The Institution of Engineering and Technology

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Board of Trustees

REPORT FROM COUNCIL

(Paper by Dr Carol Marsh. If you have any questions on this paper before the meeting please contact Dr Carol Marsh on carol.marsh@ietvolunteer.org)

1. Issue

Council met on 7 October 2021 and wishes to report the following matters to the Board of Trustees.

2. Timing

Board of Trustees meeting, 5 November 2021.

3. For Note

The Board of Trustees is invited to note the attached report from Council.

4. Background

4.1. Council has considered carefully how it can offer the most valuable and constructive input into the Board of Trustees for this Session and as such has agreed to concentrate on two themes:

- Technicians – reflecting the President's main theme;
- IET membership – reflecting a key aspect of the Council's remit.

4.2. The initial findings are provided in this paper, with the most important matters for consideration noted. More detailed meetings to cover both topics will be held in January and March 2022, resulting in papers for the Main Boards.

5. Questions

5.1. Council would welcome replies to the following key questions before the next Council meeting in January 2022

- What is a technician? Provide a definition of what a technician is. Is this different dependent on field, industry, or country?
- What's in it for me? Provide a narrative that is targeted at different audiences, for example, employees, employers, country, region.
- Do we need specific technician representation on Council? Can we co-opt one or two volunteer technicians onto Council this year?

6. World Café Session: Spotlight on Technicians

A World Café format was used to explore the topic "Spotlight on Technicians" at the Council meeting on 7 October 2021. The results are shown in the attached mind map, pages 1 and 2.

7. World Café Session: Spotlight on Members

A World Café format was used to explore the topic ”Spotlight on Members” at the Council meeting on 7 October 2021. The results are shown in the attached mind map, pages 3 and 4.

8. Next Steps

8.1. The report provides a summary of the topics covered at the Council meeting on 7 October 2021. The topics will be considered in more detail as follows:

- In January 2022 the topic on Technicians will be covered in more detail at the Council meeting and a paper will be presented at the February BoT meeting.
- In March 2022 the topic on Members will be covered in more detail at the Council meeting and a paper will be presented at the May BoT meeting.

8.2. Council will welcome any thoughts from the Board of Trustees as it prepares for these meetings.

8.3. The joint Board of Trustees/Council meeting in June 2022 could provide the perfect opportunity to review the outcome of both papers as well as an update on Council’s previous papers on Climate Change and International Strategy.

9. Risk

None identified.

10. Resources

None identified.

What goals, factors and challenges should be addressed by the IET in support of its President's intention to "shine a spotlight on Technicians"?

KEY QUESTIONS

"What's in it for me?" → We need narratives that are targeted at the audience. What is in it for an employer is not the same as for a Technician

What **IS** a Technician ? → What is the definition from the EC ?
How does the IET want to define a technician ?
Is the definition different depending on field or industry ?
UK-Spec provides a framework for evaluation and not a simple, clear narrative of what a Technician is

Of the notes and items presented as work in progress, it is these two questions we feel the Trustees and IET senior staff should focus on this first ***- it is key for us all to start with a clear definition***

In addition we make the point about Representation and whether we should bolster Technician representation and views ***specifically*** *in this presidential year*

REPRESENTATION → Do we need specific Technician representation on Council ?

- Specifically in this year of focus, should we not look to co-op one or two volunteer technicians onto Council ?
- Whilst there is a new Council member who is EngTech (we believe), there is surely a need for wider views from the 'shop floor' so to speak: really, all of us have in some way climbed above that level.
- This could be temporary for the year, but in future years, diversity of representation should be reviewed for a balance from technician to Fellow

For information: Council will be looking in more detail before formally reporting to Trustees

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Around the world there are countries that enshrine the title ‘Engineer’ in law and in some aspects ‘technician’ as well.

What is culturally an Engineer or Technician in one country or region, may not be the same.

The IET should perhaps consider a core narrative and then more focused variance regionally or internationally

Do we have enough understanding of the cultural context of Technicians around the world ?

INTERNATIONAL

Status – there is no narrative to encapsulate the status of technicians in society

EngTech is not an end, but a start

- it can be a journey to IEng, CEng and Fellow

- We must also support Technicians who wish to consolidate their professionalism as Technicians but who do not wish to progress

SOCIETY

Schools

Should be more than a political slogan.

For the IET this should encapsulate ACCESS TO THE PROFESSION

LEVELLING UP

Status of a ‘Technician’ is different in the Armed Forces – (higher training, clear progression, key responsibilities)

There is no clear narrative to link the Armed forces internal status with the status wider society sees on leaving

IET’s communications about technicians should also strongly convey their value to society ‘as is’. The new T-levels coming in to education may provide a valuable communication opportunity.

There is a perception they focus only on University Entry.

Since Universities have started accepted Btech for entry this has embedded

The perception that a ‘Technican’ route has lower value is a stigma and barrier

Spotlight on Members

For information: Council will be looking in more detail before formally reporting to Trustees

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PERCEIVED VALUE

Not anywhere clear enough the IET is a Learned Society that has a depth & breadth of expertise that can be tapped

Membership & Registration Cost

Wild thought ...

Significantly reduced membership fee for one year on successful registration.

There is a not insignificant number put off by registration as it effectively 'doubles' their membership costs in that year.

If the IET 'corporate' goal is to raise standards and particularly professionalism then the on-cost of this is small compared to the higher numbers of registrants and associated value of that

"What's in it for me?"

HIDDEN BENEFITS

There are wider membership benefits (such as 10% off Hertz), but there seems no clarity of a list

SOCIAL MEDIA

There is a need for a better, more relevant, and timely Social Media presence.

A growing number of the target new Engineers & Technicians use Social Media as a primary access tool(s)

DIVERSITY

Lots and growing representation based around Gender, Colour, Race etc – an Excellent thing

But there are a growing number of members (and potential members) that have some level of mental 'spectrum'

Neuro-diversity should be added to our priorities

VOLUNTEERS

Process of Volunteering

There does not seem an obvious way of volunteering. (Speaking personally as an interviewer/PRA, many candidates express an interest but have no idea ‘how’)

There is a commitment needed, but no ‘try before you buy’ or shadowing. Far too many very capable members feel they might not ‘be able’ to do it

Far too UK-Centric.

A reflection on the majority membership perhaps but at the recent Volunteer Online Conference there were several non-UK volunteers rather berating the lack of support they felt they got, or voice they had

Do we need a specific non-UK Volunteer/LN Conference ? - Voice heard direct !

Access issues around culture & Language

- Politeness: in the UK we are far less worried about interrupting – in many cultures that is seen as very rude

- Language – English is not a primary Language (usually), so running a conference a little differently might work better

INFLUENCE

There is a perception that staff ‘filter’ suggestions for what they feel are worthy or fit an agenda. This is general at LN level, individual members and Internationally, and not just a perception that my be Council related

Also the length of time anything takes is inherently long

There is a perception that ‘little’ voices are not heard

The time taken by (say) Trustees to do anything is seen as too long to be ‘listening’

Maybe this also sounds and resonates with the more ‘Social Media’ access needed – the world and our membership are rather more ‘now’