

## Faculty Education Committee (FEC)

Faculty of Natural Sciences

**DATE:** 29 April 2020

**TIME:** 12.00-14.00

**LOCATION:** via Teams

### MINUTES – APPROVED

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Prof Emma McCoy (EMcC)         | vice-Dean (Education) FoNS (Chair)                                  |
| Prof Donald Craig (DC)         | DUGS Chemistry  |
| Dr Huw Williams (HW)           | DUGS Life Sciences  |
| Prof David Evans (DE)          | DUGS Mathematics  |
| Prof Carl Paterson (CP)        | DUGS Physics  |
| Dr Rudiger Woscholski (RW)     | MRes Director of Studies in Chemistry                               |
| Prof John Seddon (JS)          | Faculty Senior Tutor  |
| Dr Niki Gounaris (NG)          | Life Sciences PGT Representative                                    |
| Dr William Proud (WP)          | Director of Postgraduate Studies, Physics                           |
| Dr Travis Schedler (TS)        | Maths PGT Representative  |
| Dr Mike Tennant (MT)           | CEP Representative  |
| Ms Michaela Flegrova (MF)      | RCSU Academic Affairs Officer                                       |
| Mr Ashley Brooks (AB)          | ICU Deputy President (Education)                                    |
| Ms Moira Sarsfield (MS)        | Senior Learning Technologist  |
| Prof Jonathan Mestel (JM)      | College Consul, Maths   |
| Ms Kate Ippolito (KI)          | Educational Development Unit (EDU) Representative                   |
| Dr Mark Anderson (MA)          | Educational Development Unit (EDU) Representative                   |
| Dr Vijay Tymms (VT)            | FoNS Programmes Committee Rep., Physics                             |
| Ms Nazia Hirjee (NH)           | Faculty Operations Officer  |
| Mr Stefan Hoyle (SH)           | Faculty Safety Representative                                       |
| Mr Will Bennett (WB)           | Information and Communication Technologies                          |
| Mr Scott Tucker (ST)           | Registry Representative - Assistant Registrar (Monitoring & Review) |
| Ms Emma Rabin (ER)             | Assistant Registrar (Partnerships, Monitoring and Evaluation)       |
| Dr Felicitas Starr-Egger (FSE) | CLCC representation   |
| Ms Rebecca Middleton (RM)      | Faculty Education Manager   |
| Ms Kasia Kmiecowski (KK)       | FoNS Administrative Assistant (Secretary)                           |

#### 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The committee reviewed the minutes from the FoNS Education Committee (NSEC) held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March [NSEC.2019.48] and the Committee Action Tracker [NSEC.2019.49]. With one minor correction as listed below, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record and the action tracker document was updated:

*Correction to: ACTION 13 - RM to notify Registry that the Excel format of the **module** modification form makes it hard to track all the changes made to the **modules** and request whether modification forms could be provided in a Word format.*

There were a number of outstanding actions for NG and HW from the Department of Life Sciences who are aware of that, but due to the current workload these will be provided at a later date.

ACTION 13 – was noted as complete. RM had contacted Registry regarding the Excel format of the module modification form which makes it hard to track all the changes made to the modules. Men-Yeut Wong had replied and said that Registry had agreed that the Excel format is not user friendly. The intention had been to export this data from Banner into Word, but that had not yet been done. The Registry is working on this and the module spec had been already redesigned in Word and will be available soon.

ACTION 15: was marked as complete. RM had received replies expressing an interest in the UG California Institute of Technology student exchange partnership from all departments except Life Sciences. She had also contacted Adrian Hawksworth to find out if CalTech is still expressing its interest in accepting Imperial students. This exchange would need to be now delayed to 2021/22 academic year, but it seems that it will go ahead. EMcC reported that all schemes that require students to go abroad will be discussed at the College Level Education Group meeting on 30th April 2020.

### 3. Matters arising from the Minutes/ Action Tracker

JS reported that the Emergency Contact project is being delayed therefore it may not be implemented by October 2020. RM added that this issue had been discussed at the recent SIMP meeting and those directly involved in that project will try to make some progress on that. EMcC noted that other projects which had been deprioritized include:

- Interruption of studies – planning of this project is still progressing. The ICT implementation is the priority.
- Staff dashboards

EMcC also informed the committee that the College is introducing a number of new policies in relation to Covid-19. JS added that the Board of Examiners Guidance is being reviewed particularly in relation to the following issues:

- How the external examiners could join Exam Boards via Teams. Progression boards tend to be separated from the main Graduating Boards, but the guidance currently seems to say that external examiners should appear at all of them.
- There are issues related to the Safety Net and how that is going to be applied.
- It needs to be decided how marks should appear in transcripts.
- It needs to be decided how the borderline boundary is going to be applied.

