

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

at the fifty-fifth Meeting of the

COUNCIL OF THE IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MEDICINE

The fifty-fifth Meeting of the Council was held in the Council Room, 170 Queen's Gate, South Kensington Campus, at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday 22nd February 2018, when there were present:

Sir Philip Dilley (Chair), Professor N. Brandon, Mr. C. Brinsmead, Ms. A. Compton, Mr. T. Courtauld, Professor A. Gast (President), Sir Jonathan Michael, Ms. A. Nimmo, Professor J. Sanders, Mr. M. Sanderson, Professor J. Stirling (Provost), Professor F. Veloso, Professor J. Weber, Mr. C. Williams, and Mr. J. Neilson (Clerk to the Court and Council).

Apologies

Mr. I. Conn, Mr. J. Cullen, Professor S. Eisenbach, Ms. S. Murray, Dr. M. Safa, and Professor T. Welton.

In attendance

Mr. J. Hancock (Assistant Clerk to the Court and Council).

ITEM 1 – MINUTES

Council – 22nd September 2017

1. The Minutes of the fifty-fourth meeting of the Council, held on Friday 24th November 2017, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

ITEM 2 – CHAIR'S REPORT

2. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and reminded them of the arrangements for the Council Away Day, to be held on the following day. This would be the fourth Council Away Day following Alice Gast's appointment as President. In that time, the Council had considered the College's five-year strategy, its long term strategy and its estates strategy. The focus for this Away Day would be the College's staff.

ITEM 3 – PRESIDENT’S REPORT

3. Opening her report, the President, Alice Gast, reported that interviews had recently been held to identify a successor to James Stirling as Provost, and she thanked Mahnaz Safa and Philip Dilley for serving on the appointment panel. Five strong candidates had been interviewed, and she was pleased to say that Professor Ian Walmsley, currently Hooke Professor of Experimental Physics and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation at Oxford University, had been appointed as the College’s next Provost. A formal announcement of his appointment would be made in the following week.
4. The President then reported on her visit to the World Economic Forum in Davos. The College had been very well represented at Davos. Imperial researchers had given presentations on nutrition and food production at a Davos Ideas Lab entitled 'Engineering Intelligent Food Systems', while she had chaired the Global University Leaders Forum, and had also taken part in a panel on the future of start-ups. At this event the President had explained how initiatives such as The Invention Rooms at White City were strengthening confidence and opportunities for young people in communities that had previously had little interaction with higher education.
5. Closing her report, the President said that the League of European Research Universities (LERU) would shortly be releasing a statement on the importance of collaboration between universities across the whole of Europe, which would be timely, given the continued discussions on Brexit. With regard to the latter, the President said a further report on the College’s preparations for Brexit would be presented to the Council at its next meeting.

ITEM 4 – PROVOST’S REPORT

6. Opening his report, the Provost, James Stirling, reminded members about the continuing dispute over the USS pension scheme. On 23rd January the independent chair of the Joint Negotiating Committee had cast his deciding vote in favour of proposals tabled by UUK. Under these proposals, the scheme would be changed so that members would earn defined contribution benefits on all of their salary from April 2019, replacing the current ‘hybrid’ system where defined contribution benefits were earned on salary over a particular threshold (currently £55,550 for the 2017/18 tax year), with defined benefits earned on salary below that. The proposals would be subject to a statutory 60 period of consultation, starting in mid-March.
7. College staff enrolled on the USS scheme were understandably concerned about the changes, which were seen by many as an erosion of one of the key benefits of working in the higher education sector, and a vital part of the College’s overall package of benefits. The College had kept staff informed of developments throughout this process, and the Director

of HR had visited a number of departments to answer questions and concerns in person.

