

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)
Ms Judith Webster – Head of Academic Services
Ms Lucy Heming – Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)
- Secretary

In attendance

Ms Chris Banks – Assistant Provost (Space) (for item 3.1)
Mr Craig Walker – Interim Director CTSO (for item 3.2)
Ms Hannah Bannister – Director of Student Services (for item 4)
Ms Hailey Smith – Project Manager (Learning and Teaching Strategy), Education Office
Mr Scott Tucker – Assistant Registrar (Monitoring and Review)
Ms Rachel Witton – Executive Officer to the Vice-Provost (Education)

Apologies

Dr Malcolm Edwards – Director of Strategic Planning
Dr Edgar Meyer – Business School representative

1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. Minutes

LTC.2018.12

2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 13 September 2018, subject to amending ‘recommendations’ to ‘recommended actions’ in paragraph 6.1.12 in line with the wording used in the Imperial College Union (ICU) survey reports.

2.2 Minute 4.4 refers: the Director of Risk Management would be attending the next Committee meeting to talk more about how Learning and Teaching risks were dealt with on the central risk log.

ACTION: Secretary

2.3 Minute 4.5 refers: Confirmation would be sought for the next meeting on the outcome of the proposal to introduce a new President's Award for Assistant Supervisors.

ACTION: Head of Strategic Projects, Education Office

2.4 Minutes 6.1.12 and 7.2 refer: members of the NSS/PTES (National Student Survey / Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey) working group had been identified and it was hoped the group would meet soon. It was intended to use the approach of "Appreciative Enquiry", through which the focus would be on good examples which could be shared. This could lead to the creation of a good practice menu from which departments could take forward realistically quickly the most relevant items. Where systemic issues were identified, these would be escalated to the appropriate areas.

2.5 It was acknowledged the introduction in new learning and teaching methods could be challenging for students and that it was possible student responses to this could initially be negative and result in lower student satisfaction. This possible short-term lowering of satisfaction would have to be borne in the knowledge that long-term gains in the improvement in learning and teaching and the student experience would be achieved.

2.6 Minute 8.2.1 refers: an update on the risks surrounding the work required following approval of curricula through Curriculum Review would be considered at a future Committee meeting.

ACTION: Secretary

2.7 Minute 15.1 refers: a presentation on the management of the impact of Brexit on learning and teaching will be provided to the November Committee meeting by the Head of Business Continuity.

ACTION: Secretary

2.8 Minute 15.2 refers: following discussion within Faculties, the College had offered to participate in the second subject-level Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) pilot but it had not yet received confirmation on whether it had been chosen. The Committee noted the importance of learning from the feedback from the first pilot and the experience of the College's representative on a TEF Panel.

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

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

3. Implementing the Vision for Learning and Teaching Space

3.1 An update on the College Space-Sharing Project

LTC.2018.13

3.1.1 The College Space-Sharing Project was seeking to maximise the College's effective use of space to support the best learning and teaching experience for students and staff and support growth in student numbers. To achieve this, there was a space policy framework, containing ten overarching principles and six strategic goals. These were further supported by a number of space policies and projects. One key issue that the project as a whole needed to overcome

was that departmental strength was more important than common good; that is, as well as practical changes, the space project needed to effect cultural change. The College needed to work together if student numbers were to grow; senior management would need to drive forward this new approach for it to be successful.

- 3.1.2** Joint timetabling currently was the biggest piece of work under the space project; the College had tasked key colleagues to demonstrate within two years of the start of the timetabling work for 2019/20 that space sharing to support growth in student numbers was achievable. Data on current usage suggested there was room for more effective space use, given the College's utilisation rate of 22%¹ against the sector benchmark of 35%. Analytics would be used to inform future occupancy; this would help unpick existing practice in more detail, such as the use of block booking approaches.
- 3.1.3** Using space more effectively, including addressing capacity usage, was important but it was noted there were other ways to look at growing student numbers as well, such as online teaching and evening teaching.
- 3.1.4** Significant change had already been introduced despite some resistance. These changes benefited current students, who were impacted by inconsistencies in access to space.
- 3.1.5** One issue to be addressed was trust and accountability. Colleagues needed to be confident that if they shared their space and subsequently could not find a room, they would be supported to obtain an appropriate space and would not just lose out. The project team was keen to address this; improved data would help as would the ongoing contribution of staff from across a range of areas to better understand local concerns and needs.
- 3.1.6** It was noted that a crunch point was looming as timetabling for the 19/20 academic year would start about two months before the undergraduate Curriculum Review process was finished.
- 3.1.7** The Committee thanked the Assistant Provost (Space) and her team for their hard work.

