

COUNCIL
Thursday 31 May 2018
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Lord Clement-Jones (Chair)	Professor Richard Ashcroft	Kath Barrow
Professor Colin Bailey	Dr Véronique Bouchet	Monica Chadha (Vice-Chair)
Sarah Cowls	Stella Hall	Dr Darryn Mitussis
Bushra Nasir	Dr Mangala Patel	Luke Savage
Professor Bill Spence	Peter Thompson	David Willis

In attendance:

Rakin Choudhury	Dalia Dasgupta [minutes 2017:078-080 only]	Laura Gibbs
Joanne Jones	Dr Nadine Lewycky	Sian Marshall
Jonathan Morgan		

Apologies:

Celia Gough	Professor Steve Thornton	Professor Wen Wang
John Yard	Yasir Yeahia	

Part 1: Preliminary Items

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2018 (Paper QM2017/54)

2017.071 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2018, subject to the following amendments:

- [a] *Minute 2017.055[a]*: To clarify that the Office for Students (OfS) would be notified of QMUL's intention to increase its level of borrowing, rather than be asked to give its approval.
- [b] *Minute 2017.055[b]*: To clarify the OfS requirements for additional borrowing.
- [c] *Minute 2017.055[c]*: To clarify that the refinancing of the £125m revolving credit facility would not require notification to the OfS as this did not represent additional borrowing.
- [d] *Minute 2017.057[a]*: Sir Michael Barber was still to visit QMUL, his planned visit having been rescheduled.
- [e] *Minute 2017.059[a]*: To clarify that the differential funding of student sport activities was an area of concern for Student Council but was unrelated to the issue raised regarding the composition of Student Council.

[f] *Minute 2017.071[f] is confidential*

Matters Arising (Paper QM2017/55)

2017.072 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 13 April 2018. The following points were noted in discussion:

Industrial relations

[a] A review of the communications with Council during the pensions dispute had highlighted that relevant information had been shared with members within 24 hours of it coming to the attention of QMSE. However, the gap between the November 2017 and April 2018 meetings had resulted in limited opportunities for the issues to be discussed face-to-face with Council. The schedule for 2018–19 had been arranged to reduce the gaps between meetings.

Memorandum of Agreement Review Panel

[b] It was suggested that the group should be renamed in order to describe more clearly its function in providing a link between the Council and the Queen Mary Students' Union (QMSU).

Chair's Opening Remarks (Oral Report)

2017.073 The Chair **said**:

[a] He had attended a range of meetings and events at QMUL including the Tower Hamlets Festival of Communities, a visit to the John Vane Science Centre, meetings regarding artificial intelligence with the Centre for Commercial Law Studies and the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science, and a visit to the University Schools Trust.

[b] He had held individual review meetings with the majority of Council members, which had been a valuable exercise. Feedback from these meetings had been discussed at Governance Committee and would be reported to the next meeting of Council.

[c] Details of the farewell event for Professor Rebecca Lingwood, Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) had been provided to members. The Chair acknowledged the significant contribution to QMUL that Professor Lingwood had made.

President and Principal's Report (QM2017/56)

2017.074 Council **received** the President and Principal's Report. The President and Principal **said**:

[a] National negotiations on the 2018 pay award were taking place between the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and the five staff unions. UCEA had made a final offer of a 2.0 per cent base pay increase, with higher increases for lower paid staff of up to 2.8 per cent. For

staff who were due an incremental increase, this would result in an overall 4.5-5.0 per cent uplift in pay. All five unions would be seeking their members' views on the final offer from late May 2018 to late June/July 2018 and there was potential for staff to take industrial action later in the year.

[b] Representatives of the post-18 funding review panel had visited QMUL. The ONS would be examining the treatment of student loans in the public accounts. Any change to the Government accounting rules could present a significant challenge to the sector (with potential impacts on higher education budgets) if in future the expected losses on loans were counted in the national accounts as soon as the loans were issued. The timescale for completion of the review was currently unknown.

[c] Professor Rebecca Lingwood was leaving QMUL on 15 June 2018. Interviews for an Interim Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) had been held and it was anticipated that an announcement would be made on the appointment during the following week.

[d] QMUL was seeking to recruit a Vice-Principal (Policy and Strategic Partnerships), which was to be advertised in the Times Higher Education.

[e] *Minute 2017:074[e] is confidential.*

2017.075 The following points were **noted** in discussion:

[a] *Minute 2017:075[a] is confidential.*

[b] *Minute 2017:075[b] is confidential.*

[c] *Minute 2017:075[c] is confidential.*

[d] The implementation of the Queen Mary Model would not be as wide-ranging as had originally been planned. However, the principles of the initiative would continue to provide a focus for activity, building on good practice from the sector in relation to social capital and skills for the future job market, internships, placements and overseas study.

