Imperial College London

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
Confirmed Minutes from the meeting held on
Thursday 13 September 2018

Present
Professor Simone Buitendijk – Vice Provost (Education) – Chair
Mr David Ashton – Academic Registrar
Ms Emma Caseley – Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office
Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning
Mr Martin Lupton – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine
Mr Alejandro Luy – ICU Deputy President (Education)
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
Ms Judith Webster – Head of Academic Services
Ms Lucy Heming – Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)
- Secretary

In attendance
Mr Robert Cashman – Strategic Planning (for item 6.1)
Mr Matt Robinson – Strategic Planning (for item 6.1)
Ms Hailey Smith – Project Manager (Learning and Teaching Strategy), Education Office

Apologies
Professor Sue Gibson – Director of the Graduate School
Professor Martyn Kingsbury – Director of Educational Development
Professor Alan Spivey – Assistant Provost (Learning & Teaching)

1.   **Welcome and Apologies**

        The Chair welcomed attendees to the first meeting of 2018/19 and apologies, as
        listed above, were noted.

2.   **Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership for 2018/19**   LTC.2018.01

2.1   The Committee agreed to recommend to Senate the changes to the Learning and
        Teaching Committee Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership, which
        take into account the following:
        • Clarification of the role of LTC in relation to the Academic Regulations,
        Academic Standards Framework and Teaching Excellence Framework
        • Clarification of the Committee's role in relation to student surveys, given the
        corresponding role of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
        (QAEC)
        • Inclusion of a new *I-Explore Module Innovation Group* (name to be confirmed)
        • Removal of the requirement for a separate representative of QAEC to be on
        the Committee, considering the Chair of QAEC was a member already

| 2.2 | The Committee welcomed Mr Lupton as the new Vice-Dean (Education) for the Faculty of Medicine and thanked his predecessor Professor Johnston for his contribution to the Committee. | |

3.   Schedule of Delegation   LTC.2018.02

| 3.1 | The Committee agreed to recommend to Senate the revised Schedule of Delegation, subject to consideration by QAEC. | |

4.   Minutes   LTC.2018.03

| 4.1 | The Committee confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 27 June 2018. |

| 4.2 | Minute 4.1.8 refers: an update on the implementation of the vision for learning and teaching space would be provided at the next Committee meeting. |

| 4.3 | Minute 4.2.2 refers: the finalised paperwork for Curriculum Review was online. |

| 4.4 | Minute 4.3.5 refers: the Learning and Teaching Risk Log had been discussed with the Head of Risk and the Committee was assured that the risks from this log were rolled into the central risk system and therefore taken into account in the College Risk Log. The Committee noted there was a lack of clarity over whether these risks were prioritised within the College's strategic risks; the contribution of members of the Committee to the Horizon scanning group would be key in ensuring these risks were highlighted as necessary. A further update on how the risks were raised centrally would be provided once the central risk log was next discussed at the Provost and President Boards. |

ACTION: Chair

| 4.5 | Minute 7.5 refers: the recommendation to introduce a President's Award for Assistant Supervisors had been made to the President but a decision had not yet been made. An update would be provided to the next Committee meeting. |

ACTION: Chair

5.   Matters Arising

| 5.1 | There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda. |

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.   National Student Survey (NSS) results and response 2018

| 6.1 | **Themes arising from the 2018 NSS and Imperial College Union response to the 2018 NSS** | LTC.2018.04   /
LTC.2018.05 |

| 6.1.1 | The response rate for the 2018 NSS was 75% with 1,603 total respondents. This compares to 74% in 2017 and a sector wide response rate of 70%. Overall Satisfaction in the College decreased by 2 percentage points to 82%. The College's percentage satisfaction fell across all question categories: Teaching (-2 percentage points to 82%); Assessment and Feedback (-1 percentage point to |

64%); Academic Support (-2 percentage points to 75%); Organisation and Management (-3 percentage points to 75%); Learning Resources (-1 percentage point to 87%); Student Voice (-3 percentage points to 73%). The two categories introduced in 2017, Learning Opportunities and Learning Community, saw falls in percentage satisfaction of -2 percentage points to 80%, and -3 percentage points to 76% respectively.

