

SENATE

Minutes of Meeting held on 8 December 2021

Present: Professor Ian Walmsley (Chair); Professors Buluwela, Craster, Distaso, Green, Haynes, Jardine, Johnston, Kingsbury, Lindstedt, McCoy, Spivey, Thompson, Veloso, Xu; Drs Craig, Field, Fobelets, Malhotra, Rutschmann; Ms Bannister, Ms Makuch, Mr Lo, Mr Lupton, Mr Tebbutt, Mr Ashton (Secretary), Ms Webster (Minute Secretary).

In attendance: Professor Jason Riley for Professor Brandon, Ms Leila Guerra, Dr Pedro Rosa-Dias for minute 2619, Ms Bridget McNulty for minute 2621

Apologies: Professors Brandon, Evans, Hanna, Weber; Dr's Costa-Perreira, James

2614 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as above.

2615 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 13 October 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record, subject to the amendment of minute to 2606 to reflect all those members of staff who had been elected as Fellows of the Royal Academy of Engineering.

2616 Matters Arising

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

2617 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

2618 Provost's Business

Received: A verbal report from the Provost

Reported: (1) hat this continued to be a rapidly moving time for the College. The award of the Queens Anniversary prize was a good recognition of the College's response to Covid 19 and was a testament to the strength of the College community and the hard work that all staff put in to ensuring the delivery of teaching, learning and research. The chair thanked all staff and paid particular thanks to Professor Emma McCoy and Richard Martin.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/232196/imperial-awarded-queens-anniversary-prize-covid-19/>

(2) That an announcement looked likely about a move to Plan B in terms of Covid restrictions and so the College was preparing for a move to a higher degree of remote learning for students and working from home for staff who were able to do this. Even though Plan B does not propose to restrict the delivery of higher education any further, the College want to ensure that students stay safe and are able to travel home for the

Christmas break. A note to staff setting this out would be circulated. In-person teaching in laboratories on taught programmes and the operation of research laboratories would remain open with appropriate safety protocols in place. This will help to remove the density of people on campus and keep people safer by reducing the risk of transmission of the virus.

(3) That the College had received news from the President about the health matters that required her attention. The Chair wished Alice a rapid return to health and full activity on behalf of all Senate members.

2619 Undergraduate Degree Proposal from Imperial College Business School

Received: A report on the approval process for the proposed undergraduate degree proposal (**Paper Senate/2021/09**)

Reported: (1) That the proposal had been considered by the Programmes Committee and the final stage will be QAEC approval. It was thought that it would be helpful for Senate members to receive an update on the proposal for a new BSc Economics, Finance and Data Science, the first undergraduate degree programme for the Imperial College Business School. It was noted that the proposal had also been considered by the Education Committee in respect of space issues to deliver the programme and the resources for undergraduate student support. The space considerations were also being looked at by Estates and there was a target date of February 2022 to make the final sign off on approval of the programme.

(2) That the Dean of the Faculty reported that they had been teaching undergraduate students for many years through modules and joint programmes and that the undergraduate programme had been under development for several years. This was put on hold post-Brexit to see what would happen but the demand for programmes of this nature is significant and there is a growing global market for programmes such as this. The Faculty also consider that the programme will provide a platform to work collaboratively across the College and within the Business School.

(3) That the development of this new programme was a milestone for the Business School. Senate members received a brief PowerPoint presentation which outlined the key points of the proposal.

Considered in discussion: (4) That the fees for overseas students did appear quite high but that the Business School had linked them to other programmes delivered in College and to other competitor organisations delivery similar programmes. The current modelling had been based on a 50/50 split between home and overseas students. Members noted in response that overseas students wanted to come to the UK and be taught alongside UK students rather than just other international students and so hoped that this balance would be achieved.

(5) That the Business School thought that flexibility in the programme structure to allow for space sharing would come through multi-mode delivery and flexible options. The programme developers want students to be able to integrate with the social aspects of the College and integrate with the wider undergraduate community and were keen to explore more interdisciplinarity. It was noted that undergraduate students really want a place to call home and the danger of space sharing is that they are always on the move around the Campus. The Chair noted that the College was looking carefully at how to utilise space in the post-pandemic world where they were looking at a significant growth in student numbers, including on new types of programmes such as micro-credentials, and in research.

2620 Review of the Student Disciplinary Procedure

Received: The proposed terms of reference and membership for a Working Party to undertake a review of the Student Disciplinary Procedure (**Paper Senate/2021/10**)

Reported: (1) That the College had reviewed this College Ordinance in 2019 but it was considered that a more root and branch review was needed. The draft proposals for the terms of reference and scope of the review had been developed in consultation with the Imperial College Union to gain their perspective. The Working Party will review the underpinning guidance to the conduct of the procedure at the same time. The Working Party would also consider the Office for Students Expectations for preventing harassment and sexual misconduct that were presented to senate in May 2021 (Minute 2533 refers). Student Services had been working hard to get prevention training in place with an external provider.

Considered in Discussion: (2) That a member suggested that the proposed membership did not have enough academic representation and should include at least one person from each Faculty to reflect the differences across the different areas. It was agreed to address this in the membership and suggested that additional membership could be drawn from Directors of Undergraduate Studies or Directors of Postgraduate Studies. It was also suggested that a panel member with experience of Fitness to Practice would be valuable.

