

SENATE

Confirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 14 December 2022

Present: Professor Ian Walmsley (Chair); Professors, Craster, Evans, Green, Hanna, Haynes, Jardine, Lindstedt, Meeran, Spivey, Xu; Drs Costa-Pereira, Craig, Field, Fobelets, Malhotra, Rutschmann; Mr Lupton, Mr Tebbutt, Mr Zheng, Mr Ashton (Secretary), Ms Webster (Minute Secretary).

In attendance: Professor Jason Riley for Professor Brandon, Professor Tetley and Ms Hailey Smith for Minute 2645; Mr Malcolm Edwards for Minute 2707; Mr Andrew Stevenson for Minute 2707

Apologies: Professors Brandon, Buluwela, Haynes, Kingsbury, Weber; Ms Bannister; Ms Makuch

2700 Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of the Senate for 2022-23

Received: A Note from the Academic Registrar (**Paper Senate/2022/01**)

Senate noted and approved the Terms of Reference, constitution, and membership of the Senate for 2022-23. A warm welcome was extended to all new members of the Committee.

2701 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 13 July 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2702 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as above.

2703 Matters Arising

There were no matters not covered by the agenda.

2704 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

2705 Provost's Business

Received: A verbal report from the Provost.

Reported: (1) That members would recall that the Quality Assurance Agency announced that they would demit their responsibility as the Designated Quality Body for the Office for Students (OfS) with effect from March 2023. It had been reported that the OfS were considering taking on the role of the Designated Quality Body themselves and they were appointing a new Quality Team to undertake this activity to ensure robust and expert evaluation of the OfS's quality system which includes the TEF and the five Quality and Standards Conditions of Registration. It was noted that there had been some debate about

whether the OfS was independent enough to take on the quality role in line with the requirements of the Higher Education and Research Act.

(2) That communications have been sent to staff and students about the impact of the strike action. Beyond the initial strike action days, UCU are now in a period of action short of a strike and this is set to continue until Monday 17th April 2023.

(3) That a number of workshops have been held with the Imperial College Union to draw up a joint action plan to respond to the key point in this year's survey results. Four key themes had emerged; Assessment; Feedback; Supporting mental health and enhancing communication between students and departments. There is a meeting of the Student Survey Action Group in late January which will review the plan and identify leads for each area.

2706 Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) Business

Received: A Report from the Interim Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) (Paper Senate/2022/02)

Reported: (1) That further work was being undertaken in respect of the National Student Survey questions which relate to assessment and feedback. It was noted that the most positive response is in relation to the fairness of the assessment. Responses in terms of feedback timeliness and quality were the most negative. The College had received similar feedback from the PTES survey in respect of these areas on a similar set of questions. Imperial below the London benchmark on these surveys.

(2) Senate was reminded that it had been a priority of the Learning and Teaching Strategy to encourage consideration of a broader range of assessment methods and have less reliance on high stakes end of year assessment in the College's taught programmes. A consultation was held as part of the review of the strategy and assessment ranked highly in the responses from staff as an area that needed further work whereas feedback ranked more highly as a student concern. A review of assessment and feedback was proposed. There was a need to be robust in our assessment practices to ensure our high academic standards but the burden on staff and students needs to be addressed.

(3) That the Education Office would be working with the Student Administration team in Registry to undertake some mapping of learning outcomes to assessments and with a view to understanding the timing and load of assessment on programmes and to stimulate debate at Staff-Student consultative committees. It was expected that there would be a need to implement some changes to assessment as a result.

(4) That in terms of feedback to students, there was a discussion about whether the current two-week deadline continued to be appropriate. Senate members agreed that the key point was that students knew when to expect feedback by and that it was timely and supported their further learning on the module. There was an agreement that a deadline was helpful especially for students. There was also a suggestion that the feedback literacy of students needed to be improved.

2707 Office for Students: Approach to Access and Participation

Received: A Paper from the Director of Strategic Planning (**Paper Senate/2022/02**)

Reported: (1) That the recently appointed Director of Fair Access at the Office for Students (OfS) undertook an extensive listening exercise around the Access and Participation Plan and made new proposals which were then consulted on. One area of the consultation that the College pushed back on was a proposal to reduce the length of the plan from five years to four. The paper presented a summary of what was expected to be the OfS's approach to APPs in advance of the expected publication of the consultation responses in

Spring 2023. The College's submitted response to the consultation was included in the paper.

(2) That the OfS had been given a revised set of priorities in the regulation of APPs which included the plans would be less driven by targets and more focussed on valuing outreach work done with schools, local and national organisations to raise the pre-16 attainment of young people from underrepresented groups across England, even where students may not come and study STEM at University.

(2) That it was likely that student success would be where a more rigorous approach would be taken. The College had been successful in increasing Widening Participation student numbers through various mechanisms and, in part, due to A level results during the pandemic. However, those students have tended to not do as well at the College. It is about access and participation so the College needs to serve the students well when they get here.