### 4. PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey) – Wellbeing Results and Action Plans

The committee considered the PRES Results and Action Plans from the following Departments:

#### 4.1 Mathematics

**4.2 Chemistry** - RW reported that the PRES had been conducted at the Department of Chemistry during relocation to White City which had been disruptive for students. Hence the majority of complaints had been due to that. MF asked about the comments around supervision and stress and asked if anything will be done to improve pastoral care. RW said there is a lot of community support and pastoral care. JWE and Mike Ray are Mental Health Aiders, there are also PG Senior tutors and the webpages had been updated recently with additional information on wellbeing.

JS added that the FoNS PG Pastoral Support Survey results had not been discussed with the Department of Chemistry yet, and he had decided to postpone it to a time when the department's workload decreases. However, the survey feedback received from all the PG students had been fully transmitted.

The following departments had been asked to provide the PRES-Wellbeing prior to the next NSEC meeting:

#### 4.3 Physics

#### 4.4 Life Sciences

#### 4.5 CEP

**ACTION 16: Departments of Physics, Life Sciences and CEP to provide the PRES-Wellbeing prior to the next NSEC meeting.**

ST noted that the fourth question (Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?) had been phrased negatively in comparison to the remaining three questions, hence replaying to it from 0 (not at all) – 10 (completely) affected the validity of the results received. Therefore, there had been delays in aggregating the answers. ST said that in the future this will be corrected so all the answers will be collated as a one package. He added that bespoke questions specific to Imperial can be added but then there will be no comparability with other sectors. EMcC noted that Imperial is doing well with regards to PRES.

EMcC reported that the PGT Registration Policy is due to be published on 29<sup>th</sup> April. Although the College is planning to deliver the course content remotely, there had been a number of queries from students related to refunds. She added that universities across the UK had stated that they will not provide any fee refunds if the learning outcomes are met. The Universities Minister, Michelle Donelan, had published a section for students with FAQ which also states that students should not expect any refunds whilst universities can still deliver the learning outcomes in a high-quality way.

AB reported that the ICU is making recommendations and actions for the PRQC and these will be fed back to faculties and departments. With regards to support and supervision, the PGR students had expressed that they would like more support due to Covid-19 i.e. supervisors and research groups should meet on a weekly basis as this will maintain students motivation and keep their productivity up. In response to that, BP reported that in the Department of Physics, students have weekly meetings. Many research groups run journal research clubs. Also an individual impact assessment had been circulated to students so information on their research will be collated at the departmental level.

**5. Student application and enrolment numbers compared to previous years**

The committee considered the Student application and enrolment numbers compared to previous years. RW commented that it is very difficult to compare this data as one of the entries is for this year's students and one for past year. Also it includes data for PGT, MRes and PGR which is difficult to compare/judge as each of these groups are handled differently. In response to that ST advised RW to contact David Parrot at Admissions to clarify that.

**6. Summary of PGT External Examiners Reports 2018/19**

The committee considered the PGT External Examiners Reports 2018/19 in excel format. ST confirmed the actual summary will be provided on a later date.

RW asked to be approached directly when the next Examiner Report is due. He added that apparently when the Registry does not receive any communication from an examiner, they terminate the appointment. However, RW would like to give the department the opportunity to approach the examiners. ST will look into it, but he believes that the contract with the examiners would not be terminated without any communication with the department.

**ACTION 17: ST to investigate the procedure of terminating contracts with external examiners.**

**7. Outstanding PGT external examiner reports 2018/19**

The committee considered Outstanding PGT external examiner reports 2018/19.

**8. ICU Communications Update - Ashley Brooks - Deputy President (Education)**

The committee considered the ICU Communications Update presented by Ashley Brooks - Deputy President (Education).

