

COUNCIL
Thursday 12 July 2018
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Lord Clement-Jones (Chair)	Professor Colin Bailey	Kath Barrow
Dr Véronique Bouchet	Monica Chadha (Vice-Chair)	Sarah Cowls
Celia Gough	Stella Hall	Dr Darryn Mitussis
Bushra Nasir	Dr Mangala Patel	Luke Savage
Professor Bill Spence	Peter Thompson	Professor Wen Wang
John Yard	Yasir Yeahia	

In attendance:

Rakin Choudhury	Laura Gibbs	Simon Jarvis [2017:099–100]
Joanne Jones	Dr Nadine Lewycky	Tom Longbottom
Ahmed Mahbub	Professor Stephanie Marshall	Jonathan Morgan
Laura SeQueira [2017:099–100]		

Apologies:

Professor Richard Ashcroft	Isabelle Jenkins	Professor Steve Thornton
David Willis		

Welcome and apologies

2017.087 The Chair:

- [a] Noted that John Yard was attending his last meeting and thanked him for his years of service on the Council, Finance and Investment Committee and IT Strategy Board.
- [b] Noted that Yasir Yeahia and Rakin Choudhury were attending their last meetings as QMSU Sabbatical Officers and thanked them for their contributions over the past year.
- [c] Welcomed Ahmed Mahbub, QMSU President elect, and Tom Longbottom, QMSU Vice-President (Barts and the London) elect, to the meeting as observers. It was noted that Ahmed would become a member of Council in August 2018 and that Tom would be in attendance.
- [d] Welcomed Stephanie Marshall, Interim Vice-Principal Education, to the meeting.

East London Genes and Health and QMUL Health Data Science

2017.088 Council **received** a presentation from David van Heel, Professor of Genetics at the Blizard Institute and Chief Investigator on the East London Genes and Health project. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The East London Genes and Health Project was the flagship project of the new Life Sciences Institute. It combined world-leading research with local community engagement and represented an excellent opportunity to change patient care in the NHS.
- [b] The project was seeking to recruit more volunteers from the local community and would welcome assistance from Council members in raising its profile. A number of high-profile events were being planned and there was already a good level of engagement from the Director of the East London mosque.
- [c] Students were engaging with the research as volunteers and were using the data sets in their dissertations. The project demonstrated how the undergraduate student body could be encouraged to develop passion for research.
- [d] The President and Principal reported that Queen Mary had been working with the Department of Health and Social Care, the Cabinet Office and the Treasury on a land purchase, which was completed recently, to develop a Life Sciences campus in Whitechapel. The development would be jointly-led by Queen Mary, Tower Hamlets and Barts NHS Trust. A minimum of 9,000sqm (but ideally 18,000sqm) was required for Queen Mary to increase dry space alongside existing laboratory capacity in the Blizard Institute. The space would also be used to expand big data and to provide residences for students and key workers. The arrangement between the partners had enabled Queen Mary to avoid the capital costs associated with a land acquisition and provided the opportunity to take out more economical, long-term leases. There was currently a two- to three-year timescale to relocate the current occupiers, but Queen Mary was in conversation with Tower Hamlets and DSHC to bring this forward.

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2018 (Paper QM2017/64)

2017.089 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2018, subject to an amendment adding Peter Thompson to the list of attendees.

Matters Arising (Paper QM2017/65)

2017.090 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 31 May 2018. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The Director of Student and Academic Services provided an update on the issue of homeless sleeping on the hospital site at Whitechapel. A meeting had been held with the Head of Security who confirmed that all of the rough sleepers had moved on.
- [b] A brief report was provided on action taken to improve Queen Mary's league

table performance. The national league tables focused on teaching-related metrics, whereas the international tables placed greater emphasis on research and reputation, which explained some of the variations in Queen Mary's position across the different league tables. It was noted, for example, that The Guardian league table gave 25% weighting to the NSS and also used a value for money indicator, which was an area in which the university needed to strengthen its performance.

Chair's update

2017.091 The Chair:

- [a] Congratulated Professor Wen Wang on his appointment as Interim Vice-Principal and Executive Dean (Science and Engineering).
- [b] Reported that an away afternoon would be held in early December to engage members of Council in the development of the new strategy before it was brought back to Council for approval in spring 2019.