Considered in discussion: (1) That a variety of support for students was needed to ensure they could fully participate at College once they were here. Medicine had looked carefully at students who had failed to progress and had underestimated the additional burdens on their time in terms of caring responsibilities or financial support issues. Engineering had offered a week of orientation before term for their students.

2708 Office for Students Condition of Registration B3: Student Outcomes

Received: A paper from the Director of Strategic Planning (**Paper Senate/2022/02A**)

Reported: (1) That this was an extract of a paper had already been presented to Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and to the Education and Student Experience Committee. The focus for Senate was Condition B3 given the implications for the College if we fell below the minimum thresholds which providers are expected to deliver for student outcomes in terms of continuation, completion and progression. In order to meet the condition a providers outcome data for each of the indicators and split indicators needs to be at or above the relevant numerical thresholds. The Office for Students have published a public B3 data dashboard which will be updated annually.

(2) That the College was delivering outcomes which meet all the thresholds in condition B3. It was noted that the OfS publish over 700 indicators and that there is some statistical uncertainty for small cohorts. The College fell below the standard level on a very small number of indicators, there are just 35 with any spread of statistical uncertainty and of those 35, the highest spread of uncertainty below the threshold is 31.9%. The OfS considers indicators with 80% or more of their spread below threshold as providing probable vidence that the underlying performance is below threshold.

(3) That in relation to the Teaching Excellence Framework, similar indicators are used but the College is compared to a peer group, so similar programmes with similar students. B3 is a single standard required baseline. Senate considered the data presented in the paper and noted that no further action was needed.

2709 Student Discipline Procedure Review

Received: A Report from the Student Discipline Review Group (**Paper Senate 2022/03**) presented by the Academic Registrar

Reported: (1) That a root and branch review of the procedure had been undertaken which is why the Review Group had taken longer to finalise their proposals following useful consultation and deliberation with a variety of stakeholder groups. The revised Procedure and guidance would be presented to the next meeting of Senate but the Group did want to bring the Code of Conduct before Senate as it had been previously

signalled that this would be expected within the academic year. In developing this code, the Group had drawn from what had been in the previous procedure and set out both positive and negative behaviours

(2) That some initial comments had already been received from Senate members concerning health and safety in laboratories being reflected more broadly. Under honesty and integrity, concern had been raised about the inclusion of vexatious behaviour and the need for good evidence to support such claims. In terms of sexual misconduct, there was some concern raised about clarity round consent and the need to make clearer that this was a clear indicator on whether misconduct had taken place.

(3) That the report included progress on updating the procedure. Some areas such as appeals had been identified as needing more discussion and the need to get the balance right between what was in the procedure and what was guidance. The Group would look back to the principles that had been agreed at the start of the review and ensure that these are satisfied in the light of the legal advice that had been provided. There was still further work to be done around support for students, in terms of what was needed and how to resource this, including the proposals around restorative justice.

Agreed: Senate agreed that a sensible timeline had been set out to have a full and proper procedure in place and endorsed the work done on Code of Conduct to date, noting the comments for further discussion.

2710 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Received: A report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (**Paper Senate 2022/04**) from the meeting of 23 November 2022.

Reported: (1) That Senate is asked to agree that the use of Turnitin for the submission of all PhD theses is no longer pursued and that the College should continue to reserve the right to use Turnitin in specific cases where there is suspected plagiarism.

Approved

(2) That Senate is asked to approve the proposed updates to the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study 2022-23 set out in Annex 1. The proposed updates are to provide clarity and elaborate on existing practice.

Approved

(3) That in addition, QAEC:

- Approved interim changes to the Module Evaluation Questionnaire for 2022-23 pending a review of the survey to be led by Professor Jonathan Mestel.
- Considered the Taught Postgraduate annual monitoring reports, identifying good practice highlighted by the annual monitoring exercise and a number of recommendations for enhancements in other areas.
- A report from the Regulations and Policy Review Committee
- Considered work from a review of the criteria of the post-nominal awards of the College and a recommendation that the regulations include a table to explain which post-nominals are available to which students.
- The outcomes from the 2022 Postgraduate Taught Student Experience Survey (PTES)
- A presentation on the TEF and the revisions to condition B3 on Student Outcomes.

2711 Senate Committees

Received and approved: The terms of reference, and constitution of the Senate's sub-committees for 2022-23 (**Paper Senate 2022/05**)

2712 Appointment of External Examiners

Received and noted: (**Paper Senate/2022/06**): the names and affiliations of External Examiners for undergraduate and Master's degrees appointed since the last Senate meeting.

2713 Progress on response to Universities UK Guidance on Trusted Contacts

Received: A Report from the Director of Student Services (**Paper Senate/2022/07**)

2714 Sector Updates

Received and noted: (**Paper Senate/2022/08**): A paper from the Academic Registrar setting out updates from the Office for Students.

2715 Date of Next Meetings

Wednesday 1 March 2023
Wednesday 10 May 2023
Wednesday 28 June 2023

All meetings start at 15.00hrs