

## **Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)**

Minutes from the meeting held on

Thursday 5 March 2020

### **Present**

Professor Simone Buitendijk – Vice Provost (Education) – Chair

David Ashton – Academic Registrar

Ashley Brooks – ICU Deputy President (Education)

Emma Caseley – Head of Strategic Projects

Professor Martyn Kingsbury – Director of Educational Development

Laura Lane – Head of Strategy and Operations, Graduate School [in place of Professor Yun Xu]

Martin Lupton – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine

Professor Omar Matar – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering

Professor Emma McCoy – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences

Dr Edgar Meyer – Associate Dean (UG Programmes & Education Quality), Imperial College  
Business School

Judith Webster – Director of Academic Quality and Standards

Scott Tucker – Deputy Director (Academic Quality and Standards) – Secretary

### **In attendance**

Professor Neil Alford - Associate Provost (Academic Planning) [Item 4]

Craig Walker - Strategic Lead for Education Infrastructure [Item 5]

Dr Camille Kandiko Howson - Associate Professor of Education [Item 6]

Eleri Canning – Head of Assessment Records [Item 7]

Rhys Purtill – Graduate Management Trainee [Item 7]

Rachel Witton - Executive Officer for the Vice-Provost (Education) [Item 8]

Hailey Smith - Project Manager (Learning and Teaching Strategy) [Item 10]

### **Apologies**

Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning

Professor Alan Spivey – Assistant Provost (Learning & Teaching)

Professor Yun Xu – Director of the Graduate School

## **1. Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees. Apologies, as listed above, were noted.

## **2. Minutes**

2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes from the previous meeting held on Thursday 23 January 2020. LTC.2019.18

## **3. Matters Arising**

3.1 There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## **4. Academic Planning**

4.1 The Committee received an update from the Associate Provost (Academic Planning) on Academic Planning with regard to the Learning and Teaching Strategy

4.2 The move of Chemistry Research to the White City campus presents the College with a unique opportunity to provide shared, multidisciplinary undergraduate lab space at the South Kensington campus. Proposals for a new learning space are informed by sound pedagogical research and will harness digital technologies.

A multidisciplinary space will encourage collaborative, investigative and independent approaches to learning. This will support students to prepare for the interdisciplinary nature of research and industry, and tackle multi-problem global challenges. The approach to multidisciplinary lab teaching would be world leading.

4.3 The Associate Provost (Academic Planning) set out the four current options currently being considered by the College, including estimated costs.

*A: Complete Refurbishment*

Space: 13,300m<sup>2</sup>

Estimated time for completion: 4 years

*B: Phased Refurbishment*

Estimated time for completion: 7 years

*C: Demolish and New Build*

*(i) One Phase*

Space: 16000m<sup>2</sup>

Estimated time for completion: 5 years

*(ii) Two Phases*

Space: Building 1 9000m<sup>2</sup>, Building 2 7000m<sup>2</sup>

*D: 'Meanwhile' Option*

Space: 3 floors of Chem1&2 for teaching/seminar rooms/breakout

Estimated time for completion: 2 years

- 4.4** Although the two-phased approach in Option C has its merits, including an increased footprint on the current space, it is envisaged that the College will pursue Option D through the next planning round. Should work be completed as planned then the space should last approximately 5-7 years.

## **5. Vision for Learning and Teaching Spaces**

- 5.1** The committee received an update on the vision for learning and teaching spaces from the Strategic Lead for Education Infrastructure. LTC.2019.19
- 5.2** An interim appraisal of Blackett LT2 (113) and RSM 1.47 conversions was presented. The goals of the conversions of Blackett LT2 (113) and RSM 1.47 raked lecture theatres were to:
- Enable the introduction of small group interactive learning at a scale and density approaching that of didactic teaching
  - Preserve ability to teach didactically at or close to pre-conversion scale
  - Evaluate a pathway to the intensification of educationally effective use of raked lecture theatres, including informal learning outside of scheduled teaching times.
- 5.3** Blackett LT2 has been positively received by students and staff, exceeding the majority of expectations. The RSM 1.47 conversion has been positively received for quality of the main room finish, and opportunities for more flexible teaching. The conversion is however reported as underperforming when full against student comfort considerations; and there are also some concerns with the teaching wall.
- 5.4** The full effects of the pilot conversions are expected to be realised over a period of years as the spaces both allow for and also stimulate deployment of a wider range of small group learning techniques. In the interim, this paper provides an initial appraisal of these pilots.