6.1.2 For 2018 the College ranks 105th in the Sector for Overall Satisfaction (82%), out of the 153 Higher Education Institutions (excluding Further Education Colleges and Alternative/Private Providers) with overall results. This is a decrease of 25 places from 80th in 2017. The College remains in the third quartile for Overall Satisfaction in 2018. Of the Russell Group institutions with 2018 results, the College ranked 16th but had the highest Overall Satisfaction of all London based Russell Group institutions.

6.1.3 The College remains in the top quartile in the Student Voice category, ranking 35th, and is in the second quartile in the Organisation and Management and Learning Resources categories, ranking 66th and 56th respectively. The College remains in the third quartile in the Learning Community and Teaching categories. The College remains in the bottom quartile for Assessment and Feedback and Academic Support. The College fell 27 places in the Learning Opportunities category to 132nd, and now ranks in the bottom quartile for this category.

6.1.4 Overall satisfaction increased in six Departments in 2018, the largest increases being in Mathematics (+12 percentage points to 90%) and Mechanical Engineering (+12 percentage points to 98%). Mechanical Engineering and Earth Science & Engineering had the highest level of overall satisfaction (98% and 96% respectively). Overall satisfaction decreased in 11 Departments in 2018, the largest decreases being in Civil and Environmental Engineering (-10 percentage points to 84%) and Physics (-9 percentage points to 57%).

6.1.5 The College ranks in the top quartile for Overall Satisfaction in the NSS Subjects General Engineering (reflecting Bioengineering at the College), Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering (reflecting Chemical Engineering), Computer Science (reflecting Computing), Geology (reflecting Earth Science and Engineering), and Mechanical, Production, Manufacturing Engineering (reflecting Mechanical Engineering). Mechanical Engineering ranks in the top quartile across all Question Categories while Earth Science & Engineering ranks in the top quartile for all but one Question Category

6.1.6 Given the use of split metrics in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), analysis had been undertaken to look at differences in satisfaction among different groups of students. There were departmental differences by gender and ethnicity. Overall EU students were more satisfied than Home or Overseas students, and Disabled students were less satisfied than non-Disabled students. There was no difference by POLAR.

6.1.7 The most positive student comments were about Personal Development, Learning Community and Learning Resources. The most negative comments were

about Learning Opportunities, Teaching, Organisation and Management and Academic Support.

6.1.8   The same themes had emerged in the analysis undertaken by Imperial College Union and formed the basis of the recommended actions within the report. Overall, the main theme was one of inconsistency across the College; for example, in relation to assessment feedback, personal tutoring and student well-being support. These recommended actions built on best practice already in place and were intended to be a starting point for action which could be followed up with the Academic and Welfare representatives over the next year.

6.1.9   The Committee welcomed the presentation and report and discussed the following:
- The 2018 results re-affirmed existing concerns; the feedback from students did not point to anything new
- There were opportunities to share practice between those departments performing well and those struggling with student satisfaction
- For some areas, external factors impacted on student satisfaction, such as in Medicine where students were based in the NHS in their final years; this limited the extent to which positive changes could be made but focussed attention on areas under College control
- The issue of inconsistency in experience across the different College sites needed consideration
- The use of technology in improving the student experience, such as with giving assessment feedback, could be considered more
- Students compared their experiences with peers in other institutions which could impact on their satisfaction; communications between newer students and those further along in their studies also impacted on student perceptions of their experiences
- Resilience in staffing of key student-facing roles was important; where staff in these roles were absent, efforts needed to be made to fully cover that absence
- Students needed to be aware of the Imperial approach to learning and teaching before joining to ensure they understood the expectations on them and the nature of the experience they were likely to receive; where approaches were changing in response to the Learning and Teaching Strategy, this needed to be made clear as some students might find the new approach difficult and contrary to their perception of what teaching and learning at Imperial would be like
- The tone of communications to students was important; the Faculty of Natural Sciences was doing training on this for staff

6.1.10   The College response and those within individual departments needed to be proactive but measured. This was not about solely pursuing short-term fixes but addressing the student experience on a larger-scale and through sustainable actions, influenced by the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, Curriculum Review and the Student Support Review. However, where action could be taken sooner, such as pushing up the personal tutoring reforms, this would be taken forward.

