

Faculty Education Committee (NSEC)

Faculty of Natural Sciences

Date: Wednesday 1 June 2016

Confirmed Minutes

Meeting #2

Present

Prof Alan Spivey (ACS)	vice-Dean (Education) FoNS (Chair), Chemistry
Dr Huw Williams (HW)	DUGS, Life Sciences
Prof Anne Dell (AD)	DUGS, Life Sciences
Prof David Evans (DE)	DUGS, Mathematics
Dr Robert Forsyth (RF)	DUGS, Physics
Dr James Wilton-Ely (JWE)	PGT Representative, Chemistry
Dr Niki Gounaris (NG)	PGT Representative, Life Sciences
Prof Stefan Maier (SM)	PGT Representative, Physics
Mr Chun-Yin San (CYS)	Deputy President (Education), IC Student Union
Mr Ben Fernando (BF)	RCSU Academic Affairs Officer
Ms Moira Sarsfield (MS)	Senior Learning Technologist, FoNS
Prof John Seddon (JS)	College Consul, Chemistry
Prof Richard Thompson (RT)	College Consul, Physics
Ms Felicitas Starr-Egger (FSE)	CLCC representation
Mr Martyn Kingsbury (MK)	Educational Development Unit (EDU) DEPUTY Representative
Mr Will Bennett (WB)	Information and Communication Technologies
Prof Martin Siegert (MJS)	Grantham Institute Representative
Prof John Seddon (JS)	College Consul, Chemistry
Mr James Balloch (JB)	Registry Representative
Mr Stefan Hoyle (SH)	Faculty Safety Representative
Ms Nazia Hirjee (NH)	Faculty Operations Officer, FoNS
Mr Dan Smith (DS)	Registry Representative, Registry Office
Mrs Rebecca Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Coordinator, FoNS

Apologies

Mr John Conway (JC)	Senior Learning Technologist, FoNS
Dr Bridge Duncombe (BD)	DUGS, Chemistry
Prof Alexei Skorobogatov (AS)	PGT Representative, Maths
Dr Nick Voulvoulis (NV)	CEP Representative, CEP
Ms Kate Ippolito (KI)	Educational Development Unit (EDU) Representative
Dr Mirabelle Muuls (MM)	Grantham Institute Representative

In attendance

Ms Valerie Johnson	Senior Change Manager, Operational Excellence Programme
Miss Kasia Kmiecowski (KK)	Administrative Assistant, FoNS

1 Welcome and Apologies

The chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies, as above, were noted.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The committee reviewed the minutes from the FoNS Education Committee (NSEC) held on Wednesday 17th February 2016 [**NSEC.2015.20**] and the Committee Action Tracker [**NSEC.2015.21**]. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and the action tracker document was updated.

ACS assured the committee that in the future only core papers will be circulated, i.e. top-level summaries of new programme proposals and modifications to existing programmes and other

documents will be sent without appendices. Full versions of the papers will be saved on the committee SharePoint site.

ACTION: KK to create NSEC SharePoint page to store full versions of NSEC papers.

ACTION: KK to circulate only core papers to the committee prior to future NSEC meetings.

3 Matters arising from the Minutes

- ACS and RM had organised a follow up meeting with BD and Phil Ramsden, Principal Teaching Fellow: Cross-Curricular Maths, regarding the prospects of developing School-University Transitional/pre-sessional materials via the EdX or Maple platforms. As a result, BD had decided to develop online teaching materials for the Department of Chemistry. The first draft of the webpage will be circulated to other departments for comments. MS noted that producing courses and teaching materials via EdX platform can be a complex process and suggested a preference for using Maple.
- RM reported that no Student Representatives had taken the opportunity to attend the LTDP Workshop 4. Future dates of LTDP workshops have not been set yet.

ACTION: KK to set up dates for future LTDP Workshops 4 in 2016/2017.

- RM had investigated the progress of the Surveys Working Party. She reported that the working party was still in existence and that its members meet once per year, but that the frequency of the meetings would be increased if necessary. Committee also noted the Surveys Calendar for 2016-2017 recommended by the Surveys Working Party. It was agreed that having a one-page calendar of surveys would help to distribute the surveys evenly across the academic year. DS added that the Faculty of Medicine had been running a pilot of migrating SOLE to the new survey tool (Qualtrics) to assess the volume of work associated with managing the new system.

