

Report to Council

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Introduction

Since providing a report at the last Council meeting, it has been particularly refreshing for me to engage, communicate and consult students on their ideas and thoughts around the different areas in this report. This input has broadened my perspectives and offered vitality on many of the challenging aspects encountered.

Learning and Teaching strategy

- The Learning and Teaching strategy is currently in its consultation stage. The team driving forward the strategy (compiled of College members, Nas and I) have been enlightened by many of the contributions made by students and staff. These contributions have been accommodated by the online consultation survey, as well as by physical pop-up stands which have been distributed around College over the past few weeks. The willingness of many students to contribute has really put the icing on the cake for me so far.
 - The strategy team will look to analyse the various forms of data collected in an effort to depict certain themes which are overarching. This analysis will be a prerequisite to the eventual writing of the strategy around January. Nas and I have been kindly invited to contribute input to all stages of the process.
 - The town hall meeting on the 23rd November generally went well. The purpose of this meeting was to inform the audience via presentations from Simone, Nas and I which later simulated insightful questions and discussion with attendees. The session was well received and successful, yet I feel there is a need for more students to attend the next and last town hall meeting on 8th December. This was stressed to many of the Senior Reps at Education and Representation Board who are on board with upping the ante on promoting awareness to students. I will be sending around a piece to Reps to give them more information on the L&T strategy.

Late submission policy

- Much has happened around this topic in a relatively short period of time. The current zero-tolerance late submission policy was discussed as part of a review at the last Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) on November 20th. The origin of the Union's stance on wanting to review this policy was from one of the recommendations in the 2015 NSS Response.
 - The review was supplemented with an alternative proposal which is a graduated mark reduction policy (10% mark reduction at a regular time interval after the passing of the deadline). QAEC concluded that this was not the most desirable option and that a different policy should be considered. This is where the 'capped at pass mark' policy version was proposed for further consultation.
 - Following this meeting and decision, the Union agreed to send out a spot-poll to seek the opinions of students. However, the results of this poll heavily conflicted with many of the attitudes expressed at Education and Representation Board (ERB) by Senior Reps. This split consensus has given the Union no option but to send out a second, better informed spot-poll which will assist us in arriving at a representative stance which embodies what the majority of students want.

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- The Union will then have a stance on the issue ahead of the next QAEC meeting on 12th January. The Union have been instrumental in slowing down the approval of the current proposal to ensure faculty staff and students are properly consulted.

Feedback Traffic Light system

- I have worked closely with Kat Parkins and Mike Horner from the IT team in exploring a technological platform through which this can be realised College wide. The solution appears to be through an existing infrastructure (Blackboard) where deadline data can be gathered centrally and redistributed to departments who would then spend limited administrative effort to manipulate the data, allowing one to track feedback return to students and clamp down on lateness.
 - I have urged Reps to raise this as an incoming opportunity in their departments; I will be compiling a document which provides more information about the system hoping to provide Reps with the knowledge and context they need to lobby this change effectively.

Imperial's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission

- The TEF is a governmentally introduced framework which will aim to measure the teaching excellence of UK universities. Based on the success of an institution in its metrics (half of the metrics of which are derived from the National Student Survey), the institution may then have the ability to raise the fees they charge to students in line with inflation.
 - The implications of the TEF for the future of higher education are controversial, yet Imperial are set on taking part in this scheme. Institutions have the ability to improve their metric grade according to a written submission (maximum 15 page document). The ideal submission involves input from both staff and students explicitly outlining how students are involved in educational process and decision making.
 - The Union have agreed to co-write this submission with College, looking to engage students in that process. This will happen around January.