AB presented a broad overview of Union comms and highlighted new initiatives. These included:

- Monthly Newsletter – send to both to the academic and wellbeing rep networks, giving general updates and any upcoming events, surveys or success stories.
- Microsoft Teams – this tool had been used for two years to share news and files which is very useful. It also enables to store files more centrally so these can be easily accessed by the new reps so the handover is better.
- Role account email addresses had been set up for faculty and dep reps so it is very useful to get in touch with the relevant person. This works well with Microsoft Teams and with email comms, in general. It allows for more control and easier use between emails/inboxes, and again, should allow for a better handover.
- Rep Thank you Party - the Union had started organising termly Thank you parties to reward and recognise hard work being done by Reps. The first party had taken place in December and had been very well attended by different students across faculties and departments (UG, PGT and PGR). The party in Spring term had been very tricky to arrange due to the current situation but it had been successful as well and students had been very appreciative.
- Rep of the Month – this initiative had been introduced for Academic and Wellbeing networks to improve the recognition of Rep successes. This is awarded on a monthly basis, up to four student reps and voted by Faculty and Dept Reps. The main criteria is based on commitment, positive impact and communication. The winners had been from across different faculties and across different year groups, which had been really encouraging to see. Prizes consist of a pin badge, certificate, voucher, and an automatic nomination for Rep of the Year.. In addition, there are posters and signs across the Union screens, which showcase Reps of the month too to raise awareness of reps work.
- Sabbs on Tour – the aim is to reach out and engage with students across Imperial. The sabbatical officers had been setting up stalls (every few weeks) at South Kensington and across the other campuses. This had enabled the Union to talk with a wider range of students who may not typically engage with the Union, in an informal way.
- Felix – A *Conversation With...* section had been added. The sabbatical officers take it in turn to interview with the Felix, covering any topical issues and outlining the current work. The aim is to reach out to a wider audience, raise awareness and maintain transparency.

AB added there are many other activities that the ICU introduced to improve its image with students and to involve, support and consult them.

NH commented that these are really useful initiatives, especially those involving cross-campus engagements. However, it is incredibly important to include all the campuses. She noted that more engagement is needed with Silwood Park students as this would help to understand their perspective and represent it properly. NG commented that Silwood Park students feel isolated, but on the other hand they are not willing to engage with the rest of FoNS community. This situation had not changed, although extra support had been provided within the last couple of years. NH stressed that understanding their perspective and increasing physical interaction will certainly help with that. The population of students changes every year and there is a need to think about continuity of messaging approaches, availability of support, and other initiatives that flow across cohorts.

## 9. Standing Items:

### 9.1 Learning Technology Matters – MS reported that the following activities had been introduced since the lockdown:

- Setting up the arrangements for the time limited remote assessments. Those are running regularly and all the departments had conducted practice tests for most of the students already. All of them had been completed with no major issues.
- Some remote Teaching had been also introduced recently. This had been quite useful to test and work out good ways of delivering remote and online teaching.
- Panopto videos - there are some concerns that students, especially in China, Australia and other parts of the world, are having difficulties viewing Panopto videos at the moment. FoE considers allowing students to download videos so that they can watch them offline. To date downloading of videos had not been allowed for various reasons. One of them is that the access permissions that were put in place could not be applied to videos once downloaded. However, due to the current access difficulties, it had been suggested to put permissions in place so that students could view the recordings for a specific period of time after which they would be archived. It had been also recognised that some staff members would like to make their materials available more widely than it had been recommended, which could be done outside Panopto i.e. via YouTube. However, majority may not want their videos to be downloaded, because that potentially negates all permissions and access restrictions that are currently in place. Due to various concerns it would be advisable to consult with all staff members and identify who agrees to the changes to permission and restrictions and also to ensure this new way to view recordings applies to all students. If the College decides to introduce permission to download the videos from 2020/21 academic year, ICT had requested that all departments need to decide by 1<sup>st</sup> May which modules they would allow to download. Obviously, it will be impossible to meet this deadline, but MS asked the committee about their views on that matter and the following comments were made:
  - DE suggested that the College should think of other solutions such as downloading videos to the College server and give students access to that.
  - EMcC said that allowing video downloading would be a great concern to most staff members. She also added that perhaps different system could be considered such as Practique which is used by the Medical School.
  - RW suggested that the College could hire an external company in a country affected by this problem, to host the content on their server. That company would have a control over the access to the recordings and consequently the IP rights would be preserved. In response to that, WB said that there are other universities who do that, but the College needs to consult this with the ICT to identify what the broader solution to this problem would be. In addition, the extra cost would need to be considered as well as the length of time to migrate the content.

**9.2 Safety** – SH reported that if anyone plans remote practical teaching to be conducted at home, they can contact SH for advice on Safety or to review any documents related to safety.

**9.3 Education** – EMcC reported a number of new committees had been established to deal with the Covid-19 and she will circulate the organisational chart to the committee which should make it easier to understand how and by whom decisions being made. She outlined some of the key groups which include:

- Gold Group - led by Alice Gast, Ian Walmsley and Muir Sanderson.
- Silver Group – operational group focusing on finances and operational planning and attended by FOOs.

