Imperial College London

Technician Commitment Steering Group

Thursday 23rd of November 2017
16:00 – 17:00
Estates Meeting Room 1 (Sherfield Building, 5th Floor)

Unconfirmed Minutes
Meeting #2

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1 Welcome and apologies

Present

Nazia Hirjee	Faculty Operations Officer, Natural Sciences (Chair)
Paul Brown	Mechanical Workshop Instrumentation Manager, Physics
Lindsay Comalie	Joint Acting Head of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre, HR
Allison Hunter	Technical Operations Manager, Life Sciences
Gareth Hyde	NHLI Safety & Technical Services Coordinator, National Heart & Lung Institute
Ken Keating	Laboratory Manager, Bioengineering
Tim Killip	Head of Maintenance, Estates Division
Rozi Harsanyi	Management Trainee, Secretariat to the Steering Group

Apologies

Leigh Davenport	Head of Customer Service, ICT
Paul Jennings	Head of Service Operations, ICT Roger White Operations Manager, Department of Surgery & Cancer
Russell Stracey	RSM Workshop Supervisor, Materials
Roger White	Operations Manager, Department of Surgery & Cancer
Angela Williams	Training and Development Coordinator, Estates Division
Yvonne Aftyka	LDC Administrator, Secretariat to the Steering Group

2 Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting - NH
- LC: we should upload the Highlights from the Technicians Skills Survey report on the website, instead of the minutes from the last meeting (which include confidential data)
- Rerunning the Skills Survey: needs to be discussed at the Technical Managers' meeting (12 December)
- NH to circulate online resources from the Science Council
- Raising awareness of the work of this Committee: through the portal and events

3 Technicians' portal - RH
- Main sections:
    - Landing page
    - The Science Council's Technician Commitment (About the Commitment, Technicians Skills Survey, Technician Commitment Steering Group)
    - Technicians' Network (About the Network, How to get involved, Events, Newsletter)
    - Professional Development (Development for Technicians, Coaching, Mentoring, links to Technician and Maintenance Apprenticeship Schemes)
    - Professional Registration (Video case studies, How to apply, Useful links)
    - News and Events

- RH to circulate the detailed website plan – feedback and comments are welcome from all members of the Steering Group

- Plan to launch the site at the end of January – however, due to the volume of information we want to cover (and the need for new processes e.g. around technician mentoring), we will continue to update it after the launch event
- RH will send around a link to all Steering Group members at the beginning of January, once more content is in place
- AH will ask technicians in her team if they would like to be featured in a professional registration case study interview on 5 December, during their meeting
- We need case studies for the Apprenticeship Schemes pages too. TK to send RH names of maintenance apprentices to be approached (*RH received these following the meeting*)

4 Portal launch event - RH
- The planned launch event will be held on 31 January, at around lunch time - exact time is to be confirmed, but it is likely to be between 12:00 and 14:00
- The Provost, James Stirling agreed to make a speech
- There is an overlap with Diverse@Imperial Week (29 January - 2 February) – RH to talk to Stephen Curry (Assistant Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) about how we can make the most of this fact in terms of publicity and other aspects
- RH will invite all members of the Technician Network and the Steering Group
- NH: the plan is to have James's speech, lunch and time for networking
- Teaching technicians – busy until 1pm on Wednesdays, they should be welcome to come later, but ideally not missing James's talk→RH to publicise when James will speak in the invitations

5 Technical Managers' Meeting - NH
- LC: we will use the standing agenda put together by AH&KK, disseminate results from the Skills Survey, and gauge interest in a technician mentoring scheme
- Managers' Mailing list: needs to be updated (based on the latest list we will receive from HR)
- NH will talk about the Technician Commitment
- This event is for managers, but all technicians will get the same information at the Portal launch event
- RH: after the meeting, send the notes to members of the Steering Group; update the mailing list

6 Professional Registration
Meeting with the Science Council - NH
- Kelly Vere from the Science Council will come to the College to meet us on 8 December, we will have lunch afterwards. An opportunity to express our points about the ease of the professional registration process, ask if anything can be done to make it easier

