

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

at the seventieth meeting of the

COUNCIL OF THE IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MEDICINE

The seventieth meeting of the Council was held via Microsoft Teams, hosted by Imperial College London, South Kensington, at 8.30 am on Friday 12th February 2021, when there were present:

Mr. J. Allan (Chair), Professor N. Brandon, Mr. T. Courtauld, Professor R. Craster, Mr. J. Cullen, Professor A. Gast (President), Mr. R. Kalifa, Sir Jonathan Michael, Dr. M. Safa, Ms. S. Murray, Professor J. Sanders, Mr. M. Sanderson, Mr. A. Sood, Professor T. Tetley, Professor F. Veloso, Professor I. Walmsley (Provost), Professor J. Weber, Mr. C. Williams and Mr. J. Neilson (Clerk to the Court and Council).

Apologies

Mr. C. Brinsmead

In attendance

Professor N. Alford (item 4,1), Mr M. Edwards (item 4.2), Professor N. Jennings, Professor E. McCoy, Miss A. Wolthuizen, and Mrs. R. Knight (Assistant Clerk to the Court and Council).

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. There were no comments on the minutes.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the sixty-ninth meeting of the Council, held on Friday 27th November 2020, be approved.

2. There were no matters arising to note.

COVID UPDATES

Education

3. The President introduced the Interim Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience), who updated Council on the work of the Education Strategy and Operations Group (ESOG) to maintain the continued quality of the College's education provision and student experience during the COVID pandemic. ESOG and its constituent sub-groups had overseen the implementation of the recommendations developed in response to the 2019 and 2020 National Student Survey (NSS). It was noted that although the Independent Review of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) report had been published in January 2021, it was not yet clear how the NSS would be used in the TEF in the future.
4. The paper outlined current workstreams and immediate future priorities for ESOG. Feedback received through the Student Online Evaluation Tool (SOLE) showed that students remained largely appreciative of the efforts which had been made to provide both education and welfare support throughout the pandemic, which included some innovative teaching including labs in a box and virtual fieldtrips. Council recognised that the pandemic had created difficulties for students and the patient and cooperative approach adopted by students. Council noted that in addition to stress and anxiety centred on the current situation, many students were concerned about the impact of the pandemic on future opportunities. The Careers Service was engaged with the ESOG and their work to support students had continued, adapted to multi-mode delivery.

ACTION: Interim Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) to circulate an overview of student career support to address the challenges created by coronavirus.

Research

5. The Vice-Provost (Research and Enterprise) presented an update on research activity, including an overview of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. In acknowledgement of the continued disruption caused by coronavirus, the submission deadline had been delayed by four months to March 2021, and REF had established additional support measures for institutions. The results were expected in April 2022, following which funding flowing from the REF would be calculated and available the subsequent financial year.
6. Grant application levels and the number of journal articles had remained high since the Campus closure, and increased on the same period in 2019. Grant application

success rates also remained strong, with a good funding pipeline, including a potential new partnership with KAU and Community Jameel worth \$500k, with the possibility of other funding from the region. Although research income from charities had been impacted by coronavirus, the industry pipeline remained strong. The UK's Associate Membership access to Horizon Europe was being negotiated and this would provide opportunities for continued support from the European Research Council.

7. The COVID-19 Grant Extension Allocation (CoA) from UKRI, awarded to sustain research directly funded by UKRI grants, had funded a 4-month contract extension for staff charged to eligible grants, whose contracts ended between 31 July 2020 and 31 March 2021. The UKRI and College had provided stipend extensions for PhD students. The College scheme had completed three waves, and a fourth would open in April 2021. To date over 300 extensions had been funded at an estimated cost of £2.1 million. The College continued to engage with the Government and UKRI regarding support for postgraduate research students.
8. Recent newspaper articles had named the College as one of the "at risk" research institutions given the tightening national security requirements for Chinese partnerships and increasing political tension. It was noted that the College had a robust due diligence process, and a good relationship with the relevant government departments. Council would be kept informed of College strategic discussion on this issue. Further, students are taking increasing interest in partnerships, which can stimulate a range of strongly expressed views and reactions.

Finance

9. The Chief Financial Officer presented the finance update, including the report from the Finance Committee. Council received the information that had been discussed at the Committee regarding the forecasts that supported the annual OfS financial submission. This focused on the potential risks to cash from operations, and the College's mitigating actions. Tuition fees were the biggest source of uncertainty due to Covid in the short-term and Brexit in the long-term, but there was also risk around pension contributions, research funding and staff costs. Currently student numbers were positive, but along with pensions remained a crucial swing factor in the modelled scenarios. The overall cash position remained strong, and at the upcoming meetings the Finance Committee would discuss the longer-term balance sheet and examine how it could be used to support the College's strategy.

MATTERS FOR DECISION**Property Committee**

10. The President presented the paper, which proposed replacing the White City Syndicate with a Property Committee which would expand the remit beyond White City to all College estates outside the Endowment. The Committee would work with the Estates Strategy Group, a committee of the President's Board, to develop a long-term real estate strategy, and would provide strategic oversight of the College's property portfolios, including its commercial portfolio.
11. The Chair of the White City Syndicate, Mr Toby Courtauld, would chair the Property Committee. He explained that whilst the new Committee would not take decisions, like the Syndicate it would consider strategy, capital and income to gain a better understanding of relevant risks. The terms of reference would, subject to Council approval, be adjusted if necessary as the Committee embedded into the governance structure. It was anticipated that the proposed Committee would have an overlap in attendance with the Finance Committee in order to consider the financial aspects of property decisions. Candidates were actively being sought to strengthen the Property Committee's membership.
12. The Committee would balance a number of strategic needs, including sustainability, social responsibility, and the needs of staff, students and the local community, as well as commercial return. Academic space prioritisation would continue to be driven by the Provost's Board, which fed into the Estates Strategy Group. The sub-committee structure provided a mechanism for stakeholders, including students, to input into decisions. This would build on the positive experience of working together on the Covid response.
13. A short summary of real estate governance was being drafted to set out where decisions were being made.