- SRSG Group (Student Recruitment Strategy Group) - focusing on future teaching across College (chaired by Omar Matar, vice Dean of Education in FoE).
- Education Group – working on delivering teaching and assessment of current students and other actions that need to be taken through the summer. This involves writing policies such as Safety Net Policy (chaired by EMcC).
- FoNS Remote Readiness Group is reporting directly to Education Group. It plans for different scenarios (hybrid/ College fully closed / fully open).
- SROG – Student Recruitment Operational Group (chaired by Maggie Dallman)
- New Group chaired by Alan Spivey which is focusing on resources provision across the College i.e. comparing resources available and establishing what will be possible to deliver using those. For example, resources such as the Digital Learning Hub, EdTech teams are looked at. There is a big concern about central finances, so the College is looking into using resources available within the College to minimise any hiring fees. She added that Neil Alford, Associate Provost (Academic Planning) is considering to convert the old Chemistry building to studios which could be used by staff to provide the remote teaching.

***ACTION 18: EMcC to circulate the organisational chart of the new College level groups to the committee.***

AB queried whether departments feel well prepared to delivered remote teaching in the summer and future terms provided they have all the resources they need. The departments made the following comments:

**Chemistry** – DC admitted that there had been an enormous spike of additional work to be done in the last couple of months, but the Department of Chemistry feels reasonably prepared and the following adjustments had been made:

- Panopto recordings from last year will be used. These are being reviewed by staff to ensure they are up-to-date.
- All the scheduled lectures had been removed from the calendar completely and students had been requested to access them at the time convenient for them, but no later than the next workshop is due. This is to ensure they familiarise themselves with the lecture material so they can fully engage with the workshop.
- Webinar had been arranged for staff to discuss remote teaching, assessment and marking.
- Online poster session and on-line viva assessments will be conducted by the department.

**Life Sciences** – HW reported that Y1 and Y2 had been particularly challenging as part of the curriculum review, the summer term mainly consists of lab-based and field work which is very difficult to replicate in remote settings. It had required large amount of work to re-model that. However, the department is reasonably confident that it will be able to provide a different, but equally valuable education experience for the students, which will meet the learning outcomes. Y3 had been also affected by the current situation as the students meant to start full time research projects before Easter. Therefore, the department had to transition these to full data projects when possible and if not, alternative modules had to be developed.

**Physics** – CP reported that part of the curriculum review a large portion of the material in Y1 had been moved to new courses in summer term. The department delivers Y1 projects remotely and provides student with a small budget to buy any materials needed for conducting the experiments at home. Y3 and Y4 have mainly exams. Staff are working extremely hard to deliver the remote teaching and assessments. He pointed that extra resources will not be available so the department will need to look into freeing up any existing resources which will be very challenging.

**Maths** – DE reported there is no lecturing in the summer term and mainly projects are being conducted. The remote exams will be arranged as close as they would normally be arranged in the normal situation. He added that the office staff focus on a vast number of exam papers which involves loads of work. Since the staff work even at the weekends. He suggested that in the long term extra administrative resources would need to be provided.

**CEP** – EMcC reported that all coursers will be delivered remotely.

RM reported that she is a member of SROG (which is looking at recruitment, admissions, communications, reporting) and the Education sub- Group. She also drew committee's attention to the Educational Development Unit which had refreshed the College's Teaching Toolkit with [new sections on remote teaching](#).

RW reported that Chemistry students based in China have problem with obtaining the online language certificate which is currently not available to Chinese students. RW will forward the email regarding this problem to RM and BP.

***ACTION 19: RM to investigate the problem with obtaining the online language certificate by Chinese students.***

**9.4 Faculty Senior Tutor** – JS reported the following matters:

- An updated Guidance for Mitigating Circumstances Boards – COVID-19 was published on 7th April 2020.
- UG and PG Faculty Mitigating Oversight Panels had met last week. Majority of the discussions had related to Covid-19 MC claims that had started coming through. The data of MC will be provided over summer once the departments are less busy. The UG FMOP will meet in late September and the PG FMOP meeting is yet to be decided. This will depend on the Examiners Board meetings as these in some departments such as Chemistry, had been postponed to October or even November.
- Information on the remote operation of the counselling services is available on the College's website. The Health Centre is now operating exclusively telephone triage system. The Disability Advisory Services also provide remote support.
- UROP projects will be in part going ahead this summer primarily the ones that are theoretical or computationally based, but there may be the possibility for some experimental ones to go ahead later in the summer, but this had not been decided yet. Therefore, individual departments had been asked to confirm which of their UROP projects can go ahead now and which one could go ahead later in the summer, depending on the situation.