**5.5** Following discussion, the Strategic Lead for Education Infrastructure recommended the following next steps, which were fully supported by the Committee:

- Commence feasibility work to apply the Blakett LT2 format to other suitable spaces
- Diagnose and where possible correct factors that have caused the experienced capacity shortfall of RSM 1.47 format compared with agreed Department needs
- Evaluate RSM 1.47 capacity and capabilities once any adjustments have been made
- Feed lessons learned from Blakett LT2 and RSM 1.47 into future projects.

## **6. Admissions Research Project**

**6.1** The committee received an update from the Associate Professor of Education on the CHERS research project ‘the understanding of contextual data in STEM admissions’.

**6.2** The outline of the project was discussed. It was made clear that the project will be undertaken nationally across a number of institutions to address national policy concerns. Although the focus will be on undergraduate admissions, there will likely be outcomes that are relevant to postgraduate provision. The project is not Imperial-specific project to focus on Imperial-specific challenges but to help institutions understand national targets and policy.

**6.3** Admissions tutors who partake in the study will be asked to give around 45 minutes of their time for interview. The Associate Professor of Education will look to conduct a total of 15 interviews across College Faculties (excluding Medicine due to the Faculty-specific policies in place) and complete this work by December 2020. Although it will be challenging to find research subjects, this is an opportunity to affect national policy and will be ‘sold’ as such. However, the Committee agreed that it was important to manage the expectations of admissions tutors in terms of the scope of the study. It was confirmed that ethical approval has been granted for the proposed research, and data collection will begin as soon as possible.

**6.4** The Committee supported the study and agreed that communications should be sent from the Associate Professor of Education.

## **7. Academic Prize Framework**

**7.1** The Committee received a proposal to endorse the development of an Academic Prize Framework from the Head of Assessment Records and Graduate Management Trainee.

LTC.2019.20

- 7.2** Following a review of academic prizes over the last 6 months, a collaborative effort between Registry and academic departments was proposed to create a framework to support academic prize administration. The Committee welcomed the proposal and agreed that there should be consistent and equitable recognition of student achievement across the College.
- 7.3** It was highlighted that prizes hold different ‘value’, outside of monetary terms, across the College. For example, some prizes play a role in future employment and some are associated with strategic partners of the College. It can often be the case where donors only want to be associated with high end prizes. These differences will therefore need to be taken into account when developing a framework.
- 7.4** Data was presented including the total spend on prizes across Faculties. The Committee asked that this is broken down into total spend per student across Faculties.
- 7.5** The Committee endorsed the development of an Academic Prize Framework, ensuring there is sufficient flexibility, to include the following:
- Guidelines on how the value of the prize should be calculated in relation to the scale of the academic achievement
  - Setting a standard regarding average value of prizes across the college
  - An agreement between departments and the graduation team on the level of academic achievement required for a prize to be read out during graduation ceremonies.

In addition, it was agreed that student opinion is gathered to assess whether the College is adequately meeting students’ expectations with the award of prizes.

A Framework will be presented at a future QAEC meeting.

## **8. Inclusive and Diverse Classrooms and Culture**

LTC.2019.21

- 8.1** The Committee received a road map for the inclusivity pillar of the LTS (Recommendation a.2 from the LTS review) presented by the Chair and Executive Officer for the Vice Provost (Education).
- 8.2** The Learning and Teaching Strategy sets out the College’s vision and mission to ‘create inclusive and diverse classrooms and culture’, and outlines the strategic approach to achieving this. The paper put forward a rationale for further development of this pillar, setting out an overarching approach to guide the development of the College’s collective actions, listing a number of new and existing discrete projects. The indicative projects listed promote inclusivity for all student across all levels, and are not targeted interventions (which are also being implemented). It was noted that the intention is to lay the foundations for these projects, without making requests for additional funding beyond the current Strategy budget.

**8.3** The Committee discussed the overall direction and ‘ethos’ underpinning the approach and the following comments on some of the proposed constituent projects were noted:

- The measures of success for some of the new projects will need to be further defined
- The College should be mindful when using the term ‘inclusivity’. This word has a number of usages across College ranging from accessible assessment to overarching policies
- Although differences exist to inclusive learning and teaching approaches within STEMM versus other subject areas, it was noted that important similarities are often overlooked
- Should further feedback be required from the postgraduate taught student community then the item could be taken to the Community and Welfare Board
- Should the College be successful in recruiting more WP students then there needs to be a strategy to address any attainment gap

**8.4** The Committee welcomed the work being undertaken in an important area of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The document will be further developed before being taken forward to appropriate forums for feedback.

## **9. Success Criteria/Targets for the LTS**

LTC.2019.22

**9.1** The Committee received a paper on success criteria/targets for the LTS (Recommendation a.1) from the Head of Strategic Projects. Minor revisions were made to the overarching principles and the action planner was updated in response to feedback provided at the Learning and Teaching Committee held on 23 January 2020 (Item 5.2 refers).