6.1.11   It was suggested the College engage with colleagues elsewhere in the sector to learn from others, particularly institutions which had addressed a similar decline in NSS results.

6.1.12   The Committee approved the thrust of the recommended actions in the ICU report and agreed that a small targeted working group be set up to map the recommended actions against current initiatives and to better distinguish between local and College actions to avoid duplication and focus attention. The group would include the Chair, the Deputy President (Education) from Imperial College Union, the President of the Graduate Student Union and the Director of Student Services.

ACTION: Chair

7.   Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results and response 2018   LTC.2018.06

7.1   Key themes emerging from the 2018 PTES results were as follows:
- Response rates were lower than in 2016; across the College there was an 11% drop in participation and the College's 26% response rate was below both the sector (29%) and the Russell Group (33%)
- The College results were below the sector average and the Russell Group average in the following categories: Assessment and Feedback (58%; -16% Sector; -14% Russell Group); Teaching and Learning (79%; -3%); Engagement (76%; -3%); Overview (77%; -3%); Organisation and Management (71%; -2%)
- The overall College average was below the 2016 and 2014 satisfaction levels in the following categories: Teaching and Learning (79%; -3%); Organisation and Management (71%; -4%); Resources and Services (85%; -2%); Overall Satisfaction (77%; -5%). There were no categories in which the College average had increased on the 2016 results
- There were significant variations in student satisfaction between Departments but in general there had been a decrease in satisfaction; only three Departments did not receive any satisfaction scores lower their 2016 results. Three Departments received lower satisfaction scores in six of the seven thematic areas as well as for overall satisfaction

7.2   The Committee noted the similarity in results between the NSS and PTES and agreed that the recommended actions in the ICU PTES report should be taken up by the proposed working group as well.

ACTION: Chair

7.3   There was ongoing discussion in the sector over the prospect of introducing a mandatory postgraduate survey, similar to the NSS.

8.   Learning and Teaching Strategy

8.1   Curriculum Review

8.1.1   The paper provided an indication of when departments would be submitting   LTC.2018.07
their Curriculum Review proposals to the Programmes Committee (PC). The Committee noted the majority of business would be going to PC meetings in February and March; it was proposed the meetings would take place over a full day in order to manage both the Curriculum Review proposals and business as usual.

8.1.2 In order to avoid the large volume of business in February and March, the Education Office was exploring with colleagues in some departments whether bespoke support packages could be used to enable them to conclude their Curriculum Review work sooner. This would involve contributions from the Education Development Unit (EDU) and the Quality team to help teams get their changes down on paper. Departments which were already quite far along with their thinking would be targeted for this.

8.1.3 Overall engagement with the Curriculum Review Reference Panels had been positive. While there was a limit to what the Panels could do to assure the approval of paperwork once it was submitted for final consideration, their role was important in assisting development and giving feedback on likely questions or issues that could be raised when presented for formal approval, enabling teams to make changes to improve the likelihood of the proposals being accepted.

8.1.4 The management of the paperwork through Faculty Education Committees would be key. Where necessary, Chair's Action could be taken but in a number of cases, special meetings had been set up to enable FECs to engage with all of the Curriculum Review paperwork.

8.1.5 Once the proposals had been agreed by PC, there still was a large amount of work to do to get all the curriculum information on to the student record system.

8.2 Learning and Teaching Strategy Risk Log

8.2.1 The Committee noted the updated risk log. It was suggested the risk regarding the level of work required following curriculum review, such as putting all the information on the student record system as noted in the previous item, should be considered at a future meeting.   LTC.2018.08

ACTION: Secretary

9. Office for Students Registration

9.1 The College had registered with the Office for Students (OfS). While it did not receive any public conditions, as part of its registration the College would be subject to enhanced monitoring in relation to access and participation. This would involve liaison with the OfS over the next few months to ensure the College's plans were sufficiently ambitious.

