Imperial College London

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
Confirmed Minutes from the meeting held on
Tuesday 20 February 2018

Present
Professor Simone Buitendijk – Vice Provost (Education) – Chair
Mr David Ashton – Academic Registrar
Mr Nick Burstow – ICU Deputy President (Education)
Ms Emma Caseley – Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office
Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning
Professor Sue Gibson – Director of the Graduate School
Professor Martyn Kingsbury – Director of Educational Development
Professor Omar Matar – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Emma McCoy – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Dr Edgar Meyer – Business School representative
Professor Alan Spivey – Assistant Provost (Learning & Teaching)
Ms Judith Webster – Head of Academic Services
Ms Lucy Heming – Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) - Secretary

In attendance
Ms Kirstie Ward – Assistant Registrar (Academic Standards)

Apologies
Professor Des Johnston – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine
Mr Martin Lupton – QAEC representative

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies, as listed above, were noted.

2. Minutes – Paper LTC.2017.34

2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 23 January 2018.

2.2 Outstanding Committee actions were noted as follows:

2.2.1 Minute 6.3 refers: a communication had gone out to Departments to reiterate the funding available to resource Curriculum Review.

2.2.2 Minute 11.1 refers: the extraordinary meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) had been scheduled for Friday 23 March 2018.

2.2.3 Minute 13.2 refers: Over 1800 nominations for the Student Academic Choice Awards had been received; this was significantly above last year's total of 831 and the Union's target of 1000 nominations. The nominations related to over 900 individual members of staff.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 The University and College Union had designated a number of days for strike action and action short of a strike in February and March. Communications had gone out to Departments and students advising them on the ways in which the College would be seeking to mitigate disruption during this period. A small number of students had contacted the College asking about compensation for missed teaching and it was anticipated that some students might not wish to cross the picket lines. The Imperial College Union was on alert to pick up any concerns being raised by students.

4. Vision for Learning and Teaching Space

4.1 The Committee received a presentation on the vision for investment in and development of College learning and teaching spaces. This was an important topic for the upcoming planning round as implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy needed suitable spaces to deliver new pedagogic approaches. Furthermore, decisions on increasing student recruitment targets to ensure financial sustainability required consideration of how additional students could be accommodated within existing College space.

4.2 Groups of stakeholders were being formed to strategically consider the use and provision of space at Imperial. Research had shown that the College under-used available space, with a usage rate of 21% compared to 43% at other Russell Group institutions. Making better use of existing space, including through increased sharing of space and ensuring that space was fit for purpose were key aims of the work underway.

4.3 Research into sector practice would inform new developments and help demystify some of the perceived barriers to introducing interactive pedagogic approaches within redesigned and existing spaces. There were good examples of innovative design at other institutions and organisations, which enabled different set-ups and usage through flexible sites and furniture. In addition there were many effective spaces already in place across the College and existing imperfect spaces could still be used to deliver innovative teaching and learning.

4.4 The intention was to develop a set of Learning Space Design principles which would inform the development of new and existing space, providing a range of possibilities while remaining financially sound. It was reiterated that good design did not have to mean high costs.

4.5 Key next steps included: addressing quality issues in existing spaces; building an experimental teaching facility to allow staff to test innovative pedagogies; promoting sharing of spaces. To achieve these steps, leadership intervention and cultural change would be needed along with adequate resourcing. Feedback from staff and students would need to inform developments and staff and student expectations would need to be managed as some changes would take time to implement.

4.6 It would be important to consider the mix of formal teaching and learning spaces alongside communal and social spaces, which would allow students to engage in learning and collaborative working in a range of different environments. Considering the impact of the pace and scale of change on the student experience and how best to use space to engender a sense of community among students were also important.

4.7 It was suggested that to promote engagement with the broader learning space design agenda, some small-scale projects could be undertaken quickly, as this would provide immediate results and could be used as a blueprint for larger scale changes further down the line. Prioritising attention on areas

with low National Student Survey (NSS) scores may be a useful way of working out where to start the smaller-scale project.

4.8 It was suggested that the Curriculum Review process could incorporate departmental space audits as a way of focussing attention and resource on refurbishing space.

4.9 A meeting would be taking place on 21 February to discuss the learning and teaching space plans in more detail and the proposals would be subject to consideration through the planning round. Support from Senior Management and Vice-Deans would be needed to ensure the project was prioritised.

4.10 An update on the practical implementation of the vision for learning and teaching space would be considered at the next Committee meeting.