[e] *Minute 2017:075[e] is confidential.*

[f] *Minute 2017:075[f] is confidential.*

[g] In the interim period, it would be helpful for members to have a clear understanding of QMUL's response to the league table results in case, in the course of their external activities, they were asked about QMUL's performance. The President and Principal undertook to prepare a short narrative for members on the key actions being taken.

[h] The Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy would be reviewed as part of the current exercise to refresh the QMUL Strategy. QMSE would reflect on the issues raised, but would seek to ensure that the Strategy's approach would not be perversely driven by league table results or other external factors.

[i] *Minute 2017:075[i] is confidential.*

Actions:

President and Principal: [g]

President's report [QMSU] (QM2017/57)

2017.076 Council **received** the QMSU President's Report. The Vice-President (Barts and The London) said:

- [a] The first Friday Prayer had been held in the Nest following its refurbishment, which was very successful with around 400 students in attendance. In future, it was planned to set up a broadcast link to the multi-faith room so that female students could receive the same sermon as male students.
- [b] Many QMSU staff and students had volunteered for the London Marathon, in addition to three runners representing QMSU.
- [c] The Joint Sport Strategy Working Group had prepared the draft Strategy with an emphasis on using sport to benefit the student experience and wellbeing.

Update on current financial position and borrowing

2017.077 *Minute 2017:077 is confidential.*

Action being taken to address concerns raised in the staff survey about bullying and harassment (paper QM2017/19)

2017.078 Council **received** an update on action being taken to address concerns raised in the 2016 staff survey about bullying and harassment. The following points were made:

- [a] These actions being taken included:
 - i. Rebranding of the Wellbeing Group tasked with developing an action plan to understand the issues and address them holistically;
 - ii. A review of QMUL's policy on preventing harassment, bullying and hate crime;
 - iii. Approval of a new QMUL dignity statement along with guidelines for students;
 - iv. Appointment and training of dignity disclosure officers.
- [b] External consultants had been commissioned to run focus groups with representatives from across the university. Their recommendations had been considered by the Wellbeing Group on 21 May 2018. The Human Resources Directorate had been restructured and a lead for wellbeing had been appointed. Under the new structure, HR Partners, working with faculties and departments, would have objectives around wellbeing and staff engagement, and would ensure that action plans were being embedded across the institution. The next staff survey would be conducted in 2019.

- [c] The focus group had not identified any cross-institution issues that had contributed to the staff survey results. The majority of issues appeared to be at a local level; these had been fed back to managers in individual areas and training was in place to address them.
- [d] During the recent industrial action, some staff had expressed broader dissatisfaction with the lack of clarity of expectations and the pressure on staff to produce work they perceived to have little value. These issues were predominantly attributed to the rapidly changing external environment, but had highlighted the need for improved communication with staff.
- [e] Members requested a copy of the report from the external consultants in order to understand the reasons for staff concerns, and a further update on progress with the actions at a future meeting.

Action: Interim Director of HR: [e]

People and Organisational Development Strategy (paper QM2017/20)

2017.079 Council **received** the People and Organisational Development Strategy. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The Strategy had been developed in order to align activity to the overall strategic direction of QMUL and the emerging internal and external contexts. The five themes within the Strategy were intentionally broad so that they would support the QMUL Strategy, once developed.
- [b] The restructure of the Human Resources Directorate was intended to provide the necessary resources and capability to ensure the achievement of the Strategy. Once the new structure had become embedded, greater attention could be given to the delivery plan.
- [c] Members welcomed the development of the Strategy but expressed concern that it contained statements of intent without sufficiently clear and focused actions to demonstrate how the intentions would be delivered. The Interim Director of Human Resources said that the delivery of each area of activity would be devolved to the five teams within the Directorate, each of which would be responsible for a small number of actions within a single area. This would enable the actions to be progressed effectively.
- [d] An update on progress with the delivery plan and actions would be provided to the October 2018 meeting of Council.

Action: Interim Director of HR: [d]

Gender pay gap report (paper QM2017/21)

2017.080 Council **received** the gender pay gap report. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The report had been published for the first time to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

QMUL's pay gap was within the range of other Russell Group institutions.

