

Present

Professor Simone Buitendijk – Vice Provost (Education) – Chair
Mr David Ashton – Academic Registrar
Ms Emma Caseley – Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office
Professor Sue Gibson – Director of the Graduate School
Professor Martyn Kingsbury – Director of Educational Development
Mr Martin Lupton – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine
Mr Alejandro Luy – ICU Deputy President (Education)
Professor Omar Matar – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Emma McCoy – Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Professor Alan Spivey – Assistant Provost (Learning & Teaching) – *left after item 3*
Ms Lucy Heming – Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)
- Secretary

In attendance

Ms Hannah Bannister – Director of Student Services (for item 3)
Mr Gideon Shimshon – Director of the Digital Learning Hub (for item 4)
Ms Hailey Smith – Project Manager (Learning and Teaching Strategy), Education Office

Apologies

Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning
Dr Edgar Meyer – Business School representative
Ms Judith Webster – Head of Academic Services

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees and apologies, as listed above, were noted.

2. Minutes

LTC.2018.30

2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 20 December 2018.

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

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

3. Student Support Strategy

LTC.2018.31

3.1 In 2018, a draft strategy for improving the way in which the College supports students was developed, setting out the case for developing a support strategy, principles to underpin the way in which the College approaches student support and priority actions. A consultation exercise with staff and students took place between June and September 2018. Using a combination of pop-stands and online surveys for students and staff, the consultation gathered over 250 responses from students and 220 responses from staff. The Committee received a copy of the draft strategy and the consultation summary.

3.2 The responses were very positive and showed considerable support for the developing a strategy and for the content of the proposal. The negative responses fell broadly into two themes:

- the principles should become SMART objectives, with timelines against the actions;
- scepticism that the actions would be implemented and make a difference.

Across all responses, it was evident that the actions, if implemented, would be welcomed and that the strategy had not omitted any major issues or activities of relevance to students. Some comments focused on relatively specific aspects such as sexual harassment, the supervisor relationship for research students and resourcing for the Student Counselling Service were already being addressed by various constituent parts of the College.

3.3 Two of the actions were already in the early stages of implementation. The Mental Health Strategy was envisaged as a research opportunity as well as a practical piece of work to establish baseline data about student wellbeing, review the efficacy of current activity, explore the links between academic study and mental wellbeing / ill health, and to identify relevant support and interventions for students at Imperial. CHERS was in the process of appointing a Research Associate to frame the project. The second action in train was establishing a case management system. This work was anticipated to require a full five-year timeframe, given the very disparate mechanisms that are in use across departments and services at present. ICT had completed an initial scoping of current practice and were working with Student Services on a bid to be submitted to the Transformation Investment Board via the Project Resource Investment Board this academic year.

3.4 The Committee discussed the Strategy in detail, making a number of recommendations for enhancements including:

- Ensuring greater staff buy-in by getting started on the actions now, even if they required tweaking along the way, to show action is being taken
- Better joining up of central and local action and support
- Providing more information on staff training and support
- Building on local initiatives, such as the work in Medicine to introduce mental health/ healthy living into new curriculum and looking at whether people can be nudged into better/healthier habits
- Extending peer mentoring to postgraduate taught students
- Incorporating outstanding recommendations from the Personal Tutor Forum and expanding Faculty-based personal tutor training
- Considering how online students would be able to access support services
- Considering how SIMP might provide opportunities for assisting with case management

3.5 The Committee discussed the notification rights of next of kin, particularly parents, when a student was facing difficult circumstances. It was noted some institutions are trialling an opt-in process for next of kin to be contacted if a student is deemed to be in need of support and that the College retains the right to make contact with a next of kin in case of emergency; however, there was some concern about how this might operate, who would determine what circumstances might lead to a notification in less extreme circumstances and how to manage this when the next of kin may be part of

the problem. The Committee agreed that more thought was needed on this but as a first step the current protocols on how next of kin information is used (for example, in the terms and conditions) would be reviewed.

ACTION: Academic Registrar / Director of Student Services

- 3.6** The Committee noted the need for appropriate resourcing to support the implementation of the Strategy. This would need to be considered in relation to the upcoming planning round, even if this was in relation to preliminary planning.

ACTION: Director of Student Services

- 3.7** Vice-Deans (Education) agreed to discuss the proposed strategy with their respective Deans before the paper was considered at Provost Board.

ACTION: Vice-Deans (Education)

- 3.8** The Committee thanked the Director of Student Services for her work on this.

4. Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy

- 4.1** The Committee received a presentation on developments with the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy. The presentation provided a reminder of the drivers behind the Strategy, an update on online programme and module developments and progression with the physical and digital infrastructure for supporting pedagogy transformation. The Committee was reminded that pedagogy was the central driver for digital developments; not the technology itself.

- 4.2** Decisions about which specific digital offerings would be developed in consultation with Departments and were based on a strong research base, predicted success (including popularity) and meeting Global Challenges. The College needed to consider how best to capture interest in developing new ideas while also managing demand/expectations.

- 4.3** The Digital Learning team was working on blended learning programmes across the College. With the MBBS, for example they were looking at content transformation through four projects to i) digitise curricula, ii) put content on Coursera and offer as blended learning; iii) provide a digital learning experience and iv) look at how different systems could work together to create unified student experience.

- 4.4** Progress was being made with the physical infrastructure to support delivery of the digital learning and teaching strategy, for example, through the development of experimental teaching spaces.

