

SENATE

Confirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 19 May 2021

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

In attendance: Professor Warren (for Professor Openshaw)

Apologies: Professors Buluwela, Openshaw, Spivey, Veloso, Weber; Drs Field, Fobelets; Mr Lupton; Mr Tebbutt

2525 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as above.

2526 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 17 March 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2527 Matters Arising

There were no Matter's Arising not otherwise covered on the Agenda.

2528 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

2529 Provost's Business

Received: A report from the Provost (**Paper Senate/2020/22**)

Reported: (1) That since the report had been written, Professor Nick Jennings had accepted an offer to take up the post of Vice-Chancellor at Loughborough University and so a process would commence to replace his role of Vice-Provost (Research and Enterprise).

(2) That Professor Emma McCoy had accepted an extension to the role of Interim Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) until 31 August 2022.

(3) That three new Head of Department appointments had been made in the Faculty of Engineering.

2530 Covid-19 Response

Received: A report from the Education and Strategy Operations Group (ESOG) (**Paper Senate 2020/23**)

Reported: (1) That the paper sets out the action taken since the last meeting of Senate and the range of issues that have been dealt with, which included; students undertaking timed remote assessment across different time zones; supporting students in religious observance during the assessment period; recognising the impact of the pandemic on the research degree students; the revised immigration legislation and the impact of Brexit; Preparations for campus reopening; the College's approach to fair assessment in 2020-21, which had included some challenging conversations with the Imperial College Union; The preparation of OfS/CMA letters for 2021-22 to set out plans for programme delivery in the event of further partial or full lockdown. It was planned for these to be published by the end of June alongside a higher level statement from the College about the student experience.

(2) That the Director of the Central Timetabling Support Office, Helena Smith had been invited to update the Senate on Timetabling plans for the next academic year. It was noted that this needed to draw on safety guidance to work out how best to timetable alongside the Government roadmap and then benchmarking to the rest of other members of the Russell Group to ensure alignment across the sector. Most institutions were planning for some constraints to still be in place such as distancing or teaching large groups online, although the desire across the wider sector was to move back to as near 'normal' as far as possible.

(3) That the approach to be taken by the College would be to maximise the amount of face to face on site teaching as possible. An expert advisory group had been convened to consider research on aerosol transmission and ventilation amongst other things and that this, along with consultation about published research and projections had informed a timetabling guide which recommended cautious planning as it would be easier to loosen constraints rather than to tighten them. This position would be reviewed at the end of July.

(4) That there were a number of measures informing the approach to timetabling. Some level of social distancing 1 metre plus (which could be mask wearing) would give a fifty per cent capacity in type 1 rooms, those with the best levels of ventilation. Fifty minute teaching slots would be used to allow some ventilation between sessions and additional cleaning slots would be used. Type 2 rooms could operate with a thirty percent capacity and a 30 min break between sessions. Staggered start times would be introduced to reduce overcrowding in corridors.

(5) That it would not be feasible to produce 2 different timetables from a resource perspective. It would be challenging to timetable as normal and then adjust from a capacity and clash perspective. There were still many unknowns about the autumn term even with the vaccination process, including the risk of a third wave and additional variants to not take a cautious approach. It was noted that the Department for Education was working on specific guidance for education but that the Health and Safety Executive may require more caution on campus than in wider society. It was planned to a term by term approach and finalise the Spring Term timetable in November 2021.

Considered in discussion: (1) That the difference in the current Government approach to University Campuses and secondary schools was causing some staff and students to question why these controls were necessary and that if this continued, it would need to be clearly articulated to staff and students. The impact of distancing on the teaching spaces would push departments into delivering all lectures online and schedule workshops and labs into one day on Campus. There were also discussions underway about how some academics plan to teach as we emerge from the pandemic, potentially with face to face time being reserved for smaller group activities and large plenary lectures available online. The

(2) That there were some staff who had not internalised the fifty-minute teaching hour and a question about whether Celcat could aid this. The Director of CTSO agreed to look into this but reported that there were communications planned for the start of September.

(3) That the students didn't want to have the same remote learning experience next session so the College would need to provide some on-campus activities. There was a clear need to be careful with the messaging about programme delivery and the need to balance what the student experience could look like. It was noted that there was a particular issue for one year Masters students who lost the opportunity for the social aspects of their programme. The Union President report that they were in alignment with the College view and working out how best to communicate this to the student body.

