



**Imperial College Union
Board of Trustee**

Wednesday 1 May 2019

AGENDA ITEM NO.	Item 11
TITLE	Changes to H&S Committee
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The current review of the H&S policy provides an opportunity to consider how the chair of this important committee is appointed.</p> <p>Given the growing importance of having a positive culture an external lay trustee should be appointed to lead the assurance work of the H&S Committee.</p> <p>Preliminary discussions have been held with the Chair of Finance and Risk who is willing to take on this responsibility.</p>
PURPOSE	Review the way the chair of the H&S Committee is appointed.
DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED	Decision

Changes to Health and Safety Committee

This paper looks at the way the chair of Health and Safety Committee is appointed each year and recommends that a new approach be adopted from the 1 August 2019.

The H&S policy is currently being reviewed by both the Finance and Risk and Health & Safety Committees. An initial first draft was discussed at both of their last committee meetings. The aim is that a final version will be brought to the June 2019 Finance and Risk Committee for approval.

The Current Approach

The role of Chair of the Health and Safety is assigned to whoever is appointed as the Deputy President (Finance and Services) (DPFS). This method does not take into consideration the experience and competence of such an individual or the importance of the responsibility of the role, lacks continuity and has no thought for the way H&S risks are managed across the whole organisation.

Experience and Competence

The automatic allocation makes no assessment of the skill, experience or competence of the DPFS in terms of their ability to lead and steer the assurance work H&S committee. The executive SMG leads in Commercial Service and Student Experience provide the competence in defining “safe systems of work” within their respective areas. The Department Safety Officer, currently the Head of Finance and Resources, is provided with opportunities to continue to build his skills and knowledge and is part way through a NEBOSH General Certificate course.

What skills, experience and competence is expected of the DPFS to steer the H&S assurance work? No assessment is undertaken and there is no recognition of whether the post holder is interested in the role. It is must better to appoint someone with some experience and interest in this key area.

The Importance of the Role

The Union has over the last two years placed more importance on embedding a positive safety culture, however, it has not reviewed how the leading assurance role is working in assessing and reviewing how effectively the safety management systems are performing. While, it is acknowledged that one person does not own this responsibility, the role of appropriate leadership remains key.

Continuity

Each year the person occupying the DPFS role changes which brings a break in continuity and adversely impacts the working of the committee. It takes a number of months before a new person understands the diverse way the Union works. Having an approach where the chair is in place for a longer period can only improve the effectiveness of the area.

Gravity of responsibility

All the governance committees are led by External Lay Trustees and H&S would also benefit from the external experience the lay trustees bring. Having an external trustee focus more closely on H&S can only elevate its importance in the minds of managers, staff and students.

Recommendation

An external trustee takes up the role as chair of Health and Safety from 1 August 2019.