- 4.5** In 5-10 years, the student population would look quite different if Imperial continued to go down the online route; there was a need to manage expectations about what online students would be able to get from Imperial and how Imperial would cater appropriately to them. For open content, students would have very limited contact with College services. For online students, there was a project group mapping services and identifying any differences. It was important to remember that on-campus tools would not always be better than online tools; therefore, for all students, the right balance of support and services both digital and physical needed to be reached. It was intended to do some educational research in this area, for

example looking at risk-taking and self-efficacy built up through initial stages of gaming.

- 4.6 Members were asked to liaise with the Chair regarding ideas for her upcoming keynote at the Coursera conference in London in March.

ACTION: Members

5. Learning and Teaching Strategy

5.1 Update on Curriculum Review

LTC.2018.32

- 5.1.1 Two undergraduate programmes and four postgraduate taught programmes had received approval from Programmes Committee since the last meeting. There had been positive feedback from Programmes Committee on the quality of the paperwork received.

- 5.1.2 All remaining Engineering Curriculum Review proposals had been discharged by their reference panels and were now going forward to their Faculty Education Committee. The MBBS reference panel review also was completed, along with two-thirds of postgraduate taught Medicine. The Centre for Environmental Policy had completed its review and would be going to Programmes Committee shortly; the other Departments in the Faculty of Natural Sciences were still working with their reference panels.

- 5.1.3 While on the whole relations between reference panels and departments had been good, some did not work as well. These exceptional cases would be addressed outside of the Curriculum Review process.

- 5.1.4 The Committee thanked the Project Manager (Learning and Teaching Strategy), Education Office for her hard work. Plans were underway to ensure the work of all contributors to the Curriculum Review process would be acknowledged and celebrated. In addition, it would be important to continue to support those enthused by this process who were looking to take it further.

5.2 Update on plans for Pedagogy Transformation

LTC.2018.33

- 5.2.1 As the first major phase of Curriculum Review was coming to an end, it was important to look at how to move forward with plans for pedagogic transformation, including building on opportunities identified through the Review process. A number of initiatives had been funded through the first iteration of the pedagogy transformation process, with about £12.5 million allocation to stream A and B bids. There was an opportunity to reflect on whether to continue as planned with the next round of projects being based on stream A (larger projects with bigger funding opportunities and based on whole department engagement).

- 5.2.2 It was noted that in Engineering, there was a department which had completed curriculum review and had interest in progressing with pedagogy transformation but through something which might be bigger than stream B and smaller than stream A, with a possibility it could become A over time depending on how A was defined. There was interest in looking at this again in the Faculty of Natural Sciences as well. It was agreed that the next meeting of Learning and Teaching Committee would review the definitions of streams A and B and agree a way forward.

ACTION: Head of Strategic Projects (Education Office)

- 5.2.3** It was noted that there was a sense of momentum which needed to be sustained and built on following Curriculum Review, while also colleagues needed some time and space to reflect on their future directions following the review process.
- 5.2.4** A concern was raised about whether postgraduate taught students might not benefit as much as due to a focus on and the timing which might benefit those projects arising from undergraduate curriculum review. It was reiterated that this was one of the benefits of taking a whole department or multiple department approach, as it reduces divides and broadens impact. In addition, some innovations might be best-suited for postgraduate taught classes
- 5.3 Update on regulatory progress**
- 5.3.1** The request for additional consultation had been taken on board; a further set of consultation representatives had been added to the Regulations and Policy Review Group and Faculties had been invited to add additional attendees as well.
- 5.3.2** The College was reaching a point where final decisions on aspects of the regulations would be required. Vice-Deans were requested to support colleagues to reach decisions, with the knowledge that the regulations would be kept under review going forward. The Vice-Provost (Education) would be kept informed if interventions were needed to reach a final decision.

ITEMS TO NOTE

- 6. Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan and Risk Log** LTC.2018.34
a & b
- 6.1** The Committee noted the addition of a new red risk (21) in relation to there being insufficient resource within Departments to implement Curriculum Review, for example, due to additional work by Departmental staff on admissions. Plans were underway for Registry to take over some of this work and deal with the backlog and liaisons were ongoing about how to management the postgraduate taught student applications; therefore it was anticipated this risk would be lessened soon. It was noted that there was always a peak in admissions work at this time and that this had been exacerbated by the increase in student applications for the College, which was a positive outcome.
- 7. Educational Research**
- 7.1** As the College moved to implement Curriculum Review, the next stage would be support the research and evaluation agenda. The Centre for Higher Education Scholarship and Research would be supporting conversations on this, including information on applicable tools and mechanisms for sharing practice.
- 7.2** Three new appointments had been made to CHERS and it was hoped they would start around Easter. The official launch of CHERS had taken place recently at the inaugural lecture of the Director of CHERS, Professor Martyn Kingsbury.

8. Online Learning Innovation Group (OLIG) LTC.2018.35

8.1 The report on recent meetings of the Online Learning Innovation Group was noted.

9. I-Explore Module Innovation Group LTC.2018.36

9.1 It was noted that there were ongoing discussions about how to deal with 7.5 ECTS Horizons modules within the I-Explore suite of modules. A consultation was planned with students via the Imperial College Union.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 The Provost had requested information for Senate on how the College can mitigate the impact on the student experience if a no-deal Brexit occurs. The Academic Registrar would follow up with the risk team and take the lead in pulling together information for Senate; some of this could be based on previous work on disruption and local communications developed for students, for example in the Business School.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

11. Dates for Meetings

11.1 Thursday 28 February 2019, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 28 March 2019, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 16 May 2019, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 20 June 2019, 15.00-17.00