- [b] The data was influenced by the following factors:
- i. High hourly rates of a small number of male, external experts employed to give lectures;
 - ii. A higher proportion of men in senior, higher salaried roles in certain academic areas;
 - iii. Services, such as cleaning and catering, being run in-house; these services had a number of roles on lower grades and were occupied predominantly by female staff.
- [c] An action plan had been developed to address the pay gap, including reviewing the policy and process for promotion to identify any barriers that might exist for particular groups. The breakdown of data by faculty had identified that junior female academic staff are less likely than their male colleagues to apply for promotion.
- [d] The next iteration of the report would be based on March 2018 data. Therefore, the actions being taken currently would not have an immediate impact. However, it was suggested that the next report should include a clear and transparent evaluation of the actions taken.
- [e] It was noted that a number of the actions in the report had been included in the university's 2017 Athena Swan application and that progress would need to be demonstrated if QMUL was to retain its institutional silver award. The Interim Director of Human Resources said that progress had been made in implementing most of the actions listed.
- [f] In response to a question about the relationship between family friendly policies and pay, the Interim Director of Human Resources said that there was a perception that family responsibilities could affect research or promotion opportunities. These policies encouraged female staff to continue with their research trajectory or to seek promotions by enabling staff to have an appropriate work-life balance.

Student casework report (QM2017/23)

2017.081 Council **received** an update on the student casework report for 2016–17. The following points were made:

- [a] The report provided assurance to Council that student complaints are effectively addressed and that the welfare and wellbeing of students is secured. The report was also relevant to Council's annual report on academic assurance; it aligned with the assurances on the student experience and the academic standards of QMUL's awards.
- [b] There had been an increase in the number of academic appeals (36%) and assessment offences (25%) considered during 2016–17. No clear reasons for these increases had been identified. This had had an impact on the workload of staff dealing with these cases and the timescales for resolving them. Early dispute resolution techniques had been introduced during the previous year and it was disappointing that this had not had a significant

impact. Further work would be undertaken to consider the reasons for this and whether cases were considered at the right level.

- [c] There was a reduction in the number of cases considered under the Code of Student Discipline (10 in 2016–17, compared to 16 in 2015–16) but a number of the allegations submitted were of a more serious nature. This was a trend observed across the sector and it was perceived to be attributable to better reporting of issues. The more serious nature of allegations raised a significant challenge for staff dealing with cases, and the importance of training for panel members and legal review of processes, for example.
- [d] The number of cases referred by students to the Office of Independent Adjudicated for Higher Education (OIA) had decreased over a five-year period. Steps had been taken to inform students and QMSU of the outcomes of cases and the types of issues that the OIA might uphold in order to help students make more informed decisions about whether to seek external review of complaints.
- [e] Steps were being taken to learn from student casework: schools and institutes received information about the appeals and complaints brought by their students in order to improve practices, and cross-institution issues were referred to Senate for consideration.

Remuneration Committee report

2017.082 Council **received** an oral report from the Chair of the Remuneration Committee. The following points were made:

- [a] The Committee had met earlier in the day and had considered the following matters:
 - i. The process for the Committee to oversee senior staff remuneration;
 - ii. The outcomes of the 2017 Professorial and Grade 8 Reviews: QMSE intended to review the promotion process to ensure greater consistency in approach across the institution;
 - iii. The draft CUC Higher Education Remuneration Code: the Committee planned to co-opt a group HR director to its membership and suggestions of individuals were welcomed from Council members;
 - iv. The requirements on published information about the remuneration of senior staff.
- [b] The Committee would be considering during the summer period the terminology used to describe the accommodation provided for the President and Principal as a requirement of employment. There would also be a review of senior staff pay and pay arrangements that the Committee would consider at a later meeting.

Use of the Common Seal of the College (Paper QM2017/34)

2017.083 Council **received** the report on Use of the Common Seal of the College.

***Agenda for the next meeting (Paper QM2017/35)**

2017.084 Council **noted** the agenda for the next meeting.

AOB

2017.085 The Academic Registrar and Council Secretary **reported** that the Assistant Secretary to Council would be leaving QMUL to take up a position at St George's, University of London and expressed his thanks, on behalf of the Council, for the Assistant Secretary's contribution to the work of Council and to the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat.

2017.086 QMUL was working with Barts Health NHS Trust and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to address the issue of homeless sleeping on the hospital site in Whitechapel. The individuals concerned had been offered support from St Mungo's Homeless Charity and had been served with an eviction order. There remained concerns for student safety in light of the issue and Council would receive an update on the matter at the next meeting.

Action: Director of Student and Academic Services

Dates of Meetings 2017–18

- Thursday 12 July 2018, 1600 hours, room G05, Rotblat Building, Charterhouse Square Campus.