

IMPERIAL

Technician Commitment Steering Group

Thursday 7 March 2024

11.30 – 13.00

Meeting Room 1 (Sher-05-504), 5th Floor Sherfield Building, South Kensington

Minutes

Meeting #21

Attendees

Present:

Tim Venables	Institutional Lead for the Technician Commitment (Chair, TV)
Joel Abrahams	Biological Research Officer, Surgery & Cancer (JA)
Naweeda Ahmad	People & Organisational Development Coordinator, POD (NA) <i>Minutes</i>
Teri Barham	People & Organisational Development Consultant (TB)
Paul Brown	Mechanical Workshop Instrumentation Manager, Physics (PB)
Allison Hunter	Technical Operations Manager, Life Sciences (AH)
Kenneth Keating	Technical Operations Manager, Bioengineering
Russell Stracey	RSM Workshop Supervisor, Materials (RS)
Dr Sharron Stubbs	Head of Infrastructure Operations, Faculty of Medicine (SS)
Angela Williams	Learning and Development Officer, Property Division (AW)

Apologies:

Rakesh Patel	Head of Maintenance, Property Division (RP)
Ellen Pengelley	Interim Head of Business Operations, ICT (EP)

Agreed Actions

- Identify a speaker for the Technicians' Conference sustainability session (KK and RS)
- Update Technicians' Conference Programme to reflect Steering Group discussions (NA)
- Invite President Professor Hugh Brady to deliver the keynote speech (TV)
- Invite Nichola Stallwood (POD) to deliver the careers session segment (TB)
- Identify technical staff award recipients, to be recognised at Technicians' Conference (TB)

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies (TV)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ellen Pengelley and Rakesh Patel.

2. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting (TV)

It was noted that the job titles for Ellen Pengelley and Sharron Stubbs were incorrect in the previous minutes and should be updated. All actions from the last meeting were completed.

3. Update on Technicians' Festival & Conference 2024 (All)

TB and NA provided a verbal update on plans for the Technicians' Festival & Conference 2024:

- A one-day Technicians' Conference was planned for Tuesday 9 July. Blackett Lecture Theatre 1 (South Kensington) had been reserved for this event. The area outside the venue would be used for registration, networking, and coffee/lunch breaks.
- A Technicians' Exhibition would be taking place on 10 July from 11.30 – 13.30 in the Main Entrance. Confirmed exhibitors included People & Organisational Development, Health and Wellbeing, Technician Commitment, Sustainability and HEaTED.
- Steering Group members were invited to suggest other potential exhibitors / themes. Suggestions included the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre, Security, the Safety Training team, and a display on e-learning. It was felt that security was too broad and to exclude this.
- It was agreed that TB would follow up with College Achivist, Anne Barrett, to find out how plans were progressing for a photo exhibition of technical staff, which could potentially launch to coincide with the Technicians' Exhibition.

TB shared the draft agenda for the Technicians' Conference on 9 July and a discussion was held on each proposed session:

Session 1 – Sustainability

Speakers for this session would include Steering Group member Allison Hunter (AH), Mark Wilkinson (Sustainability Manager) and Ben Gray (Sustainability Initiatives Coordinator). It was agreed that AH would arrange for case study examples of the LEAF initiative to be showcased. The session would also cover the three sustainability schemes currently running at Imperial (My Green Labs, LEAF and Green Impact) and demonstrate how they were relevant to the University. It was agreed that KK and RS would help to identify an additional speaker for this session. **(Action: KK and RS)**

Session 2 - Innovation

This session would cover the following themes: the Innovation Hub and Outreach, technician engagement, job swaps, a creative session and Innovation & spin outs. It was noted that the session title would be changed from Innovation & spin outs to Innovation, translation and impact and that the creative session would be moved to Session 3 on the Agenda. **(Action: NA)**

Keynote Speaker

It was agreed that TV would contact President Professor Hugh Brady to invite him to deliver the keynote speech. **(Action: TV)**

Session 3 - Careers Development

This session would be comprised of short, 15-minute talks; the exhibition on 10 July would then be an opportunity for technicians to get more detailed information. Confirmed speakers included Steering Group member Joel Abrahams, and Ben Jones from the Engineering Council. People & Organisational Development would be invited to present their professional development offer, with a focus on mentoring for technicians and safety training. This would be an engaging and creative session, with an opportunity for the audience to participate using the Mentimeter tool. It was suggested that Nichola Stallwood (Head of People & Organisational Development) could be invited to chair this session. **(Action: TB)**

Session 4 - Awards Ceremony / celebration of achievement

This session would celebrate technician achievements over the past year. Individual names would not be read out by the facilitator but would instead appear on a slide. Achievements to be recognised could include completing a professional qualification or apprenticeship, obtaining professional registration or receiving an employee recognition award. JA suggested that long servers could also be recognised. It was agreed that TB would identify technicians to be recognised in this session, with support from the Steering Group as appropriate. **(Action: TB, All)**

A general discussion on the Technicians' Festival followed. AW asked whether the conference could be live streamed, with rooms and catering provided at other campuses, to increase engagement among technicians who were not based at South Kensington. It was agreed that live streaming could be investigated. However, running catered events at other sites for an unknown number of participants was felt to be outside the current capacity of the team delivering the event. The Chair noted that there was a good selection of agenda items and emphasised the importance of senior technical staff both attending the Conference and encouraging their teams to do so.

4. Agree an approach to award nominations in 2024 (All)

A discussion took place on how best to celebrate technical staff successes at the Technicians' Conference 2024, and how to support and encourage award nominations in general. It was noted that some technical managers were unfamiliar with the variety of award schemes (internal and external) now available for technicians. AH suggested that it would be helpful to have some guidelines on how to write a nomination. TB suggested that a reminder on the internal staff recognition award scheme should be included in the next Technicians' Newsletter. It was also felt that Departmental Committees and Faculty Operations Officers should be reminded to cascade information. RS noted that nominations could be made by colleagues, not just by managers. It was agreed that someone who had knowledge of the Technician Commitment and technicians should present this session at the Conference.

5. Review Focus Group questions from Steering Group and agree next steps (TB)

Following on from a suggestion at the previous Steering Group meeting to run a focus group for technicians about the Technician Commitment, TB shared a suggested question set, collated by some Members of the Steering Group (see Appendix 1). The following feedback was received:

- Open questions should be used rather than closed questions.
- The person running the session might wish to adapt/add to the question set.
- There could be a callout for participants in the Technicians Network Newsletter.
- Focus group discussions / outcomes could be shared in the Newsletter after the event.

This led on to a general discussion about the Technicians' Network Newsletter, which some technicians did not know existed. It was agreed that Departments should be encouraged to cascade the information to their technical staff.

6. AOB (TV)

A suggestion was made that job alerts for technicians could be released in a separate e-newsletter but no decision was reached on this.

Next meeting:

Tuesday 25 June 2024, 09:30 – 11:00