Action: Secretary

5.   Apprenticeships – Paper LTC.2017.35

5.1 The Director of Strategic Planning provided an update on apprenticeships. The Government had transformed the apprenticeship scheme in recent years. Employers with a certain number of employees now paid an apprenticeship levy; the levy was ring-fenced for employers' own use in the first year and then rolled into a national pot of funds. The pedagogy of apprenticeships had been changed as well with apprenticeship standards introduced at various levels of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

5.2 One of the main issues around apprenticeships was achieving a successful balance between academic learning and work-based learning in the workplace. The College was not prepared to follow the traditional model of day-release as this would not provide apprentices with sufficient time engaged in learning at the College. However, new models of engagement were being developed in the sector. For example, a new apprenticeship had been developed with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) where students would spend the first two years in university as normal but would work in PwC in the vacations and then spend six months at university and six months in the workplace in years three and four.

5.3 It was envisaged that were the College to get involved in apprenticeships, it would focus on level 7 awards. The College was keen to avoid the additional regulatory burden which could be involved in offering apprenticeships at lower levels, for example, auditing by Ofsted. Furthermore level 7 apprenticeships would best suit the existing delivery methods use and market positioning at the College. Initial interest within Chemical Engineering had cooled due to concerns about market volatility but work was underway in Business to scope out possible partnerships. The Committee noted the potential for using online delivery as a way of managing student numbers and resources effectively.

5.4 The College would need to retain the ability to ensure high academic standards and that candidates met minimum entry requirements. This would need careful discussion with employers who would choose which candidates to put forward for consideration, as the arrangement would be unsuccessful if the College had to frequently turning down the employer's proposed students.

5.5 The College needed to consider how the growth in apprenticeships would affect the graduate employment market. If a number of current recruiting companies changed their approach and sought to bring in students at an earlier stage and develop them via apprenticeships or to upskill existing employees, demand for Imperial graduates could be affected. The College was actively

engaging with employers to understand their needs and would be open-minded about engaging in apprenticeships provided the College was able to safeguard its academic standards.

5.6   It was proposed that a small working group was formed to consider a College wide approach to apprenticeships.

Action: Head of Strategic Planning

6.   Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

6.1   The Director of Strategic Planning provided an update on the pilot of subject-level TEF.

6.2   The College had been provided with metrics for the College as a whole, which showed the College as silver overall, and for individual departments. Those Departments with metrics not in line with those for the College (that is, gold or bronze) had been asked to provide a written submission to explain the metrics, as had two other departments. Engineering also had been trialling a metric on teaching intensity, based in part on timetabled information but triangulated with other data sources. Alongside this, students from Engineering had been surveyed on their experience of teaching intensity. The written submissions were under review and would need to be submitted shortly. Information on the metrics of individual departments would be kept confidential.

6.3   As well as providing the written submissions and information on teaching intensity, the College would provide feedback on the experience of engaging in the pilot, including the time and cost involved. One major point of interest from the pilot was that the metrics were not set up in a way to cater for cross-disciplinary working; this caused particular problems for areas such as Business, which would be fed back.

6.4   Action would need to be taken by departments which had metrics which fell below the College average. The reason for the lower metrics was primarily in relation to results in the NSS and non-continuation rates. The new Learning and Teaching Strategy was designed to help address these areas by helping students feel part of the community and supported to succeed but this would take time. Understanding better why some students did not continue with their studies would be helpful; it was anticipated this was multi-faceted and could include difficulties in making the transition from A Level, making the wrong course choice and strain on students' mental well-being.

6.5   The Committee thanked the Director of Strategic Planning and his team for the way in which engagement with the pilot had been approached and supported.

7.   Excellence Fund for Learning and Teaching Innovation – Paper LTC.2017.36

7.1   A paper was tabled outlining the outcomes of the recent funding call for Learning and Teaching Innovation projects. This year's call for funding was designed to support projects which stimulate the development of more inclusive learning and teaching, with a focus on the development of inclusive curriculum content. 11 submissions were received and considered by the panel. The Committee noted the decisions of the Panel.

7.2   Funding was awarded to the following successful applicants: Mike Tennant (Centre for Environmental Policy) '*Developing Robust & Inclusive Pedagogies for Socially Relevant Problems*' and Sara Rankin, Kate Ippolito, David Mooney (NHLI, EDU, DAS) '*Developing evidence-based inclusive methodologies to make teaching at Imperial more accessible for students with specific learning differences*'.