(3) That the Working Group would be mainly focussed on desk research of approaches to student discipline in other institutions. It was noted that the previous review had been chaired by an external member. Members also asked about including former students in the Working Group.

(4) That consideration needed to be given to how students feel they can safely report incidents. The Director of Student Services described the Report and Support tool which allows students to report incidents of bullying, harassment and/or sexual misconduct anonymously. The reports raised are monitored to evaluate what comes in so that there can be learning from issues raised. Staff are part of national and international networks working on these areas and so are picking up lessons learned and good practice from other institutions and this will be fed into the review process.

(5) That members noted the links to other related policies and hoped that these would also be considered and welcomed expectations of student behaviour being more clearly set out. Members also suggested that staff serving as Panel members could be given a time allocation for their service

(6) That members noted that there is a wide range of misconduct dealt with under these procedures and that consideration could be given as to how Departments deal with summary cases but that what members really wanted to see were simple procedures that were easy to follow in all cases. Additional guidance on the point at which penalties were ever rescinded would also be welcomed. It was suggested that the Consuls should be included as an additional evidence group and that the presence of lawyers in the proceedings needed to be clear as this was not a legal procedure.

2621 Office for Students Consultation on its strategy for 2022-2025

Received: The consultation document from the Office for Students and the draft repose from the College (**Paper Senate/2021/11**)

Reported: (1) That this is the latest consultation document from the Office for Students which sets out their proposed strategy for 2022-23. It sets out a plan of action which will guide the activities of the OfS as a regulation over the next three years. The proposals identify three key areas of focus: quality and standards, equality of opportunity and, enabling regulation. Bridget McNulty, Regulatory Compliance Manager, has met with

College stakeholders to draw together the College's draft response to the consultation and was welcomed to the meeting to hear the discussions.

(2) That the response included some general comments including how communications from the Office for Students could be improved, about the timing of the consultations clashing with vacation periods or busy times of the academic year and on student engagement and a suggestion that the regulator should ensure all student unions, including non-NUS affiliated ones are included in student consultations. In terms of quality and standards, it is noted that the OfS have not yet published the response to the consultation on conditions of registration that was conducted over the summer, and that the consultation on condition B3 on student outcomes and the TEF has been put back to the new year and that it would have been helpful to have clarity on the B conditions before the strategy was consulted on.

(3) That Under Equality of Opportunity, the College and the Union are supportive of the OfS's commitment to improve access and participation and would welcome further guidance on the regulator's expectations in this area. Under Enabling Regulation the College is recommending that the resource implications of regulatory burden should be considered, particularly where there is duplication with other government agencies.

Considered in discussion: (4) That the inclusion of the Unions perspective in the College's response was welcomed and that the Imperial College Union would not be making a separate response as a result.

(5) That members expressed concern about the growing breadth of responsibility being placed on institutions by the regulator and that the College needed to push back on any attempt to reduce academic freedom and autonomy. Members also noted the significant economic impact that international students make by choosing to study in the UK.

Approved: Senate approved the draft response to the Consultation as presented and members were invited to submit any additional comments by 17th December 2021.

2622 Office for Students PGT Pilot Survey

Received: A verbal update from the Vice Provost (Education) on proposals for a Pilot Survey of PGT students.

Reported: (1) That the OfS are planning to run a second pilot survey to capture student feedback, comparable to that captured for the National Student Survey, for PGT students. The pilot, which will run between April and May 2022, will aim to:

- Test the new survey questions
- Test the processes of identifying eligible students to take part in the survey
- Assess participant response rates
- Understand the additional activities and effort required of providers taking part in the survey
- Inform the development of sector level public information about PGT Provision.

(2) That it was anticipated that that TEF will be expanded to PGT programmes and noted that the College had already indicated to Advance HE that we would be taking part on PTES next year, which would overlap with the OfS pilot. The Vice Provost (Education) advised Senate that they were inclined to join the pilot in order to provide direct feedback but were concerned about over surveying students.

Considered in discussion: (3) That members agreed that there would be a concern about survey overload for those students – typically the participation rate for PTES is quite low anyway. However, members were generally supportive of taking part in both and recommended communications to students to explain the rationale for being involved with both surveys.

2623 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Received: A report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (**Paper Senate 2021/13**)

Reported: (1) That there was a proposed update to the QAEC membership to ensure better representation for PGT provision and to allow the Senior College Consul and the ICU Deputy President (Education) to identify nominees in order to secure representation from a wider pool in both cases.

(2) That QAEC approved minor amendments to the Authorised Interruption of Studies procedure providing clarity on module registration and management.

(3) That QAEC had considered recommendations for the Academic Misconduct Procedure and an initial report setting out enhancements to the operation of the procedure for the current academic year in the light of the unprecedented amount of casework during the last year.

(4) That QAEC had also received an update on the development of the Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ), which replaced the SOLE survey. New questions had been developed and piloted at the end of the previous academic year and a replacement platform had been procured. The MEQ launched successfully on a new platform on the 7th December

Approved: Senate approved the revised QAEC membership.

2624 Appointment of External Examiners

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

2625 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 23 March at 3.10 pm