3.2 An update on recent improvements to learning and teaching spaces

LTC.2018.14

- 3.2.1** Alongside the work on space sharing, there was work underway on enabling the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy in terms of physical spaces. To this end, more than £2.5m had been spent on making improvements to more than 61 rooms, bringing those rooms up to the basic standards expected of all teaching rooms as well as contributing towards the development of some experimental spaces. This work had added real capacity and based on feedback from users, the progress made was significant.

¹ The 22% does not reflect use of space for lower numbers than possible.

3.2.2 While the work completed was successful, there would be a further two to three years of further work needed. In particular, works around ventilation and temperature management would be addressed over a longer term. It was noted that the impact of future improvements might be lessened; current improvements had addressed the worst affected areas so achieved the greatest change.

3.2.3 The College had plans to overhaul some of its lecture theatres to make them more flexible. The College was working with an architect who had experience of this in other UK institutions and had agreed to initially pilot this by converting two lecture theatres. A list of those under consideration had been shortlisted based on meeting certain criteria. Currently no options from Medicine were included but the Committee agreed that this needed to be discussed in more detail outside of the meeting.

ACTION: Medicine Vice-Dean (Education); Interim Head of CTSO

3.2.4 Members were asked to advise the Interim Head of CTSO if any of the Lecture Theatres which had been ruled out of the shortlist should be re-considered, for example, if the data assumptions were incorrect. It was emphasised that if chosen, those using the Lecture Theatres would have to commit to using them for interactive learning and teaching methods and engaging in the space-sharing project. As a result, while meeting the structural criteria was important, consideration of the temperament of the primary users was also key.

3.2.5 Calculations based on the architect's previous experience of converting lecture theatres indicated that there would be a seat reduction in some instances; this would also need to be taken into account when choosing which package of rooms to be take forward in the pilot.

3.2.6 The Vice-Deans (Education) were requested to provide feedback on the proposed packages on rooms to be used in the pilot, taking into account staff willingness to engage and the impact of any reduction in capacity.

ACTION: Vice-Deans (Education)

3.2.7 The Committee thanked the Interim Head of CTSO and his team for their hard work and particularly welcomed the culture change already achieved through the space improvements made to date.

4. Student Support Strategy

LTC.2018.15

4.1 The Student Support Strategy was being developed by Student Services alongside Imperial College Union and informed by good practice elsewhere in the sector. The proposal for the strategy had been presented to Provost Board last year; this had provided the mandate for consultation on the key principles in the document. The consultation had finished at the end of September; about 500 responses had been received as well as a couple of responses provided through other means. Particular thanks were recorded for the ICU's work on engaging with and promoting the consultation.

4.2 The Director of Student Services was working through the responses and the detailed free text comments. Overall the responses showed agreement with the

principles and priorities. The feedback also showed some cynicism from students over whether anything would actually change and highlighted their perception that support currently was disjointed and that greater anonymity would be welcomed. It was suggested that some students could benefit from allowing greater transparency over their information.

- 4.3** There was a broader issue which needed to be addressed about the extent to which students should experience some discomfort in their learning process by being educationally challenged and the extent to which students expected their degrees to be a painful rite of passage without querying whether that was what was really needed or expected of them. The College needed to challenge the perception that implementing new learning and teaching approaches or changing curricula would 'dumb down' degrees.
- 4.4** It was intended that Strategy would be inclusive of all students, including postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR). Feedback had been received from students at all levels of study and the language used in the Strategy would aim to reflect the different experiences and types of support that might be needed at different stages of a student's educational journey.
- 4.5** The feedback did not suggest anything had been overlooked but did show a big call for better resourcing of the Counselling Service; more resourcing had already been put in place for 2018/19. There was a lot of interest in reviewing induction and further developing the transition programme; feedback on the difficulties students had faced in transitioning to their studies at Imperial would inform future support.
- 4.6** It was recommended that the College could be clearer to applicants on what support would be available to manage their expectations and make preparations in time for the start of their studies. It was important to have applicants discuss support needs from an early stage in considering applying to Imperial to ensure the College could identify what support was available and what would be needed to balance the College's legal responsibilities with the student's wishes and expectations.
- 4.7** It was noted that the Strategy did not contain any Key Performance Indicators as there was a lack of data. This prevented the College from benchmarking itself against other HEIs. Data was captured locally but not in a way that could be collated and used effectively. It was hoped to install a case management system for use across the College in future; this would help share information and ensure more joined-up management of student support as well as providing data for benchmarking.
- 4.8** It was noted that the regulatory mapping and gapping exercise could help take forward some related areas, such as a fitness to study policy.
- 4.9** It was agreed an updated version of the Strategy should come to the Committee and then on to Provost Board.

