individual cases or raising feedback with the department. The administration teams can also be useful to reps, through helping to organise events, helping with communication and directing to relevant staff.

College Response

The general response from College staff is getting more positive and people are becoming more aware of wellbeing as an issue. Key staff that have a lot of student interactions can talk about wellbeing more easily, suggesting the culture is slowly changing, however there is still a long way to go.

Student staff Committees/ Student Staff Liaison Groups (SSCs/SSLGs) have proven to work better this year than last year, considering the addition of the Wellbeing Representation Network. The format for SSCs/SSLGs is variable across UG programmes and therefore there are discrepancies in how students are represented across different departments. SSC guidelines need to be investigated and updated for College departments to adhere to and to be included in training for Reps.

Some wellbeing reps are being asked to feed into other committees and initiatives such as Equality, Diversity and Culture committees and community building events. The next set of rep team catch-ups should be able to help us map the differences between departments and help make it more cohesive.

There has been an addition to the SACA categories with the new categories focusing on Communities, wellbeing and diversity. This has helped us to better recognise and reward staff who engage in areas related to the wellbeing representation network. Many students took the opportunity to recognise staff in these areas.

Student Response

The students involved in the network really saw the value of it and enjoy doing their roles. They reported that a lot of students still don't understand the purpose of the wellbeing rep network and are not always responsive in giving feedback. We should be looking at ways to make this clearer and stop students becoming confused. The rep review should also positively impact this.

Next Steps

Anecdotally the network seems particularly effective at reducing stigma and changing the culture. This is a slow process but this makes having the network worthwhile. We need to find a way to measure this to ensure it is successful.

There has been quite a bit of interest from various postgrad communities about extending the network to include PGs. This should at least wait until the academic rep review has finished so that the network is made productively. The Business School is looking to implement their own wellbeing structure independent of the Union in time for next year. It is likely the GradSchool will be looking at this as an option within the next 2 years.

The upkeep of the network is time-consuming e.g. training and regular catch ups with all reps. This currently works but it may not be sustainable or the best use of time. It is potentially the limiting factor of extending the network. We should look into if this is the best use of time or if there is a more effective way of doing a similar thing.

With the Student Support Strategy almost approved, it may be useful to link the Wellbeing Representation Network and the Strategy together, so that Board and our members can understand why we have it. The Strategy is on the business plan as a strategic objective but the WBRN is not, we should connect the dots better.