Resolved:

That the Property Committee Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix A, be approved, with the President of the Students Union always welcome to attend, and subject to edits from the Chair of the Committee.

Access and Participation Plan – approval of 2019-20 monitoring return

14. The Provost presented the paper, which set out the 2019-20 monitoring return required by the OfS conditions of registration. The return set out progress against the Access and Participation Plan during the 2019/20 academic year. Council were reminded that 2020-21 marked the beginning of the new Plan agreed with OfS last

year, which had different criteria and was outcome based. The paper included data regarding targets set for the end of the current 3-year plan period.

15. The 2020 intake saw significantly more widening participation students than previous years. Several factors contributed to this, across all widening participation groups. These included the impact of A level grade inflation, as well as actions taken by College to increase applications from low participation cohorts, and new admissions processes for WP-flagged candidates. Student progression would be an important success measure, and support was in place for the students. Department staff had access to data that tracked performance and flagged any differential outcomes.
16. The ambition depended on good progression of widening participation students who had started their programmes. Historically there had not been an attainment gap, and this needed to be maintained with the significantly larger cohort. Aside from academic achievement, it was also important that students built peer support networks that would enable them to thrive in the College community. It was noted that Dr Mahnaz Safa had been nominated as the Council's Diversity Champion.

Resolved:

That the first version of the Annual Monitoring Return for 2019-20 be approved for submission to the OfS, subject to minor amendments upon release of OfS data necessary for completion of the report, that would subsequently be approved by Chair's Action.

School of Public Health - approval of building contract

17. Council received the paper which sought approval for the signing of a construction contract to complete the remaining design and procurement activities for plot G on the White City Campus, within previously agreed time and cost parameters. The Chief Financial Officer explained that this was consistent with the masterplan on White City North and was a key element of the academic strategy.

Resolved:

To approve the signing of a construction contract to complete the remaining design and procurement activities regarding the School of Public Health Building at White City.

CHAIR, PRESIDENT AND PROVOST REPORTS

Chair's Report

18. The Chair provided Council with an update from the Nominations Committee, which had met on 22 January 2021. The Committee had begun to plan searches for external Council members and for a President to succeed Professor Alice Gast at the

end of her term. He would come back to Council in order for it to appoint a Search Committee.

Presidents' Report

19. The President, Professor Alice Gast, presented her report. The College had continued to receive high levels of coverage in global news clippings, which were presented in the media report. The highlight of the events listing was the Schrodinger Lecture on 24 February 2021 and the Global Development Hub launch in April.

ACTION: In future the media report should be circulated on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, rather than at Council meetings.

20. She updated Council on recent activity, including visits to departments which had focused on lessons learnt from the last year and her vision for her last 18 months in office. To date fourteen academic departments had been visited, and there were plans to visit professional service departments in the future.
21. Fundraising was on track to meet the 2020-21 fundraising goal of £42 million in new gifts and pledges as 'steady state' giving. Lord Sainsbury had donated £1 million to the Faculty of Engineering and the Business School. The President outlined other gifts that were nearing completion.
22. The President had joined other Russell Group members in discussion with the Government regarding the National Security and Investments Bill and the International Education Strategy regarding exports. The research exemption was fundamental to academic collaboration and partnership.

Provosts' Report

23. The Provost, Professor Ian Walmsley, presented his written report. He was pleased to announce that Professor Emma McCoy had agreed to remain as interim Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) for a further year.
24. A number of staff had been recognised externally: Professor Carol Propper had received a Damehood on the New Year's honours list in recognition of her services to public health and economics. Professor Chris Toumazou has been elected an International Member of the National Academic of Engineering in the USA, which was amongst the highest professional honours for Engineers. The Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS) / European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) had awarded Professor Molly Stevens their annual Women in Science Award, which recognised outstanding scientific achievements of female life scientists who had worked in Europe in the last five years.
25. The College community continued to adjust to the demands placed on it by the

current circumstances. The workload action group, which had been tasked to address concerns raised by staff, with input from College and Trades Union representatives, was reviewing the workload allocation policy and discussing a proposal for the introduction of maximum working hours. A new Working Together task group had been launched to listen to the community and identify practical ways to build an environment which enabled everyone to deliver their best work. The group membership is drawn from across the College community, including a Student Union Vice President as well as members of professional services and academic leaders.

26. The Artworks Group, which had been established to review the College's artworks and recommend options to reflect and celebrate the College's diversity, had completed its report, and launched a new and innovative partnership with the Royal College of Art. The History Group had also submitted an intermediate report to the President's Board, which had identified a number of areas on which to focus attention over the coming months. Further engagement with the community would take place before recommendations were presented to the President's Board in June.
27. The President and Provost were thanked for their written reports.

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

28. Council received and noted the annual report from the Remuneration Committee.

STARRED ITEMS FOR NOTING

29. Council received and noted the report from Senate, the Staff Matters report and the Major Projects report.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

30. There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 10.12 am