

Mission and Vision – Notes from HoDs' Lunch

Background

At the HoDs' lunch on 7 October 2014, the Provost asked each table to share their thoughts on the College's current mission and vision and how these could be updated for the College Strategy 2015-2020. The points made are summarised below. These will be worked up into options and reflected back to HoDs at a later date.

Current mission and vision

Our mission

Imperial College embodies and delivers world class scholarship, education and research in science, engineering, medicine and business, with particular regard to their application in industry, commerce and healthcare.

We foster multidisciplinary working internally and collaborate widely externally.

Our vision

- To remain a world-leading institution for scientific research and education.
- To harness the quality, breadth and depth of our research capabilities to address the difficult challenges of today and the future.
- To develop the next generation of researchers, scientists and academics.
- To provide an education for students from around the world that equips them with the knowledge and skills they require to pursue their ambitions.
- To make a demonstrable economic and social impact through the translation of our work into practice worldwide.
- To engage with the world and communicate the importance and benefits of science to society.

Discussion

Table 1

The point was made that the College's current mission and vision are inward-looking. While this is common for universities, it was argued that the College is a service business providing education and research services and that service businesses focus on talking about what they do for others. The vision was considered to be too long. The College should think about producing outcomes and impact in a global vision for shaping the future. It was suggested that innovation, technology and sustainable solutions should be referenced, and that "responsible innovation" should be replaced by "sustainable innovation".

Table 2

It was noted that the final sentence of the current mission ("we foster multidisciplinary working internally and collaborate widely externally") did not fit within a mission statement. There was also discussion of what the word "scholarship", referenced in the College's current mission, really meant. It was felt that the word should be kept in, though it was unknown how external readers would interpret it. It was also noted that at the interim workshops considerable enthusiasm for increasing the College's policy influence had been expressed, but that this was not referenced in the current mission and vision.

Table 3

This group was more comfortable with the vision than with the mission. The mission ought to be centred on education and research which will tackle global and scientific challenges. The phrase "world class" should be removed and replaced with a tighter definition of this based

around excellence. It was also suggested that the vision should reference UK students as well as students from around the world.

Table 4

This group felt the limitations of the current statements were that they did not refer sufficiently to engineering, medicine, creativity or influence, and did not convey enough 'meaning'. Both the mission and vision should be more explicit about the choices made by the College (e.g. STEMB provision only, multidisciplinary work, and London location) in order to differentiate itself.

Table 5

It was suggested that the mission should include reasons why the College wanted to undertake education and research in order to inspire people. When drafting the Strategy, it would be important to reference fundamental, applied and breakthrough research (with innovation linked to breakthrough research). The mission and vision should emphasise the College's agility and its impact on society through developing solutions to global challenges.

Table 6

This group felt the current wording missed the fact that the College is a globally connected community of people and that people are a major outcome of the College's activity. The word "harnessing" should be removed. The new mission and vision should aim to inspire, should reference curiosity-led research as well as applied research, should talk about shaping the future, and should recognise that shaping new disciplines is also an important part of the College's activity.