2531 Admissions Update as at May 2021

Received: A paper from the Academic Registrar (**Paper Senate/2020/24**)

Reported: (1) That the numbers included in the report were provided in comparison to the same point last year for undergraduate, postgraduate taught, MRes and postgraduate research programmes. UCAS applicants to undergraduate programmes have until 10th June 2021 to make their decision. Headline figures showed an overall rise of about 11% but small drops in applications to some departments. What looked like a large drop in home numbers was accounted for by EU students now being classified as overseas students following Brexit. There were some drops in the number of offers being made. Teacher Assessed Grades would be in place this year and so it was anticipated that there would be a need to account for some grade inflation and that this was being managed at departmental level.

(2) That for PGT applications there was an increase of 6% overall. There was a small drop in applications for postgraduate Medicine and the Faculty was undertaking some targeted campaigns to address this. In terms of demographics, the figures show a decrease of applications from African countries and an increase from China, although the reason for this was as yet unclear. Applications across gender is consistent. It was noted that PGT programmes are seen as an attractive option given the current job climate.

Considered in discussion: (1) That thanks were expressed for the support in bringing students back for lab-based activities before 17 May. In terms of the admissions statistics, departments found the access to a dashboard on PowerBI very helpful. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have screenshots for Senate reports in future.

2532 Education Delivery Planning for 2021-22

Received: A presentation from the Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience)

Reported: (1) That the next academic year was currently being prepared for but consideration was also being given as to how the College should develop its post pandemic vision, building on some of the themes in the Academic Strategy – education, research and development - and that this was an opportunity to capitalise on what we have learnt given that the College had accelerated its education through the pandemic and had had the opportunity to be able to refurbish some space on Campus.

(2) That Principles for 2021-22 programme delivery had been established with an expectation that staff and students will be back on campus where possible (except for fully on-line programmes). It was recognised that not all students may be able to travel to Campus for the start of the academic year and that some exceptions will need to be made for late arrivals. The need for a balance between some online and the on campus experience as key and Departmental delivery plans were being developed based on evidence from the current year and review of the activities delivered in multi-mode. The College was working towards a more seamless student journey from applications to alumni.

(2) That there was a need to consider different types of learning, the idea of the “sage on the stage” transferring knowledge can very effectively be done remotely which would leave

space for more experiential, critical thinking to be done on campus to achieve a balance of synchronous and asynchronous delivery and support the student workload. The balance of different types of space needs would also be considered to ensure that teaching spaces were fit for purpose and to introduce more flexibility for face to face delivery. In addition, more informal social learning space and community building space would be needed.

(3) That it was considered timely to have a review of the College's assessment procedures and review, in particular, the role of high stakes end of year exams in the assessment regime. Consideration would be given to designing assessment that more clearly links to module learning outcomes and graduate attributes. Related policy and procedural guidance would also be considered and updated.

(4) That in respect of the longer term strategy for education delivery, there was a developing government led emphasis on life long learning and skills for jobs. The College should look at flexibility in programmes, for example to accommodate engineers who constantly need to upskill following completion of their degrees and engage in ongoing Continuing Professional Development. There was a need to link education to the research strategy and identify new partnership models, both internationally and within the UK with links to industry to deliver education and research. The College would need a broader regulatory framework to support 'stackable' qualifications.

Considered in discussion: (1) That there was a need to analyse how students have done this year before moving ahead and to engage with students on what they want as well. The student representation from the Union this year had been invaluable in providing the student voice in the response to the pandemic. It was also suggested that there was a need to get beyond just the representatives and engage with the broader student body. The Module Evaluation scores through SOLE should not be take as an indication that all had gone well and been liked by students, as the Student Experience Survey had shown some big drops in scores..

(2) That the Student Experience Group, established under the emergency governance procedures, would become permanent and feed into the new Education Board to support and ensure a joined-up approach across student services.