4 Presentation by Valerie Johnson on “Operational Excellence and what this means for you”

Valerie Johnson, the Senior Change Manager, presented an overview of the [College's Operational Excellence Programme](#). She outlined its aims and benefits as well the impact it will have on the academic staff's area of work. These included reducing the time academics spend on administration and resolving problems due to faulty equipment or error in room booking.

James Balloch presented the vision of Student Information Management Programme (SIMP) and its benefits. These mainly related to improving College's performance across the student lifecycle and better course advertisement, particularly ensuring that transparent information on tuition fees is included. He also outlined the advantages of Banner. These included a single-source of student and course data, a module catalogue outlining accurate module structure with an option of tracking specific programmes and generating automatic notifications for students.

The following timescale for implementation of the SIMP was noted:

- Autumn 2016 – possible launch of the system
- Spring 2017 – inclusion of bursary and scholarship information
- Autumn 2017 – inclusion of full range of admissions

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5 New Programme Proposals

No new programme proposals have been received.

6 Modifications to Existing Programmes and Changes to Schemes for Award of Honours

6.1 Mathematics Department: Geometric Complex Analysis, Infinite Groups, Random Matrices and Algebra IV [NSEC.2015.22]

The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Mathematics to develop the following new modules in 2016-17:

- Geometric Complex Analysis
- Infinite Groups
- Random Matrices
- Algebra IV

ACTION: DS to email further comments about the above proposal to DE.

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee supported the proposal.

6.2 Physics Department: 1st year - Mathematics, Basic and Advanced Electronics and MSci Physics [NSEC.2015.23]

The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics to introduce minor modifications to 1st Year modules. These included:

- Basic Electronics module to be added as a new component
- Advanced Electronics module to replace the existing module

In addition, the above proposal included moving the administration of the Year 1 Mathematics module from the Department of Mathematics to the Department of Physics. This had been already agreed by both departments.

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee supported the proposal.

7 Additional Entry Criteria

No proposals to amend additional entry criteria have been received.

8 Exchange Partnerships

No proposals to develop additional Exchange Partnerships have been received.

9 Survey Results

9.1 Undergraduate SOLE Survey Results [NSEC.2015.24]

The committee considered the results of the Undergraduate Spring Term 2016 SOLE Lecturer and Module surveys.

It was noted that survey participation rates had risen across the College. However, they were still relatively low in FoNS departments. It was suggested that the following actions could resolve this issue:

- Changing the time the survey takes place i.e. not close to Easter break or exam session.
- Ensuring students that issues raised in SOLE are addressed and actioned.
- Providing each student who completed the questionnaire with printing credit or free access to other facilities at the College.

The committee noted that the percent satisfaction rates for BPES modules for Autumn and Spring (table 6) substantially differ. In addition, the Horizon modules had received better results in comparison to other departments.

ACTION: RM to investigate the reason for the substantial differences in satisfaction percent between Autumn and Spring BPES modules as well as the cause of higher scores received by the Horizon modules in comparison to other departments.

9.2 Postgraduate SOLE Survey Results [NSEC.2015.25]

The committee considered the results of the Postgraduate Spring Term 2016 SOLE Lecturer and Module surveys. It was noted that survey participation rates for Department of Life Sciences and Physics were very low.

9.3 Student Experience Survey (SES) Results [NSEC.2015.26]

The committee considered the Phase 1 & Phase 2 Student Experience Survey (SES) results. It was noted that the overall feedback has been positive. Students considered the *Academic/Course/Teaching/Research* aspects as the best features of their experience at Imperial, but also the main areas for improvement.

10 Accreditation Reports [NSEC.2015.38]

The committee considered the Accreditation Report submitted by the Institute of Physics. It was noted that the overall feedback has been very positive.

11 External Examiner Appointments

11.1 External Examiner Appointments due to expire 2015/2016 [NSEC.2015.27]

The committee noted a List of External Examiner Appointments due to expire at the end of the academic year 2015/16.

11.2 Outstanding External Examiner Appointments 2014/15 [NSEC.2015.28]

The committee noted a List of Outstanding External Examiner Appointments for the academic year 2015/16. DS, reported that six appointments are outstanding. NG added that more external examiners were being appointed.

11.3 Summary of External Examiner Reports 2014/15 [NSEC.2015.29]

The committee noted the Summary of External Examiner Reports for the academic year 2015/16. It was suggested that having a separate list of negative comments on issues included in the report would help to resolve them.

