

SENATE

Confirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 14 October 2020

Present: Professor Ian Walmsley (Chair); Professors Buluwela, Chilvers, Craster, Distaso, Green, Haynes, Kingsbury, Lindstedt, McCoy, Meeran, Openshaw, Spivey, Thompson, Xu; Drs Costa-Pereira, Craig, Field, Fobelets, Gounaris, Malhotra, Rutschmann; Ms Bannister, Ms Flegrova, Ms Makuch; Mr Lupton, Mr Sood, Mr Tebbutt, Mr Wang; Mr Ashton (Secretary); Ms Webster (Minute Secretary).

Apologies: Professors Dougherty, Veloso

2501 Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of the Senate

Received: A Note by the Academic Registrar setting out the current Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Senate and reporting the names of those appointed or elected for the current session. **(Paper/Senate/2020/01)**

Reported: The Terms of Reference, constitution and membership of the Senate for the current academic year. The Chair welcomed new members to Senate and staff in new roles at Senate. The Imperial College Union representatives and the Graduate Students Union were also welcomed to the meeting.

2502 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 24 June 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record subject to the following amendments.

Amend minute 2448 to reflect that the proportion of students taking up places was with regard to those students planning to take up their places in person rather than student registrations only being at 80%

Add Karen Makuch to list of attendees of the meeting.

2503 Matters Arising

Student Disciplinary Procedure (Minute 2444 refers)

The guidance on the Student Disciplinary Procedure was circulated to members by email on 18 September 2020. A letter had been sent to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator expressing the College's concern about aspects of their guidance which prevent the sharing of outcomes of student complaints with the complainant.

2504 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

2506 Provost's Business

Received: A report from the Provost (**Paper Senate/2020/302**)

Reported: (1) That Professor Emma McCoy had accepted appointment as Interim Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) with effect from 1 July. Working closely and collaboratively with key colleagues, in this role Professor McCoy will be responsible for leading the delivery of the College's strategic aims for the provision of a world class education for its students, the enrichment of its student experience and for delivering an 'Imperial education' which reflects the College's dynamic and enterprising culture. She will be responsible for enhancing the quality, impact, coordination and delivery of education at the College.

(2) That Professor Richard Thompson has accepted the appointment of Vice-Dean (Education) for the Faculty of Natural Sciences with effect from 1 August 2020 until 31 August 2021. Professor Thompson joined the College's Department of Physics as Lecturer in 1986. He is currently Professor of Experimental Physics. He has served as Consul and as Faculty Senior Tutor, as well as Director of Undergraduate Studies for Physics.

(3) That Professor Robert Kosowski has accepted appointment as Head of the Department of Finance for a three-year term, with effect from 1 May 2021. Professor Kosowski will succeed Professor Alex Michaelides, who has extended his term as Head of the Department until 30 April 2021. Professor Kosowski joined Imperial in 2006. Currently he holds the role of Professor of Finance, and he is also a Research Fellow at the Centre for Economic Policy Research.

(4) That following the election of College Consuls, the full list of consuls for the 2020-21 academic year is as follows:

Senior Consul: Professor Peter Openshaw
Faculty of Engineering and the Business School: Professor Martyn Boutelle
Faculty of Engineering and the Business School: Professor Richard Jardine
Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Education Office: Professor Stephen Warren
Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Education Office: Professor Martin McCall
Faculty of Medicine: Professor Liz Lightstone
Faculty of Medicine: Professor Dorian Haskard

(5) That as the College moved through the pandemic response, some new and more effective ways of working together had been identified. As a result, a new Directorate of Academic Services had been established with interim leadership. An internal search for a Director to oversee all the operations of the teams involved pre-registration to post-registration had been launched. Further information would be provided to Senate on the new directorate.

2507 Covid-19 Response

Received: A report from the Education and Strategy Operations Group (ESOG) (**Paper Senate 2020/03**)

Reported: (1) That the report provided an update on activities since the report to the previous meeting of Senate. In respect of the governance arrangements, it was noted that Education Strategy and Operations Groups had been rationalised and meetings had reduced in frequency. An Ed-Tech Guild had been established to oversee the resources related to multi-mode delivery and also had a sub group to consider applications for the strategic approval of online programmes. It was noted that the College had received some positive feedback from students on the start of term arrangements and thanks were extended to all staff.

(2) That the Office for Students had published guidance for all institutions on how to meet the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements. A checklist had been developed to support departments in the preparation of information for their applicants and continuing students on any planned changes to the published information about their programmes of study and on the arrangements that would be put in the place in the event of any additional national or local restrictions. Student consent for these changes was secured through the enrolment and registration process.

(3) That the move to Centre Assessed Grades for the summer A Level results had impacted on the Colleges student number targets. There had been a need to defer the entry of about 100 students to the College and that a support packages had been made available to those students. The Timetabling for the current academic year had been impacted by the additional students in terms of management of the numbers on campus.

(4) That work was underway to plan for how the College would need to adapt in the event that it moved between the four tiers established for higher education. Efforts were being focused on how the delivery of education would be managed as well as the management of the spread of the virus, keeping student spaces accessible and supporting students in halls of residence and those in self-isolation.

Considered in discussion: (1) That if the College campuses were moved into a higher tier, as, for example, Liverpool had been, the College would need to move to remote teaching except for essential medical teaching. Whilst great efforts were being made to keep the campuses open, there was some pressure on Universities...

(2) That the Universities Minister had suggested that the last two weeks of the Autumn Terms should be delivered remotely to allow students to travel home for the Christmas break but that no final decision had yet been made. There was some concern about students who may need to stay in the UK over the break and then the impact of the return of students to campus and a need for them to quarantine. These expectation was that any arrangements would apply to all provision and students and that this was being planned for.

