

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

**at the sixty-third meeting of the**

**COUNCIL OF THE IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MEDICINE**

The sixty-third meeting of the Council was held in the Ground Floor Boardroom in the Dyson Building, South Kensington Campus, Imperial College London at 10:00 a.m. on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019, when there were present:

Sir Philip Dilley (Chair), Mr. I. Conn, Mr. T. Courtauld, Professor A. Gast (President), Sir Jonathan Michael, Ms. S. Murray, Dame Alison Nimmo, Dr. M. Safa, Professor J. Sanders, Mr. M. Sanderson, Mr. A. Sood, Professor T. Tetley, Professor F. Veloso, Professor I. Walmsley (Provost), Professor J. Weber, Professor T. Welton, Mr. C. Williams and Mr. J. Neilson (Clerk to the Court and Council).

**In attendance**

Professor N. Alford (Associate Provost, Academic Planning) (item 7 onwards), Professor L. Blair (Vice President Communications and Public Affairs) (item 7 onwards), Professor S. Buitendijk (Vice Provost, Education) (item 7), Dr. M. Edwards (Director of Strategic Planning) (item 7 onwards), Professor N. Jennings (Vice Provost, Research and Enterprise) (item 7 onwards), Mrs. S. Walsh (Director of Risk Management) (item 8), Professor M. Murphy (Vice President, Advancement) (item 7), Mrs. R. Knight (Assistant Clerk to the Court and Council) and Mrs J. Solieux (Central Secretariat ).

**WELCOME**

1. The Chair of Council welcomed Professor Terry Tetley, the elected staff member of Council 2019-21, to her first meeting.

**ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES**

2. Apologies were received from Professor N. Brandon, Mr. C. Brinsmead and Mr. J. Cullen.

**ITEM 2 – MINUTES****Council – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

3. The Minutes of the sixty-second meeting of the Council, held on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

**ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING**

4. There were no matters arising to note.

**ITEM 4 – CHAIR'S REPORT**

5. The Chair made a brief report.

**ITEM 5 – PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

6. Opening her report the President, Professor Alice Gast, reflected on progress over the summer. She had attended her last meeting of the UK Research and Innovation Board but would remain engaged, particularly in conversations about changes to research funding. The government had announced that the two-year post-study work visa would be reintroduced following vigorous lobbying by Imperial College and many others. This was a welcome change which would help student recruitment.
7. The President presented her dashboard with a focus on the modest staff turnover since the EU Referendum and the College surplus which was affected by the USS valuation and accounting requirements for the College that will continue to cause volatility.
8. The President then reported that the Project Oak negotiations had continued over the summer. The President thanked the Council for their support, and noted that following their approval of the resolution to announce the intention to sell St. Mary's in July the College had been able to communicate and engage effectively with stakeholders and had strengthened its negotiating position. After the announcement, three important town hall meetings had been held with staff, students and alumni. Professor Weber explained the issues raised by the three communities to Council, and said that the College was focussed on delivering improvements to research and teaching facilities that would benefit students. Other feedback included the importance of keeping the St Mary's building fully functional for the next five years and celebrating the heritage of the St Mary's building. The Imperial College Healthcare Trust is supportive of the decision.

**ITEM 6 – PROVOST’S REPORT**

9. The Provost, Professor Ian Walmsley, opened his report by reporting that eight members of the College staff had recently been successful in obtaining awards from the UKRI Future Leaders scheme. Taking into account the size of institutions the College had achieved the best result in the sector. In addition, the European Research Council had awarded two additional proof of concept grants to the College, for disease diagnosis and pancreatic cancer treatment.
10. The Provost reported on productive visits from the Chinese Minister of Science and the Portuguese Science Minister.
11. The search for a successor to Professor Tom Welton, Dean of Faculty of Natural Sciences, was progressing well, and it was expected that the new Dean would be in post in the new year.
12. Professor Paul Lickiss has been appointed as the academic lead for sustainability. He would help develop the College sustainability strategy building on the Greening Imperial initiative. He takes up his post in November, following his sabbatical leave.
13. The USS pension talks continued to progress. The Trustees had finalised the 2018 USS valuation, which had reduced the increase that would have followed the 2017 valuation. The terms had been significantly informed by the work of the Joint Expert Panel, which the College had had a substantial role in establishing. The UCU leadership had not accepted the outcome of the 2018 valuation and had begun a strike ballot which ends on 30 October 2019. Their “no detriment” position was that benefits should remain the same with any increase in costs being entirely met by universities. Staff were updated regularly, and information was being disseminated to Heads of Departments to help them engage with colleagues about the impact of the valuation. Contingency planning was underway.
14. In response to questions the Provost confirmed that the number of EU students starting in the coming academic year looked to be within the normal range. He would be able to confirm the final figures at the next Council meeting. The fees for EU students starting this year and next remained the same as for Home students for the remainder of their course, but it was not yet known if the same rules would apply to students joining after 2020.

