

RCPsych Annual General Meeting 1 July 2020

Report of the Dean



INTRODUCTION

It is four years since I was elected and took up office of Dean at the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Over this time I have been working to deliver the promises I made to enable the College to support all psychiatrists to fulfil their professional potential. Little did any of us foresee a national emergency and the implications of what this might mean for the profession stepping up to meet the extraordinary demands and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have achieved much during the last 12 months since my last report to the Annual General Meeting. However, I am exceptionally proud of what the profession has delivered during the last four months since UK went into lockdown. I have seen College values of courage, innovation, respect, collaboration, learning and excellence come into their own during this period. I want to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of College staff and echo Wendy's earlier thanks.

ASSOCIATE DEANS

In delivering my key objectives I have been ably supported in all this work by my Associate Deans

Dr Nandini Chakraborty - Associate Dean for Equivalence
Dr Helen Bruce - Promoting recruitment into psychiatry
Dr Regi Alexander – Conferences and Advanced Learning
Dr Subodh Dave – Trainee Support
Dr John Russell - Curriculum

I want to specifically thank Dr Subodh Dave, who demits office today. Subodh has made a very significant contribution to the college and beyond by highlighting the challenges faced in training by IMGs. I am delighted to welcome his successor Dr Israel Abedukan.

This year I have created two new associate Dean posts. I am pleased to have appointed Dr Charlotte Wilson-Jones as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Psychiatry. Charlotte has extensive experience as a senior undergraduate educator and is well-placed to lead this work nationally.

The second post as Associate Dean for Academic Training will be appointed to over the summer.

UNDERGRADUATE PSYCHIATRY

September 2019 saw the publication of our Guidance for Medical Schools which has been widely cited up as an exemplar of good practice. It holds up the importance of psychiatry for all doctors

practising modern medicine and highlights the importance of exposure early in careers to positive experiences of the specialty.

RECRUITMENT

Wendy has already mentioned our Choose Psychiatry campaign and its positive trajectory over the last 3 years. We are expecting an announcement regarding the final figures imminently. In anticipation of that announcement I want to say thank you to you for working tirelessly on promoting the specialty and encouraging a new generation to #ChoosePsychiatry. We have demonstrated that when we work together with a common goal, we can influence change. I know you will want to join me in celebrating your collective hard work and that finally we are likely to be in a strong position to advocate for expansion in numbers of training places.

WORKFORCE

Today sees the launch of our workforce strategy and stresses the importance of retention within the workforce. We still have a lot of catching up to do to ensure that higher specialist training is in a healthy position to supply the much-needed consultant workforce. Work we have done with academic partners at University College London this year has demonstrated that very few trainees choose to run straight through a 6-year training process. Trainees have told us that they really value psychiatric supervision within their training but push factors are far too often the bleak landscape of mental health services. It is a vital factor that in improving recruitment and retention in training, we continue to influence improvements in clinical services and ensure that consultants have doable and attractive jobs. Trainees need to be confident that the end goal is a positive one that they can envisage sustaining throughout their working lives.

I want to pay tribute to Dr Adrian James, our Registrar. In my role as chair of the Workforce Oversight Group I have seen first-hand Adrian's commitment to workforce issues especially in areas of wellbeing and retention. I look forward to continuing the work and wish him every success for his term of office as president.

CURRICULUM

Work has continued on developing new curricula. I am grateful to John Russell, Associate Dean for leading on this work. The core curriculum is now with the GMC awaiting sign off. Our vision was to develop a modern, vibrant curriculum. Once given the go-ahead by the GMC, we will enter the next phase of implementation. The higher curricula build on this foundation of the core curriculum and are due to be submitted to the GMC in the autumn for approval.

EXAMS

The timescales for digitising the MRCPsych exam have been brought forward out of necessity due to the pandemic. I want to thank our Chief Examiner, Ian Hall, who is leading these developments at pace along with College staff. Ensuring that the MRCPsych continues to uphold important standards for patient care and that trainees' career progression is not held up because of the pandemic have been important guiding principles.

We have been developing digitised written papers for the autumn along with a digitised clinical examination. The exam regulations have temporarily been amended to allow CASC to be taken ahead of passes in paper A and B in order not to delay progression into ST4.

We have worked closely with the GMC and other educational stakeholders as well as the Psychiatric Trainees Committee under the excellent leadership of Ross Runciman.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In addition to the above, we have built on our Fellow schemes by launching a successful leadership and management scheme, developed our Psych Stars scheme to support medical students, expanded the Medical Training Initiative Scheme, secured funding for and developed Foundation Fellowships, supported PsychSocs in every medical school in the UK, continued the work of the Gatsby Wellcome Neuroscience project and delivered high quality educational events via CALC.

I am very grateful to the support and leadership of Professor Wendy Burn in her role as President and her inspiring positivity, especially during these challenging times.

This autumn will see calls for interest to stand as the next Dean to take over from me at next year's AGM. Please encourage each other to consider standing for the role. It has been an immense privilege to serve the college in this capacity.

Dr Kate Lovett, Dean

June 2020