

NOTE ON COUNCIL WORKSHOP

2 December 2022

Background

The workshop brought together key stakeholders with Council, to receive and discuss feedback about the 2020 disclosures involving senior management and subsequent handling. The aim was to reflect on the lessons learned, on Imperial's response to date and on ways forward. Attendees were invited to submit questions and thoughts before and after the workshop. The views expressed in the three discussion groups, governance and process, communications, and organizational culture, are noted below.

Governance and process

- Many staff and students do not know of Council, what is responsible for, or who the members are.
- College wide governance structures and roles are not well understood.
- Procedures for dealing with allegations against the most senior staff were unclear, particularly how complaints regarding senior staff are escalated, to whom, and who manages investigations.
- Broad support for the process to consider allegations against the President proposed in paragraph 68 of the Halpin Report. Additional points raised included:
 - the Senior Consul could be included in the subgroup membership.
 - a student could be included in the subgroup membership.
 - suspension whilst under investigation could be considered.
- Allegations could be triaged before investigation, potentially by an external appointee.
- Guidance on available sanctions and how they would be applied in specific scenarios would be helpful and could help manage expectations.
- Trust was a recurring theme, summed up by the statement that *people trust people, not corporations*.

Communications

- Communications should be prioritised and built into strategy and planning from the outset.
- It was difficult to balance legal requirements for confidentiality with the needs and expectations of the College community, and that in the absence of this explanation the College had appeared to 'prioritise' in favour of the accused.
- Communications should be proactive and timely. It was disappointing to read about the allegations in the national press before receiving internal communications.
- There should be a commitment to transparency and the use of Plain English in our communications. Communications should be clear when certain things cannot be shared.
- Consuls and student representatives could play a role in advising on communications to the Imperial community.
- Council should have direct access to legal and communications advice.
- Council should be visible to the Imperial community. Communications can help with this.

Organisational culture

- Trust in the senior leadership had been eroded.
- Future senior leaders should be equipped, through training if appropriate, with the skills needed to manage staff in a positive and supportive way, this included being able to handle difficult staffing issues.
- Senior staff should be held to higher standards of behaviour because their actions have a bigger impact on the organisation than the same behaviour from junior staff.

The workshop ended with thanks from the Chair.

Further action

Following reflection on the event, the feedback and suggestions have been incorporated into current streams of work led by the Director of Communications, the Director of HR (working with Imperial Together as appropriate) and the College Secretary and General Counsel. A revised process for considering allegations against the most senior leadership, as set out in the Halpin Report, will be brought back to Council.