**ITEM 7 – ACADEMIC STRATEGY (PAPER A)**

15. The President introduced the academic strategy, which was presented to Council after extensive discussions across the College. Its implementation would be discussed further at the Council away day in February 2020. The President introduced colleagues who had joined the meeting for this item, and invited the new Vice President, Advancement, Michael Murphy, to introduce himself to Council. The Vice President emphasized the connection

between philanthropic giving and the academic strategy, and the potential of fundraising to further the success of the strategy.

16. The Provost introduced the strategy and the implementation plan. The ambitious vision identified four themes of intellectual endeavour that will enhance the ability of Imperial's capabilities in discovery science and application development to deliver significant academic and societal impact, including economic impact through innovation actions. Further, four distinctive capabilities and two foundational areas along with the student experience were identified as key assets that are distinctive Imperial attributes. The strategy derives both from assessing new external opportunities regarding areas ripe for research and education, as well as areas in which the College has, or wishes to develop, world-leading expertise and capacity.
17. The Academic Strategy built on the aspirations of the College Strategy, Department and Faculty Strategies as well as other strategies including Estates, Learning and Teaching and Advancement. Together they provided a framework to set priorities and implement opportunities, taking into account external factors and interacting with the student experience.
18. The Provost described the approach to implementation of the strategy, including examples of opportunities and the next steps. He shared a draft external publication with Council, which would soon be finalised and published.
19. Senior members of staff and the President of the Imperial College Union explained to Council what the Academic Strategy would deliver in their own areas. Communication, collaboration across Faculties, and the student experience were all recognised as direct benefits of the strategy.
20. Council members welcomed the Strategy, particularly the way it brought several disparate themes together, and the inclusion of the student experience (although important aspects of this were wider than academic). In discussion the main points made included:
  - It was suggested that the Strategy could give greater emphasis to the College's contribution to the national economy, perhaps under the heading "Prosperous Society". This had always been a distinctive part of the College's mission.
  - There was also a question as to whether "Smart Society" should be an objective in itself, or whether digital should simply be described as an enabling capability.
  - It was helpful to establish how the success of the Strategy was to be measured.
  - What was distinctive about this Strategy for the College was the research focus on economic impact and the substantial opportunities for students to be involved in research.

21. The College was aware that there would be some difficult decisions about what opportunities would not be pursued, and potentially some activities would need to be discontinued. Although the College would set its own research agenda, this would need to take account of the agendas of external partners, such as Wellcome and UKRI, and also of the need to balance fundamental research with the more applied. It was important that students and staff would be involved in the strategy's implementation and evolution. It was anticipated that this would be easier to achieve, and that the strategy would 'come to life' as collaborations and work gained momentum. The implementation and impact of the strategy would be measured and communicated, both with the Imperial community and wider stakeholders. Summing up the Chair said that Council had indicated much support for the Strategy.

### **ITEM 8 – RISK REGISTER (PAPER B)**

22. The Chair welcomed the Director of Risk Management, Dr Sarah Walsh, to the meeting. Dr Walsh presented the College's overall risk profile and its top risks, described in Paper B, which had been endorsed by the President's Board and the Audit and Risk Committee. She explained that when assessing risk particular attention was paid to those with a red RAG rating, and to those with more immediate impact, for example the potential pensions strike and Brexit. KPMG had recently audited the risk approach, the methodology for which had included a deep dive into three risks including their control and effectiveness of mitigation. The report was pending. Council were invited to endorse the College's overall risk profile.
23. The Audit and Risk Committee had discussed the risk profile in detail at their last meeting. Since 2018 the infrastructure risk had decreased to an amber rating, and it was explained that this reflected risk perspectives across the College, including from Heads of Departments and other senior staff. There had been significant recent improvements in the quality of some parts of the estate which had reduced the risk rating. The requirement to finance further improvements to College infrastructure was now included under the financial sustainability risk heading.
24. The Council welcomed the addition of NHS partnerships as a significant potential risk and noted that the focus was on how to influence NHS relationships effectively, rather than on the risks associated with employing many staff engaged in clinical activity. The mitigation was assisted by the Academic Health Science Centre structure, but the core mitigation involved creating strong relationships with individual NHS partners.
25. The methodology for determining risks was discussed, particularly the people and infrastructure risks. Qualitative and quantitative data from a wide range of stakeholders was considered in building up to the College risk profile, for example staff surveys and health and safety data. Future reports would include further explanation of the metrics used. The financial sustainability risk was more realistic than it had been in the past, because it