11.4 Outstanding External Examiner Reports 2014/15 [NSEC.2015.30]

The committee noted a list of Outstanding External Examiner Reports for the academic year 2014/15. Student Representatives noted that external examiners had raised issues that had been also reported in students' surveys. Some of these included the high number of assessments, double marking and lack of consistency when providing the feedback.

12 Standing items

12.1 Safety – verbal update

SH reported that:

- The guidance for Principal Investigators on Health and Safety procedures for undergraduates had been updated to also include Masters students. It will be submitted to the Faculty Management Committee for approval.
- A number of Health and Safety training courses had been developed for students from the CEP and Silwood campus. In addition, new processes had been implemented to ensure the risk is assessed properly and laboratory work can be carried out safely.

12.2 LTDP – verbal update

RM reported that:

- Six academics have completed the LTDP this academic year to date
- Participants seem to be more engaged with the programme ps, than in previous years. This might be attributed to DUGS who have encouraged staff to complete the programme, particularly as staff approach probation, as well as to the new LTDP Newsletter.

HW suggested organising a refresher LTDP course for more senior academic staff.

ACTION: RM to investigate the possibility of organising a refresher LTDP workshop for more senior academic staff.

12.3 Learning Technology Matters - verbal update

MS reported that:

- Panopto transfer had been successfully completed.
- AV studio in the Huxley Building had been made available to staff to prepare and edit recordings as well as produce any other teaching materials for students.
- Programme containing a new reading list had been created. It will be accessible via Blackboard. The aim is to provide students with the up-to-date information on list of available books and articles as well as references. MS noted that training on how to use this programme will be provided.

12.4 FOO – verbal update (NH)

NH reported that a number of teaching facilities had been inspected and it had been decided that they need substantial refurbishment. NH will provide a further update at the next committee meeting.

ACTION: NH to provide an update on the refurbishment of teaching facilities.

12.5 Registry - New Student Information System (JB)

Please see item 1.

ITEMS TO NOTE

13 Minutes of the Previous Meetings of the NSEC Sub-Committees

The committee noted the minutes from the UG sub-meeting on 9 March 2016 [NSEC.2015.31.01]; Masters Sub-meeting on 3 December 2015 [NSEC.2015.31.02] and 21 March 2016 [NSEC.2015.31.03].

14 *Chair's Report

No specific actions were reported that were not covered under items 2 and 3.

15 Vice Provosts Advisory Group (Education) (VPAGE) Minutes

The committee noted minutes from the 3rd December 2015, 14th January, 11th February and 10th March 2016 meetings [NSEC.2015.32].

16 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) Executive Summary [NSEC.2015.33]

The committee noted an executive summary from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

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17 Academic Standards Framework Update [NSEC.2015.34]

The committee noted an update on progress with the academic standards framework from the steering group.

ACS reported that the Provost had reported to the May Senate meeting that the College is to introduce two parallel systems based on 5 and 6 units. Although the Senate members had discussed this, they had not directly been asked to approve or vote to ratify the decision.

The committee members noted that the decision to proceed with two parallel ECTS systems could not strictly therefore be considered as a decision of the senate. As a consequence, the status of this decision was considered uncertain and the view/actions of the incoming vice

Provost (Education) were expected to be important in shaping the development of this aspect of the ASF.

18 Minutes of the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee (PPDC) [NSEC.2015.35]

The committee noted the latest minutes from the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee:

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19 Annual Monitoring Reports [NSEC.2015.36]

The committee noted the Annual Monitoring Reports. It was agreed that these should be sent to FoNS Undergraduate Sub-committee for consideration.

ACTION: KK to circulate Annual Monitoring Reports to the FoNS Undergraduate Sub-committee for consideration.

Student Representatives felt that students should be regularly updated on the progress of addressing the concerns raised by students. They added that the Annual Reports should be also scrutinised by Students' committee. In response to that, DS said that the Annual Reports are available on Blackboard along with the External Examiners Reports.

20 Principles Underpinning the Academic Regulations [NSEC.2015.37]

The committee noted the Principles Underpinning the Academic Regulations document with inserted comments from Student Representatives. It will be circulated to the committee for further comments.

ACTION: ACS to circulate Principles Underpinning the Academic Regulations paper to the committee for further comments.

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ACS reported that exam errors had been reported and these mainly had occurred in the Department of Physics.

RM invited the committee to the FONS Prizes for Excellence ceremony to be held on 8th June. Prof Tom Welton and ACS will be presenting.

22 Dates of Future Meetings

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