2508 Fitness to Study Procedure and Authorised Interruption of Study

Received: A paper from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) with a proposed Fitness to Study Procedure and a revised Interruption of Studies Procedure **(Paper Senate/2020/04)**

Reported: (1) That the need for a Fitness to Study procedure to make more transparent the arrangements for the College to take action where there are concerns about a student's ability to study and engage in College life, including in Halls of Residence as a result of several complex student cases. This was also a recommendation to the College following on from a student complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

(2) That the Fitness to Study Procedure will allow the College to take informal steps initially to support a student who is experiencing difficulty in their studies and/or College life more broadly. The procedure has three stages which follows OIA best practice in structuring such procedures. The procedure has been endorsed by QAEC and the draft shows some amendments that have been made following the QAEC discussion and in further discussion with the Director of Student Services.

(3) That the Interruption of Studies Procedure has also been amended slightly. The intention is that this is a procedure that would be proactively used by students who want to take a break from their studies, for a variety of reasons and this may include health reasons. There was some additional work to be done on determining access to College facilities and resources for students who have chosen to interrupt their studies.

(4) That the approval of the Fitness to Study procedure would mean that Regulation 9 in the Regulations for Students could be amended, as shown on the paper, to direct

Departments towards this formal procedure where they have concerns. It was proposed that these are introduced with immediate effect as it not considered that there is any disadvantage to students of having these much clearer procedures in place. The Student's Union indicated their support for these new and revised procedures and regulations.

Approved: Senate approved the Fitness to Study Procedure, the Authorised Interruption of Study Procedure and the revised Regulations for Students.

2509 National Student Survey 2020

Received: A report from the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) (**Paper Senate/2020/05**)

Reported: (1) That the paper provided an update on progress against the key recommendations made in respect of the 2019 NSS Survey which were reviewed by the NSS/PTES Review Group in May 2020 in the light of Covid-19. Since then the Imperial college Union has published its response to the NSS 2020 Survey. This has not yet been reviewed by the NSS Working Group but the new recommendations have been included in the summary in the paper with notes on where action is underway and where action will be taken. There was still some work to be done on themes that reappeared annually in the survey but it was hoped that by more clearly identifying actions and ensuring that they have clear owners that more progress could be made and tracked this year. It was noted that the Imperial College Union had taken a different approach in their response to the 2020 survey with the aim of improving the overall student experience at the College.

(2) That the Office for Students had launched a root and branch review of the National Student Survey to consider how it assures high quality programmes and gathers reliable data from a student perspective. The outcomes of this review would considered by Senate when available.

2510 Supporting Trans and Non-Binary Gendered Students: Policy and Guidance

Received: A paper outlining the position of the College in relation to trans students (**Paper Senate/2020/06**)

Reported: (1) That this Policy and guidance had been developed to fill a gap and had been produced in consultation with student representatives, Imperial 600, College support staff in departments and central services. Useful feedback has also been provided from Stonewall. The guidance focussed primarily on staff and supporting their interactions with students. A student guide would be developed following approval of this policy and guidance.

Considered in discussion: (1) That while the policy and guidance was welcomed, concerns had been raised in one Faculty about section 6 of the document which stated that students would be entitled to use toilets and changing facilities which best suit their gender. This followed a student disciplinary case in the Faculty and had led to staff expressing concerns about this statement and feeling that it did not extend a duty of care to colleagues and other students. The suggestions was that the College should instead commit to a clear timescale the provision of proper gender neutral facilities.

(2) That caution was needed in making statements of support for one group of students which could be seen as not being fully supportive of trans students or any other vulnerable groups.

Agreed: That a statement of intent on moving towards provision of gender neutral toilets was required.

2511 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Received: A report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (**Paper Senate 2020/07**)

Reported: (1) That QAEC had considered the **Emergency Contact Consent Policy and Procedure**, which had been developed from work initiated by the SIMP Vision Group as one of three projects to be taken forward during 2019/20. The procedure had been developed to establish a mechanism for students to give permission for the College to contact those held as their emergency contacts in certain circumstances.

Considered in discussion: That some members had found the document confusing to read and felt that it needed to be revised to make the procedure clearer and reduce some of the repetition. There were also concerns about the ability to convene a case conference at short notice but it was noted that the procedure did try and make allowances for issues arising outside normal working hours, for example in halls of residence. It was also noted that this was about informing the emergency contact of the situation and not about waiting for them to take action. It was felt that the paragraph on consent needed to be clearer regarding how and when a student could withdraw their consent. The Faculty of Engineering queried whether their trusted contact scheme was allowed to continue to operate alongside this procedure and were advised that it could.

Approved: Senate approved the procedure to be effective from January 2021 subject to rewording.

Reported (2) That QAEC had considered proposed revisions to the **Academic Misconduct Procedure** which would simplify and streamline the summary and Panel procedures, and included allowing a greater range of penalty decisions for examination offences which had been proposed following the timed remote assessments carried out as a result of Covid along with other changes set out in the paper. QAEC considered that these proposals would also provide a more supportive approach to students for mild or moderate cases.

Approved: Senate approved the procedure to be effective immediately.

Reported (3) That QAEC had considered proposed amendment to the **Student Withdrawals and Appeals procedure** to address differences for students under the old and new regulations in terms of unsatisfactory progress for the 2020-21 academic year.

Approved: Senate approved the procedure for the 2020-21 academic year.

2452 Senate Committees

Received: A paper from the Head of Academic Services detailing Senate Sub-Committees for 2020-21 (**Paper Senate/2020/08**)

Approved: Senate approved the Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of Senate sub-committees for 2020-21

2453 Date of Next Meetings – 2020-2021

Wednesday 9 December 2020
Wednesday 17 March 2021
Wednesday 19 May 2021
Wednesday 16 June 2021