



The voice of engineering academics

Engineering in Academia in the COVID-19 context

Professor Colin Turner, EPC President

for Royal Academy of Engineering Visiting Professors Induction

BCE – Before the COVID-19 Era

- Brexit
 - causing uncertainty in some international arrangements for the recruitment of students, including Erasmus.
 - concerns over income streams and the multiplying effects of EU grant income.
- HE Funding uncertainty – the Shadow of Augar
- AHEP 4
- Increasing important and demand for inclusion of ethics, sustainability and security in the curriculum.
- Long standing imbalances in recruitment

Learning and Teaching

- International recruitment is very unstable, and the rest of the picture is still emerging
- Decolonisation of curricula
- Many of our modules require on campus learning to support Learning Outcomes.
- Tensions around authentic assessment – particularly whether accreditation and specific PEIs require formal examinations.
- However, this will be a time of unprecedented reform in assessment as well as curricula
- Engineering may be particularly sensitive to problems of engagement and retention.
- Budget allocations of focus and attention will be needed

Research and Development

- The existing challenges of Brexit and uncertainty in grant funding were already in play.
- Many engineering labs are normally densely packed with research staff and students
- Collaboration with remote colleagues can be better, but worse with local colleagues
- We can expect very patchy gaps in research funding, and the usually ever reliable fly wheel of L&T may be less so.
- This in turn makes the staffing ecosystem more fragile than usual
- Impact on PhD researchers, both human and supply pipeline

Org Strain

- As ever, the most important resource of Schools and Departments are its teams.
- Resilience – from Latin resilire – to recoil or rebound.
- We are not yet in the “new normal”, but the “temporary abnormal”.
- Staff are coming to understand this is marathon.
- The new normal is yet to come and is still in formation.
- Staff are being pulled in even more directions than usual, attempting to rapidly upskill in many cases, having less social, organic contact with each other.
- Aside from the human impact on our teams, this is likely to affect all dimensions.
- Are all Universities considering the need to replace old ad hoc contact routines?

Engineers are the key workers of the recovery

- As ever, Engineers are playing a fundamental role in the resolution and recovery
- Directly solving problems within academia and / or with industry
- Pipelining vital talent for the economy
- Hot Issues – still those from before COVID
 - Ethics
 - Sustainability – new focal points
 - Security – new focal points
 - Recruitment – new focal points



Engineering Academics NETWORK

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Thank You. Do join our EAN if you haven't already.