**9.5 FOO** – there were no issues reported.

**9.6 Registry** - ST updated the committee on the SOLE which had been discussed at the QAEC meeting. It was agreed that the Spring SOLE had the survey window being extended to 21<sup>st</sup> May to increase the participation rate. The Summer SOLE cannot be conducted due to a very old hardware that exists within the College. Therefore, the QAEC had proposed to conduct this survey using Qualtrics. As extra recourses will be needed to do that, this proposal will have to be approved at the Silver Group. Assuming it is approved, further details will be disseminated to the departments.

ST also introduced Emma Rabin, the new Assistant Registrar (Partnerships, Monitoring and Evaluation) who will be the new Registry Rep attending NSEC meetings replacing ST. EMcC thanked ST for his work as a member of the NSEC.

VT queried whether the SOLE should be conducted in the current format or whether it would be more practical to change the way of evaluating the modules. In response to that, RM said that the Spring SOLE had already started and it may already include valuable feedback from students so collating the responses should continue. With regards to the Summer SOLE, this had been discussed at the QAEC meeting and it had been felt that in the absence of any other method of collating the feedback, the College ought to proceed with it. Also, the feedback related to summer remote teaching might be useful for planning remote teaching in the future. ST added that at the Lecturer and Module Evaluation Group it had been recognised the SOLE questions are not fit for purpose and it had been recommended that some funds should be allocated to hire a project manager who would be working on the new SOLE-type evaluation system. This had been delayed due to Covid-19, but there are plans to change the module evaluation system at some point.

***ACTION 20: EMcC to raise the SOLE issue with Omar Mater.***

ST added that it had been agreed at the QAEC that the PTES would also continue within the agreed timeframe.

**9.7 College level initiatives:**

- I-Explore update - EMcC reported that Caroline Clewley is leading the i-STEM side of the I-Explore. Those modules will be also delivered online.
- Student Shapers update – MF noted that since a number of UROP projects and internships had been cancelled, students will have more time over summer and could be involved in some online studentship projects.

***ACTION 21: EMcC to find out if there is a possibility of providing additional on-line studentships over the summer.***

## **10. Annual report on Taught Student Academic Appeals**

The committee noted the Annual report on Taught Student Academic Appeals.

**11. Annual Student Academic Misconduct Report**

The committee noted the Annual Student Academic Misconduct Report.

**12. Annual Taught Student Complaints Report**

The committee noted the Annual Taught Student Complaints Report.

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

The committee noted the latest, confirmed minutes from the UG/Masters Sub-Committee meetings:  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/natural-sciences/education-and-teaching/fons-education-committee/>

**14. Chair's Report**

The committee noted the actions taken by the Chair on behalf of the committee

**14.1** To suspend the Machine Learning and Data Science MSc until October 2021.

**14.2** To suspend the BSc Physics and Music Performance, effective from Oct 2021.

**15. Minutes of the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee (PPDC)**

The committee noted the latest minutes from the Graduate School's [Postgraduate Professional Development Committee](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/graduate-school/registries/10-committees/ppdc/): [\\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\PPDC](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/graduate-school/registries/10-committees/ppdc/)

**ACTION 22: KK to add working link to the minutes from the Graduate School's Postgraduate Professional Development Committee.**

**16. Minutes from QAEC, Senate and the other Faculties' Education Committees**

The committee noted the latest minutes from the [QAEC](#), [Senate](#) and the other [Faculty Education Committees](#)

**17. Any other business:**

Recruitment information on Banner

RW raised an issue related to the recruitment information on Banner which is not always up-to-date. WB advised RW to raise a ticket with the ICT and to send him the ticket number so he will follow up this query with a relevant staff member.

My Imperial page

WB reported that my Imperial page has now Covid-19 tab where students can add their current location as well as to provide information on their health and mental wellbeing. Students are encouraged to do that as this will take the pressure off the departments having to collate this information themselves. EMcC said that this request had been made in one of the daily Covid-19 updates but perhaps it would be better if the departments asked their students to provide that information.

**ACTION 23: EMcC to ensure the Departments had sent the request to students to fill out the information on My Imperial page related to Covid-19.**

**18. Dates of Future Meetings (2019/20 Committee Schedule)**

| Committee                     | Date          | Time        |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| UG Sub-Committee of NSEC      | Weds 27/05/20 | 12.30-14.00 |
| Masters Sub-Committee of NSEC | Weds 03/06/20 | 12.30-14.00 |