

SENATE

Minutes of Meeting held on 28 February 2024

Present: Professor Ian Walmsley (Chair); Professors Allen, Ashby, Brady, Buluwela, Green, Hanna, Haynes, Matar, Meeran, Mestel, Peydro, Spivey, Tennant, Weisemann, Xu; Drs Bluck, Costa-Pereira, Craig, Jenkins, Malhotra, Rutschmann, Tennant; Mr Lupton, Mr Tebbutt, Ms Bannister, Ms Boutrolle, Ms Yang, Mr Ashton (Secretary), Ms Webster (Minute Secretary).

In attendance: Ms Lizzie Burrows

Apologies: Professors Brandon, Ces, Craster, Hanna, Kingsbury, Lindstedt;

2826 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 13 December 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2827 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as above.

2828 Matters Arising

2829 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

2830 Provost's Business

Received: a verbal report on behalf of the Provost.

Reported: (1) That a new Academic Strategy for the College would be launched by the President the following week and would set out the nine strategic initiatives development through the consultation process. The intention was to help drive the College's disciplinary strengths across all activities and to extend the reach of the educational mission.

2831 College Strategy Update

Received: A presentation from the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) and the Vice-Dean (Education), Imperial College Business School

Reported: (1) That the presentation would reflect on areas of the new strategy that were focussed on education. The nine strategic initiatives were discussed and included, under the heading of Imperial Inspires, plans to encourage children and young people to consider working in STEM and overcome some of the barriers they may face by putting in place scholarships, outreach programmes and efforts to widen participation. The Imperial Class of 2030 would consider the attributes, skills and outcomes for graduates and

support their thinking about how their time at the college equips them for future careers and would link to the revised Learning and Teaching Strategy.

(2) That Imperial Talent would consider how to look after staff and this would extend to Early Career Researchers and PhD students. Imperial Futures would focus on delivering interdisciplinary research and education on an unprecedented scale through four Schools of convergence science. These areas would be aligned with the existing pillars of the current strategy, Sustainable, Intelligent, Health and Resilience and the idea would be to establish schools of convergence science to drive these developments forward in a way that had not yet been achieved. These would provide a physical and virtual shop window for Imperial activities to enhance visibility, attract talent and raise funding.

(3) That bringing together colleagues from across disciplines would support the development of inter-disciplinary research in a way not yet done as well as the development of the next generation of research leaders. It was expected that some interdisciplinary MSc programmes would be set up as part of this with the expectation that they would complement existing provision rather than duplicate or compete with existing programmes.

(4) The Associate Provost for Digital Lifelong Learning introduced Imperial Empowers which would see the launch of an Institute of Extended Learning which would develop lifelong learning beyond the existing work done delivering corporate and executive education. This would take students beyond a linear education and would enable them to upskill and develop their learning throughout their career. It was hoped that this would diversify the current reach of Imperial and be attractive to companies seeking to develop their employees. Discussions were taking place with departments to support them in building micro-credential, stackable degrees. It was planned that the Institute would oversee the structure to support this activity including quality assurance, market appraisal and knowledge and cross-College support. Careful attention would need to be paid to ensuring that the academic workload was not increased and that any provision was developed to avoid overload and to ensure a great student experience for those on the modules.

Considered in discussion: (6) That the Group taking the extended learning forward had set a direction of travel for the future and had been in discussion with the Director of Academic Services to make sure that the appropriate underpinning systems to operationalise this activity could be developed in parallel. It was reported, in response to a question on supporting Graduate Teaching Assistants who want to progress on to become members of academic staff to develop their teaching skills, that there had been discussions on support available through online platforms to allow sharing of knowledge and expertise within the College's own communities.

(2) That in response to a question on the different support that was implied by the slides for traditional students against lifelong learners, it was noted that the offer for lifelong learners was likely to be different in terms of the pastoral care offered but that the framework of what support learners could expect was still under development.

2832 Admissions Update

Received: A presentation from the Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions

Reported: (1) That the College had entered into a partnership with the University of Cambridge to launch admissions tests for the 2025 entry. The Maths University Admissions Test (TMUA), which already exists and is used by nine other universities and the Engineering Science Admissions Test (ESAT) is new and will be created with Pearson Vue, who are the third party, in collaboration with colleagues from Cambridge and Imperial. Some content would come from existing tests offered by Cambridge. There was an extensive communications plan to support the roll-out of these new tests, two webinars

had been delivered to over 400 people and the team had presented to the UCAS teachers and Advisors conference. Meetings were being held with every department to ensure it works with their processes. The tests would operate at the level of a top GCSE or AS Level result and would help Departments with high numbers of applications to deselect applicants with a cut off score. There would be contextual scores for WP students. Scorers would be reviewed and change each year dependent on numbers of students sitting the tests and based on data.

(2) That there was a lot of ongoing work around the Access and Participation Plan (APP) and that there would be a single institutional approach to widening participation from the 2025 entry, which would be more straightforward for applicants. If a student meets a minimum requirement there would be a guaranteed test, guaranteed interview or guaranteed minimum offer depending on the department.

(3) That the first undergraduate and postgraduate admissions forums had been held which had been well received. All Faculties were being spoken with about target setting for 2024 entry and then 2025 and beyond. Close work was taking place with the finance team ensuring that the competitive fees database is available, looking at enrolment targets and then working backwards to map how many offers and therefore applicants were needed and how that works in line with the White City growth plans.