7.3 The Panel had requested revised proposals from the following teams, whose projects were considered to have significant potential to address the objectives set out in the call: Thrishantha Nanayakkara, Petar Kormushev, Nicolas Rojas (Dyson School of Design Engineering) '*Culture, gender, and robotics education*' and Wayne Mitchell, Sophie Rutschmann, Katie Stripe, and Jeffrey Vernon (Faculty of Medicine) '*IMPACTS: an Inclusive Module for Professional And Critical Thinking Skills'.*

8. Curriculum Review

8.1 Curriculum Review process, timeline and documentation – Paper LTC.2017.37

8.1.1 The Committee received a proposal on the documentation and timelines for handling programme changes arising from Curriculum Review. Seven meetings of Programmes Committee and QAEC had been scheduled for 2018/19 to cope with the workload; the Committee was reminded that QAEC had delegated authority from Senate to approve programme changes. The final Programme Committees meeting at which changes under Curriculum Review could be presented was 26 March 2019 in order to go through for final approval at QAEC on 10 April 2019.

8.1.2 Departments would be scheduled to present their curriculum redesign proposals to particular meetings during the cycle. The Chair of Programmes Committee and the Head of Strategic Projects (Education) would discuss how best to manage the scheduling. Departments which were in a position to submit early on in the cycle would be encouraged to do so. To facilitate this, the reference groups would be set up soon.

Action: Chair of Programmes Committee, Head of Strategic Projects (Education)

8.1.3 The Committee agreed that the output of Curriculum Review would need to be a rationale document, a full programme specification for all programmes and a module specification for all modules at all levels. This would ensure the College complied with its legal requirements under the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and that applicants would have sufficient information to make informed decisions about the new programmes on offer. The Committee supported the submitted documents for use during Curriculum Review: the Curriculum Redesign Proposal Form, the Programme Specification and the Module Specification.

8.1.4 Exemplars of the forms would be produced and distributed at the next Curriculum Review workshop on 21 March 2018.

Action: Head of Academic Services, Senior Assistant Registrar

8.2 Guidance for student involvement in Curriculum Review – Paper LTC.2017.38

8.2.1 The Committee considered a guidance document on engaging students in the Curriculum Review process, which had been produced by the Education and Representation Board of Imperial College Union. Feedback had been requested from Departments on how students had been involved in the process to date; good examples had been gathered already and a summary would be provided to the next Committee meeting.

Action: Deputy President (Education), Secretary

8.2.2 The guidance document would be circulated to the Curriculum Review leads.

ACTION: Assistant Provost (Learning and Teaching)

8.2.3 It was agreed that the guidance on how to include students in the Curriculum review process would be incorporated into the Curriculum Redesign Proposal Form.

9.   Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan – Paper LTC.2017.39

9.1   The Committee considered an update on the Learning and Teaching Strategy implementation plan.

10.   Education Evaluation

10.1   The Director of Strategic Planning provided an update on current activities. The main points highlighted included working on data cleansing and access to data sources; developing a dashboard to show student attainment gaps on programmes; working with external data providers to increase access to data, for example, working with UCAS to access to personal statements.

11.   Educational Research

11.1   The Director of Educational Development provided an update on upcoming areas of work. A research away day was planned for March which would be seeking to form consensus on areas of educational research to take forward. The Educational Development Unit had been adding to the resources on educational evaluation and these were available via the teaching toolkit. The team was planning to start an audit of educational research already underway within College so as to ascertain how best to bring this research together and establish curated resources which would help collaborations on educational research and inform future research plans. An online course on interactive pedagogy was underway and the team was planning on running it on a termly basis.

11.2   It was noted that had been an increase in requests for the Unit to assist staff with applications and projects but decisions were having to be made about where to focus the scope of the team so as to make best use of the available resource.

12.   QAEC

12.1   QAEC had not met since the last meeting of the Committee so no update was required.

12.2   The Committee received a verbal update from the Academic Registrar on the academic regulations. The regulations and an academic calendar were out for consultation with the Vice-Provost's Advisory Group; they would be going to the next QAEC meeting along with the new casework procedures.

13.   Senate

13.1   The minutes from Senate were available at:
         http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/senate/

14.   Any Other Business
         No other business was raised.

15.   Dates of next meetings 2017-18
         Thursday 22nd March 2018, 09:30-11:30, 909B, EEE Building
         Wednesday 16th May 2018, 10:00-12:00, Ballroom, 58, Prince's Gate