2533

OfS Statement of Expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education

Received: A paper from the Academic Registrar and the Director of Student Services
(Paper Senate/2020/25)

Reported: (1) That there was increasing concerns about these issues across the sector as set out by Lord Wharton of Yarm, the Chair of the Office for Students who had recently stated that unlawful harassment had to be tackled and that he was expecting increased media scrutiny through the next Freshers week. The OfS expects that all institutions have ensured that they had appropriate policies and procedures in place for the start of the next academic year. The new statement of expectations requires clear accountability on prevention and response to harassment (domestic violence and abuse; stalking) and sexual misconduct. The College was working closely with Imperial College on this area of work in order to set out clear behavioural expectations to students, staff and visitors.

(2) That the sector as a whole was currently grappling with these issues. There was concern about drug and alcohol abuse and some of the initiation ceremonies related to student societies. Senate is aware that the College has reviewed the Disciplinary Procedure recently, involving an External Chair of the Review Panel and that training had been provided for key role holders on how to investigate reports of sexual misconduct.

(3) That in support of and in parallel with the reviews of process and procedure, more support has been for students including the appointment of the Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLO's) who had been in place for two and a half year to support students who

report behaviours about sexual misconduct and have recently implemented harassment support for students (including sexual). The College has introduced Report and Support to make it easier for members of the College community to report incidents without going down a formal procedural route. It was felt that the College was in a better position to give advice on options and to signpost support available outside the College as well. There was a clear need to consider preventative measures and help all students to understand what are inappropriate behaviours.

(4) That a core group would be established to undertake a gap analysis against the statement of expectations, review the reports already made and consider the response made to previous discipline cases and think about what changes need to be implemented before the coming academic year and then during the next year to move the College forward in these issues. The core group would be widened following the gap analysis to identify how we mitigate the gaps and the implementation of further preventative measures and support for students.

Considered in discussion: (1) That student involvement would be crucial in this area too. Support from the Union for this has already been discussed. Activities such as consent training are needed and the Union can help to ensure that messages are given in a way that is meaningful. Current Union Officers are keen to handover knowledge before they leave their posts.

(2) That Senate has previously discussed the concern raised by the Consuls that the outcomes to these procedures currently need to remain confidential and that it can be difficult for a reporting party to understand how their complaint has been addressed by the College. There was a request that this be re-considered through this review.

Senate supported the proposal to establish the Core Group with Union involvement.

2534 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Received: A report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (**Paper Senate 2020/26**)

Reported: (1) That a Working Group is being established to agree a set of principles to inform the development of the 2022-23 academic calendar to consider events that directly impact the student lifecycle. The initial focus will be on the start and the end of the academic year to set out key deliverables in the student lifecycle and manage student expectations in understanding about how the organisation works in delivering their programmes.

(2) That QAEC considered the annual report and noted that the number of cases had increased significantly and which when considered against the raw data correlated with concerns raised in respect of Timed Remote Assessments. However, this number is expected to decrease over subsequent years as understanding and expertise in the design and deliver of digital assessment develops.

(3) That QAEC considered Undergraduate annual monitoring and looked at Faculty Reports and a summary of College level recommendations.

(4) That QAEC considered a summary report of Postgraduate External Examiner reports which, in line with the undergraduate reports, were positive about the College's response to the pandemic. Overall the externals agreed that the College was maintaining academic standards, that the assessment process was rigorous and fair and conducted in line with the College's policies and regulations.

Considered in discussion (1) That more could be done to make the annual monitoring process less burdensome and more meaningful. There was a question about where the real evaluation of the annual monitoring exercise takes place and how the feedback loop is closed to students and staff at the end of the process. It was noted that in the Faculty of

engineering, the Faculty Education Committee has two meetings per year which give detailed consideration to the reports but it was acknowledged that more could be done to raise the transparency of the process.

(2) That the Quality Assurance Team have planned to undertake a review of the annual monitoring process but that this had been delayed by the Covid response. The review would reflect on the data available to the monitoring process, the metrics against which the data is evaluated, better identification of areas of concern and of good practice, the potential for thematic reflection through the process and to clarify how consideration of the outcomes of the reports flows through the College Governance structure, including a feedback loop back to Departments.

2535 Prizes and Awards

Noted: A Note from the Academic Registrar listing prizes and medals awarded since January 2020.

2536 External Examiners

Noted: The names and affiliations of External Examiners for undergraduate and Master's degrees appointed since the last Senate meeting.

2537 Date of Next Meetings – 2020-2021

Wednesday 20 June 2021 at 3pm via Teams