ACTION: Director of Student Services, Secretary

4.10 It was agreed that further discussion would be welcomed around mental health and how the learning and teaching approaches could be used to develop and support student resilience.

ACTION: Director of Student Services, Executive Officer to the Vice-Provost (Education)

5. Master's Experience Project

LTC.2018.16

5.1.1 An interim report on the Master's Experience Project was considered. A working group had been meeting for the last few months and its focus was on taught postgraduate students' well-being, professional skills development, and supervision. The group had reviewed results in these areas from the PTES and their own survey, which showed similar outcomes. A common complaint was that PGT students felt marginalised in relation to UG and PGR students. In addition, students were concerned about the ongoing use of Wednesday afternoons for teaching in some programmes.

5.1.2 In response to feedback on supervisor and project experience, an expectations and role and responsibilities document was being developed. The professional development programme was being reviewed and the Graduate School was working closely with the Director of Student Services on the Student Support Strategy to ensure PGT students were explicitly included.

5.1.3 The report recommended that feedback was provided to AdvanceHE over changing the timing of the PTES but it was not thought likely that this could be changed. It was suggested instead the College focus on engaging with consultations about a new PGT survey being developed by the Office for Students.

5.1.4 Curriculum Review would need to address key issues around postgraduate taught provision, including:

- How much realistically could be achieved within one year?
- How can this be delivered without using Wednesday afternoons for teaching?
- How can students be supported to be ready to excel in their studies from day one given the short time-frame?

5.1.5 The issue around personal tutoring for PGT students would be referred to the NSS/PTES Working Group.

ACTION: Chair

5.1.6 A further agenda item on PGT would be considered at a future meeting; it was recommended that the Director of Student Services was invited to contribute to this agenda item.

ACTION: Director of Graduate School, Director of Student Services, Secretary

ITEMS TO NOTE

6. Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan and Learning and Teaching Strategy Risk Log LTC.2018.17a & b

6.1 The Committee noted the updated Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan and the Risk Log.

7. Educational Evaluation

7.1 This item was deferred until the next meeting.

8. Educational Research

8.1 The Centre for Higher Education Research and Scholarship was becoming better established and helping to build research capacity, in part through the recruitment of additional PhD students.

8.2 An update was provided on the HEFCE-sponsored LEGACY programme, which was looking at defining and measuring learning gain in HE. The challenges of doing this were considerable but there was acceptance the sector needed to engage with it rather than wait for others to come up with other measurements which may be less robust. There were interesting projects on learning gain at a number of institutions, including the University of Cambridge and the Open University, from which the College could build its own analysis. The data on learning gain provided a useful prompt for discussions on learning and teaching and could be used alongside student feedback, such as through the NSS, to relate the learning experience to learning gain.

8.3 It was recommended this topic was explored in more detail at a future meeting in the context of the student experience.

ACTION: Secretary

9. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

9.1 The Committee noted an update from the last QAEC meeting:

- Consideration of the consolidated 18/19 undergraduate regulations which were subsequently approved by Senate;
- Consideration of the 19/20 single set of taught regulations which was subsequently approved by Senate; developments to corresponding policies would be managed through a mapping and gapping exercise;
- Consideration of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy which was subsequently approved by Senate;
- Noting of the Academic Calendar, which will be used in 2018/19 to identify ways to change practice and bring in firmer deadlines for 2019/20

10. Senate

10.1 The Committee noted the minutes from Senate could be accessed at: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/senate/>

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1** It was noted the Universities UK (UUK) document on grade inflation and improvement would be published soon.

12. Dates for Meetings

- 12.1** Thursday 29 November 2018, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 20 December 2018, 15.00-17.00
Thursday 24 January 2019, 15.00-17.00
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