(4) That there had been stories in the national press which made claims about the Russell Group in respect of foundation years and international year one programmes, were you do a foundation year and then progress to year two, the use of agents and the lowering of international equivalencies for entry into year one. Reassurance was offered that Imperial do none of these things.

(5) That Senate received a presentation of data on the current position for the undergraduate and postgraduate admissions for the 2024 intake. The overall picture was positive with the total UG applications up by 7% which was atypical for the sector. There was some further work to ensure that conversion of applicants was good. Information was provided on market drivers, domicile and gender splits for applications. It was noted that WP applications were up by 14% overall. In terms of postgraduate applications, there was also an increase on 2023, and while there was not the same sort of competitor datasets for postgraduate programmes, sector information indicated that this was atypical. However, the recruitment cycle didn't have the same deadlines as the UG process. Links would be provided to all members with the full details.

Considered in discussion (6) That it would be helpful to consider the gender split on PGT programmes by considering whether the slight change was reflected on new programmes or the old established Masters' programmes.

(7) That it would be helpful to understand if the maintenance loan for home students not rising in line with inflation was having any impact on recruitment. It was an area of concern for students but the College tried to counteract that with the generous bursary scheme. UCAS have provided some data to show that this is having more of an impact on mature students taking up places. The Imperial Inspires aspect of the academic strategy, and the revised APP, would be addressing the support for WP students to ensure they can success when they arrive.

2833 Artificial Intelligence Tools Update

Received: A paper from the Associate Provost (Learning and Teaching) (**Paper Senate 2023/13**)

Reported: (1) That a Working Party had been commissioned by the Education and Student Experience Committee with a broad membership from across the College, including student representation, with a focus on evaluating the impact of generative AI tools and considering

the current and future capability of these tools. Case Studies and good practice are being developed by the Educational Development Unit and the paper reflects the work of the group and its alignment with what is happening across the College. The Group is also looking at vulnerabilities in the current methods of assessment, provision of training for staff and students and recommending any changes necessary to college academic policies and regulation.

(2) Following the Senate approval of a paper setting out the general approach to generative AI tools, a website was developed, and the pages have been updated and extended to include guidance on assessment and setting out decisions about not using Turnitin AI 'detection' and the Otter AI tool. A decision tree had been developed to support thinking about the types of assessment to use.

(3) That the College had actively engaged with the development of the Russell Group's principles of AI and that the College had been representing its approach at various national forums. A workshop had been held to look at how to engage generative AI in teaching and the Educational Development Unit have developed an in-person course as an introduction to AI for teaching, learning and assessment. Work had been undertaken in collaboration with the library to update student facing guidance on plagiarism and how to cite references. Departments were being encouraged to meet and think about their approach, underpinned by the College's principles, on what is and is not acceptable use of AI.

(4) That the initial focus had been on undergraduate programmes, but additional work was now being undertaken in conjunction with the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee and Registry on guidance for the stages of assessment in a research degree.

(5) That a meeting had been scheduled with a group of students to understand how students view and use generative AI tools. Additionally, funding had been secured to hire five AI Futurists, one for each Faculty and one for non-Faculty units as a 12 month 0.25 FTE position to act as a bridge between current AI capabilities and future developments. These posts were currently being recruited.

(6) That work was being undertaken with ICT to consider technology to lock down browsers during assessment and restrict access to AI tools and to roll out Microsoft Co-pilot to offer a level playing field access to generative AI tools for students.

Considered in discussion (7) That the work being undertaken by the College was very much in line with sector peers and the approaches they were taking with information and guidance to students and staff. That more needed to be done internally to raise staff awareness of the work that was going on and it was suggested that a course could be developed as part of the Imperial Essentials programme.

2834 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Received: A Report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) **(Paper Senate 2023/14)**

Reported: (1) That the Chair of the Admissions Sub-Committee had been added to the membership of QAEC.

Senate **Approved** the amendment to the QAEC membership.

(2) That QAEC considered a summary of the Undergraduate External Examiner Reports for the 2022-23 academic year which included high response rates to the overall confidence statements Examiners are asked to respond to. Some of the themes raised in the reports around marking, moderation and feedback are already being addressed by the Assessment and Feedback Group, chaired by Martyn Kingsbury. Comments were also raised about human and physical resources to support the delivery of undergraduate programmes and the impact of generative AI on assessment.

(3) That the survey outcomes from the Autumn Term Module Evaluation Questionnaire had been considered and the committee was shown a newly developed dashboard for the dissemination of the results of the survey. The committee also discussed ongoing challenges in delivery of the survey in its current format.

(4) That QAEC received an update on progress made by the Study Abroad Task and Finish Group and noted the annual student exchange partnerships report.

2823 Dates of Terms

Received and noted: A note from the Academic Registrar setting out Dates of Terms.
(Paper Senate/2023/15)

Senate **approved** the proposed dates for Session 2026-2027.

2824 Update of Sector Developments

Received and noted: A note from the Director of Academic Quality and Standards **(Paper Senate/2023/16)**

2725 Dates of Next Meetings

1 May 2024
26 June 2024

All meetings start at 15.00hrs