9.2 Items under consideration were the scope and scale of the College's outreach programmes, the flexibility of the College's admissions policy and processes, and scalability of support mechanisms designed to lessen the attainment gap.

9.3 The Committee discussed the following in relation to these suggestions:
- Including a year zero, which was a common feature in some Medical schools
- Undertaking more outreach work outside of London given the OfS focus on POLAR 1 & 2
- A re-focus of outreach work to multiple interventions and conversion rates
- Ensuring Admissions Tutors and Directors of Undergraduate Study (DUGS) were aware of widening participation applications

- The opportunity for Imperial College Union to work closely with the College on the student experience for widening participation students

9.5 Awareness needed to be raised of the Student Protection Plan; colleagues needed to be aware of the potential compensation costs if programmes were not delivered as described in the prospectus and other sources. The risk was highest for postgraduate research provision given the consequences for students if their supervisor was to leave. In addition, the College needed to ensure transparency on any programme-related costs.

10.   Academic Regulations and Academic Calendar

10.1 The College noted the intended schedule for approval of the 2019/20 single set of regulations. The initial drafting was undertaken through three Task and Finish Groups and furthered by discussion and consultation during the 2017/18 academic year culminating in a joint meeting of QAEC and the Vice Provost Advisory Group for Education (VPAGE) at which a small number of outstanding issues were resolved. The regulations being presented to QAEC on 3 October and Senate on 10 October would reflect the decisions made at that meeting and would include all core material.   LTC.2018.09

10.2 It was recognised the Regulations and their associated academic policies will need to be kept under review. The Quality Assurance Team would undertake a 'mapping and gapping' of the current suite of academic policies associated with the core regulations to ensure that the academic regulations and guidance were aligned from 2019 onwards.

10.3 The Academic Calendar for 2018/19 was intended to run as a trial to identify barriers and find solutions to meeting core College deadlines. Given the internal requirements and external pressures on the College, this was considered an important piece of work although it was recognised it may not be popular during the initial phase of introduction.

ITEMS TO NOTE

11.   Student Shapers

11.1 Following pilot activities this summer, StudentShapers is on track to begin the explicit launch process to staff and students from week beginning 10th September. The StudentShapers scheme will support student partnership under themes of **Curriculum development and pedagogic enhancement and innovation**, and **Educational research and investigation**. Project opportunities for undergraduate (UG), postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) students will align with the Learning and Teaching Strategy to enhance our taught curricula. www.imperial.ac.uk/studentshapers

12.   Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan

12.1 The committee noted the updated Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan.   LTC.2018.10

13. Online Learning Innovation Group (OLIG)

13.1 The Committee noted the update from the last OLIG meeting.   LTC.2018.11

14. Senate

14.1 The Committee noted the minutes from Senate could be accessed at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/senate/

15. Any Other Business

15.1 It was agreed that the Committee should consider the impact of Brexit on teaching and learning at a future meeting. The College had a Brexit co-ordination group which was engaged in lobbying and considering actions to be taken in preparation for a possible no-deal exit. The issue around disruption to supply chains, for example, had been considered in relation to research and would need to be addressed for teaching and learning as well.

ACTION: Secretary

15.2 The College had been invited to take part in the second subject-level Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) pilot in 2018/19. It was anticipated that this would involve providing a submission for every subject. The Vice-Deans (Education) were requested to feed back to the Director of Strategic Planning on whether they would support taking part; the decision would need to be reached by 24 September.

ACTION: Vice-Deans (Education)

16. Dates for Meetings

16.1 Thursday 18 October 2018, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 22 November 2018, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 20 December 2018, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 24 January 2019, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 28 February 2019, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 28 March 2019, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 16 May 2019, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 20 June 2019, 15.00-17.00