reflected both the increasingly difficult external environment and the materiality of this issue for the College. Likewise, the document demonstrated significant improvement in the risk management process at the College. Council members provided comments on potential further improvement, including better distinction between controls and contingencies, and testing these against plausible scenarios to provide assurance that the controls were assigned to appropriate owners and were working. A recent crisis exercise had focused on overseas travel risk, which would result in changes to the monitoring plan. It was suggested that a crisis exercise focused on cyber security could be helpful to build on work already completed in that area.

26. Summing up, the Chair said that the Council endorsed the overall risk profile in paper B, and thanked Dr Walsh for the improvements she had made.

### **ITEM 9 – ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN (PAPER C)**

27. The Director of Strategic Planning, Dr Malcolm Edwards, presented Paper C, the Access and Participation Plan approved by the Office for Students (OfS). This continued the College's commitment to attracting the students with the greatest potential regardless of their background and was linked to the Academic Strategy. The final document included more challenging targets than those that Council had seen previously with the OfS setting very high expectations around reaching the poorest households outside London in addition to sustained outreach activity in the capital. The plan frames a five-year agenda to attain the target admissions and attainment.
28. The Provost explained that the appendix to the report contained details of projects intended to deliver a long-term change in the College's performance in this area, and to reach students who could benefit from, and met the standards for, an Imperial education, and who were not yet engaging with the College. The implementation plan included measures of success, and the College would engage with the OfS on monitoring and metrics. Council was reminded that there was the opportunity to be creative and bold in this area.
29. It was suggested that although the London area had relatively high participation in Further and Higher Education, it also had relatively high living expenses for students studying there, which was likely to be a deterrent for students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2. Dr Edwards reminded Council that most first year undergraduate students lived in College accommodation, even if they lived within commuting distance. Imperial offered one of the most generous bursary schemes in the country, and this should enable all Home students from disadvantaged backgrounds to meet the cost of living in London in College accommodation, when combined with the student loan. A bursary challenge fundraising campaign had been launched to enhance and support the scheme.

**ITEM 10 – COMMUNICATION DASHBOARD AND YEAR END REVIEW (PAPER D)**

30. The Vice President Communications and Public Affairs, Luke Blair, introduced the paper. The paper reflected changes in the way in which 2019 College media coverage was evaluated. The College was considering how well themes were received by particular audiences. Rather than being metric focused, there had been a deliberate approach to reduce slightly the number of news stories in favour of increased depth of digital content, for example videos, which had increased engagement. It was known that student use of Facebook was in decline, whilst Linked-In and Instagram showed growth. The College would continue to respond to user expectations of a more sophisticated online experience.

**ITEM 11– STAFF MATTERS (PAPER E)**

31. Paper E was received for information.

**ITEM 12 – MAJOR PROJECTS REPORT (PAPER F)**

32. Paper F was received for information.

**ITEM 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

33. The President drew the media and events listing documents to the attention of Council members, particularly the upcoming launch of J-idea prior to the Commemoration Dinner. In addition, the series of salon events held in the President's Flat would continue; the next event being with Professor David Gann, Professor of Technology and Innovation Management. Other planned topics included mental health, air quality, public health, fake news, malaria and vaccines. Council members were invited to suggest further salon topics to the President's Office.
34. The Chair noted that this was the last Council meeting for Mr Iain Conn, and thanked him for his many contributions to Council. Mr. Conn shared his highlights, including the decision to proceed with the White City development.

**NEXT MEETING**

35. The Chair reminded members that the next meeting would be held on Friday 22 November 2019, at the Chelsea and Westminster Campus.