Internally: RH on meeting with the Graduate School
- LC, NH, RH: met with Dr Janet de Wilde and Alastair Macintosh, directors of the MARS (Membership Accreditation and Recognition) Scheme at the Graduate School - currently only open to postgraduate students in the Department of Chemistry who want to achieve registered scientist or chartered scientist status
  - Alastair and Janet confirmed that going through the Science Council, as opposed to individual professional bodies, is the best route to implement a College-wide professional registration strategy
  - To minimise the written part of the registration process, the Science Council can accommodate face-to-face interviews. The Graduate School also uses face-to-face interviews and these usually take around half an hour (except for chartered scientist interviews which are about 1 hour long).
  - The Graduate School has a webinar on reflective writing to help students and they also run drop-in sessions to help applicants: options we could look into to help technicians in the written part of their application

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- o Students on the MARS programme have a mentor from the College. RH is working with Fiona Richmond from the LDC on a mentoring programme for technicians (covering both professional registration and general mentoring)
- AH: technicians are not quite sure what mentoring means and don't believe that it is accessible to them - LC: we can come to technician meetings and talk about mentoring to promote it; we also need to draw attention to coaching and talk about the differences between mentoring and coaching
- AH, KK: techs need to be reminded that professional development courses and coaching/mentoring are available to them, we need to explain that it is an opportunity (not a punishment, as it is often perceived)
- GH: Problem: full-day courses are often challenging to attend for technicians with irregular work schedules
- AH: teaching technicians feel restricted by their timetable
- NH: financials and projections around professional registration to be sent around to FOOs
- Science Council is joined up with the Engineering Council – provides an umbrella route to different places? We need to check with Kelly at the meeting
- LC: we need to be clear on the website that the Science Council is not the only body for professional registration

7. **Any Other Business - NH**
   - GH: funding considerations - Research Councils not refunding us in the same way for different groups of staff (less funding for technicians) – something we need to address? NH: but RCUK is on board with raising the profile of technicians
   - TK: AW's point: staff interested in learning about new equipment – AW to talk to PB about this
   - LC: providing centralised training for technicians is a challenge considering the various different requirements… What's the Steering Group's view on the usefulness of that?
     - o AH runs general induction sessions for technicians, but equipment is specific locally
     - o KK: skills like wielding are more general – training provision in these could be improved
     - o AH: keep it open, see what people are requesting
     - o LC: Skills Survey respondent numbers are so low that at the moment it would be hard to say with certainty that more centralised training will be useful
     - o GH: Cytology, Histology: run training sessions, these are also a good advert for their facilities
     - o NH: Research Facilities Directory – we could link directly to that
     - o LC: if we are looking for centralised training, we need to put in a request for budget and resources in early next year
     - o NH: more keen to submit a bid for resources to support professional registration
   - Management training for technicians
     - o LC: management skills in lab spaces - something we could build into the ILMDP (managing in labs, managing health and safety)?
     - o KK: problem: technicians are not confident in correcting others if they make a serious mistake
     - o AH: The IST Leading Your Technical team workshop provides a good networking opportunity, you get to meet other senior technicians across the country. LC: we decided to stick with our internal leadership programme as the workshop had a lot of the same content
     - o NH: Heads of Department (Physics and Life Sciences) made it compulsory for all the PIs – very successful training. FoNS will be rolling out to all PIs. LC: integrating this training into our leadership course? Follow up on that.

- PB: PRDPs start early next year - what can we do with those who are 'happy as they are', not interested in further training? NH: in FoNS, it is mandatory for everyone in the Faculty to enrol into 1 personal development programme.
- AH: job sharing, attending network events is also part of professional development. We need to encourage taking part in these softer activities
- AH: on the portal, we need to have a selection of people of different grades, from different faculties, talking about professional development

Actions

- *NH to circulate online resources from the Science Council*
- *AH to ask technicians in her team if they are interested in participating in professional registration case study interviews on the portal*
- *RH to circulate website plan with the minutes – all Steering Group members to review and send comments and suggestions*
- *RH to contact technical apprentices suggested by TK about being featured as case studies on the website*
- *RH to keep working on the website's content (and specifically on the technician mentoring scheme)*
- *RH to update Technician Network mailing list*
- *RH to send Technical Managers' meeting notes to the Steering Group*
- *NH/KK to get clarification from Kelly Vere about registration with the Engineering Council (can it be done through the Science Council)?*
- *RH to talk to Stephen Curry about the promotion of the portal launch event as a part of Diverse@Imperial Week*
- *RH to compile a one-pager about the financial side of and our plans with professional registration – NH to send it to FOOs*
- *LC to investigate the possibility of integrating Eversheds' Safety Leadership training into the ILMDP*
- *AW to talk to PB about training for staff*