**9.2** The Committee discussed the following inputs, which have been referred to the College’s Regulations and Policy Review Committee (RPRC):

- Availability of marking schemes and past exam papers for all coursework and exams
- Availability of model solutions for all coursework and for all exam papers shortly after completion

The Committee did not recommend providing, for example, model answers from the past three years, as the purpose of the above information is to prepare students for the overarching assessment experience rather focus on specific programme content.

**9.3** Further discussion took place around the following input:

- Implementation of transparent workload models across all departments to include time for education innovation and individual’s teaching practice

It was noted that there is now a College working group taking this area forward.

- 9.4 The Committee welcomed the document and recommended it to Senate for endorsement. The paper will be included as part of the Learning and Teaching Committee Report to Senate.

**Action: Secretary/Head of Strategic Projects**

**10. PGT Curriculum Review**

LTC.2019.23

- 10.1 In preparation for PGT Curriculum Review, a paper was presented at the Learning and Teaching Committee in November 2019. Following feedback, the Project Manager (Learning and Teaching) presented a follow up paper summarising the lessons learnt from the UG Curriculum Review.

The following points were noted:

- It was agreed departments would plan and carry out the review of their PGT programme portfolio on a locally driven timescale
- On establishing these timescales, resources would be planned to produce a package of holistic support for departments conducting Curriculum Review. This support is expected to include:
  - The benefit of support, guidance and professional expertise from the Education Office, EDU and QA teams
  - Provision of opportunities and share and collaborate with relevant programme teams from across College
  - Peer support and feedback on the review and redesign of curricula and assessment, as well as on Curriculum Review documentation
  - A variety of high-quality worked examples of programme and module level documentation
- Each Faculty was asked to work with their departments to form an indicative view of the most practical timeframe for the review of PGT curricula.

- 10.2 Indicative PGT curriculum review development plans from the Business School and the Faculty of Engineering were noted. An indicative plan is currently being drawn up by the Faculty of Natural Sciences and will be shared with the Committee once finalised. Curriculum Review was carried out for the majority of the Faculty of Medicine's PGT programmes in 2019. Six programmes within the suite have not yet been reviewed. The Committee welcomed early Faculty planning and agreed that this will inform Programmes Committee workload management.

**10.3** The Associate Dean (UG Programmes & Education Quality) Imperial College Business School, and current programmes Committee Chair, recommended that:

- The new Chair, once appointed, and any new members of Programmes Committee are provided with guidance to undertake effective scrutiny of programme documentation
- Programmes Committee is provided with relevant comments/recommendations made by FECs on programme proposals

The Committee agreed with the recommendations.

**10.4** The Head of Strategy and Operations (Graduate School) welcomed opportunities to work with programme teams where appropriate and offered support on behalf of the Graduate School.

**10.5** The Committee agreed that PGT programmes will normally make provision for exit awards and a rationale must be provided where these are not included in programme specifications. Module structure will inevitably dictate exit award provision and the Committee appreciated that both PG Certs and PG Dips cannot always be built into programmes. Departments should be consistent in the provision of exit awards and recognise that these are in place to recognise student achievement at the point of award.

**10.6** The Committee welcomed the document which will be further developed by the Project Manager (Learning and Teaching) through consultation with the wider College.

## **11. Education Evaluation**

**11.1** No updates reported.

## **12. Educational Research**

**12.1** The Committee received a verbal update from the Director for CHERS (Centre for Higher Education Research and Scholarship).

## **13. Online Innovation Working Group (OLIG)**

**13.1** The Committee received a verbal update from the Vice Provost (Education).

## **14. I-Explore Module Innovation Group (IMIG)**

**14.1** The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Provost (Learning and Teaching).

**15. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee**

**15.1** The Committee noted that the minutes from QAEC can be accessed at:  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/senate-subcommittees/quality-assurance-enhancement-committee/>

**15.2** The Committee received a verbal update from the Academic Registrar on the QAEC held on 15 January 2020.

**16. Any Other Business**

**16.1** It was noted that the Associate Dean (UG Programmes & Education Quality), Imperial College Business School, is leaving the College in March 2020. On behalf on the Committee, the Chair expressed sincere thanks to the Associate Dean for his exceptional work over the years in supporting Committee decisions and contribution to the College as a whole.

**17. LTC Meeting dates for 2019/20**

**17.1** The Committee noted the following meeting dates, all scheduled from 15.00-17.00:

- Thursday 2 April 2020
- Thursday 14 May 2020
- Thursday 4 June 2020
- Thursday 30 July 2020