8. As had been reported in the news, the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) had balloted its members nationally for strike action. The strike, which had commenced that day, was taking place at 61 universities, including Oxford, Cambridge and UCL, with a total of 14 days scheduled over the next four weeks. The Provost advised that 522 members of staff were currently members of UCU. By the end of the first strike day 53 staff members had declared that they were striking, although more declarations were expected to follow. Individual departments were working closely with central support teams to minimise the overall impact on teaching and assessment for the College's students. These actions were being coordinated by the Vice-Provost (Education) and the Academic Registrar, in consultation with student leaders.
9. Concluding his report, Professor Stirling acknowledged that the strength of feeling on this issue from both staff and students was understandable. As the pension scheme formed a significant part of the overall package of benefits for the College's staff, the College would look at overall staff remuneration, and reaffirm our position that Imperial College is committed to offering staff a pay and benefits package that is equitable, fair and appropriately reflects the College's standing as a world leading University.
10. Members noted that the generous pension scheme provided by the USS had for a long time been an important part of the overall benefits package for academics; the proposed changes to the scheme would reduce the value of this benefit, and could make the overall package less attractive. However, it was also recognised that the future financial sustainability of the USS Pension scheme would have to be addressed. As the USS was a multi-member scheme, with over 350 HE employers in the scheme, there was a limit to the extent to which the College could influence the eventual outcome of the dispute.

ITEM 5 – FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

11. The Chair of the Finance Committee, Chris Brinsmead, provided members with an oral report of the Committee's meeting held earlier that day. As well as reviewing two reports to HEFCE, the Annual Efficiency Report 2016-17 and the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) Return for 2016-17, the Committee had considered a report on Long-Term Financial Planning from the Chief Financial Officer. The Committee had also discussed the three main financial planning areas for the College – the Core College, Related Ventures and the Endowment – and had asked to be provided with a 3 year cash flow forecast at its next meeting.
12. The Chief Financial Officer advised the Council of a confidential potential commercial opportunity that was currently under discussion. The College was undertaking due diligence at present, and would present a more detailed report to the Council at its next

meeting in May.

ITEM 6 – ANNUAL REPORT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY (PAPER A)

13. The Provost, James Stirling, presented Paper A, and noted both the College's efforts to promote and support research integrity, and also how allegations of research misconduct were investigated.
14. Members asked how the level of misconduct investigations compared to the total volume of research activity. Professor Stirling said that both the volume of research activity and the number of researchers at the College had been increasing, but noted that the increase in the number of allegations received in the previous year was not a reflection of, and did not correlate to, this increased activity. It was more instructive to look at the number of full investigations carried out by the College, and in 2016-17 no allegations had been referred for full investigation.
15. With regard to completed investigations, members asked if sanctions could be placed on the College or individual researchers in response to a case of research misconduct. Professor Stirling advised that the College worked closely with external funders, and would inform them of the outcome of formal investigations. In serious cases researchers who had been found to have committed research misconduct could be barred from receiving further funding. However, often the most serious consequence of a case of research misconduct was the damage caused to a researcher's, and in some cases also to the College's, reputation.

ITEM 7 – ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (PAPER B)

16. The Chair presented Paper B and noted that, as well as reviewing the salary and emoluments for the President and staff members of Council, the Committee had also reviewed the changing landscape and guidance for the governance of remuneration committees and had supported changes to its terms of reference and to the approach of the Committee. The revised terms of reference were now recommended to the Council for approval.
17. It was confirmed that the College would have to report publicly on its gender pay gap by the end of March. A detailed report on this was due to be presented to the Provost's Board in the following week, but in advance of that, it was reported that the College's median pay gap was about 9%, among the lowest in the Russell Group. It was agreed that, in presenting this information, the College should be careful to distinguish between the gender pay gap, and gender pay equality, as they could easily be confused and the information misinterpreted.

18. Turning to the Committee's terms of reference, the Chair confirmed that neither the President nor the Provost were members of the Remuneration Committee, and could not attend when their own pay was being discussed. The revisions to the terms of reference provided considerably more detail about the Committee's operations than before, and were in line with the latest published guidance on the roles and responsibilities of Remuneration Committees. It was suggested that the quorum for the Committee should be increased to the Chair with two other members.

Resolved: That, subject to the inclusion of the increased quorum noted above, the revised terms of reference of the Remuneration Committee, as set out in Paper B, be approved.

ITEM 8 - STAFF MATTERS (PAPER C)

19. Paper C was received for information.

ITEM 9 - MAJOR PROJECTS REPORT (PAPER D)

20. Paper D was received for information.

ITEM 10 - SENATE REPORT (PAPER E)

21. Paper E was received for information.

ITEM 22 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22. The Chair of the White City Syndicate, Alison Nimmo, reported that the Planning Application for the White City Campus had been submitted to Hammersmith and Fulham Council.

NEXT MEETING

23. The Chair reminded members that the next meeting would be held on Friday 18 May 2018 in the Commonwealth Building at the Hammersmith Campus.