President and Principal's Report (QM2017/66)

2017.092 Council **received** the President and Principal's Report. The President and Principal said that:

Pensions and pay

- [a] Council members had been made aware of progress regarding the USS pension scheme via a message sent to all staff in the previous week. The Joint Expert Panel had been convened and was due to report on the valuation of the scheme by the end of September 2018.
- [b] The USS Trustee had invoked clause 76.4 with effect from April 2019, causing contributions to increase for employers from 18% to 25% and for members from 8% to 11.7%. This would result in an additional cost for Queen Mary of £9.6m in the first year. The faculties and professional services had been asked to develop scenarios for meeting this challenge.
- [c] The outcome of national pay negotiations had been put to a ballot by the main trade unions with the recommendation that the offer be rejected. The results of the ballots were due in July and could lead to further industrial action. It was likely that staff would see a connection between the issues of pensions and pay.
- [d] Concerns had been raised about communications issued by the USS and Universities UK, which stated that employers would be able to afford a contribution increase to 21% from 18%. This was potentially damaging for the sector and might place a significant financial burden on individual universities.

Senior Personnel

- [e] Stephanie Marshall had joined Queen Mary as Interim Vice-Principal (Education).

[f] Interviews were being held for the new role of Vice-Principal (Policy and Strategic Partnerships). The field of candidates was strong and an appointment was expected to be made.

[g] A strong candidate had been identified for the role of Director of Research and Innovation.

External environment

[h] *Minute 2017.092 [h] is confidential.*

Student recruitment

[i] *Minute 2017.092 [i] is confidential.*

New strategy

[j] Engagement with staff on the new strategy had been extremely positive. Workshops had been held on all campuses, providing a forum for discussion about Queen Mary's mission, vision and values. Staff felt that they had been given the opportunity to contribute and that their voices were being heard. A parallel branding exercise was also under way.

2017.093 The following points were noted in the discussion:

Student recruitment

[a] *Minute 2017.093 [a] is confidential.*

[b] *Minute 2017.093 [b] is confidential.*

[c] *Minute 2017.093 [c] is confidential.*

Post-18 funding review

[d] The current funding model was misunderstood by applicants, students and the wider public. Student loan repayments should not be classified as debt, but as a contribution.

Report on the 2017–18 Planning Round (QM2017/67)

2017.094 Council **received** a report on the 2017–18 Planning Round. It was noted that the reported increases in pension costs should not reduce the value of the Strategic Investment Fund for non-capital allocations, as faculties and professional services had been tasked with absorbing these additional costs. Some allocations had already been made to strategic priorities, such as membership of the Turing Institute and to meet cost of living increases in the Students' Union.

QMSU President's Report (QM2017/68)

2017.095 Council **received** the QMSU President's Report. The QMSU President:

- [a] Reported that students had been invited to speak to the panel conducting the post-18 funding review and had appreciated the opportunity to feed into this.
- [b] Reported that QMSU was commissioning a research project to understand the wider impact of bursaries on wellbeing and student retention across different student groups. A brief had been developed and the report would be due in December 2018.
- [c] Reported that QMSU had bid successfully to the Westfield Fund to support a student leaders' residential, a re-design of the QMSU website, projects to increase the recreational sport offer, and a Community Sport cohesion project.
- [d] Expressed his thanks to the Council and senior staff for working with the Students' Union on a number of initiatives during the past year.

2017.096 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The introduction of QMSU life memberships for graduating students was a positive initiative which would give alumni the opportunity to stay connected and create an additional revenue stream for the Students' Union.

Vice-Principal (Education) update (QM2017/68a)

2017.097 Council **received** a report and presentation from the Interim Vice-Principal (Education). Professor Marshall said that:

- [a] Work had commenced to address the major issues impacting on student experience, teaching and learning, the TEF and league table performance. An analysis had been conducted of the data sets and meetings had been held with key internal stakeholders. The TEF Working Group had established the 'Going for Gold' project, which would inform Queen Mary's approach to the next assessment in Phase 5 of the TEF. The focus was on improving teaching quality, retention, assessment and feedback, and attainment. Masterclasses had been arranged with leaders in the sector to share best practice and to understand what success looked like. Students would also be engaged in conducting research projects and producing recommendations. There would be an emphasis on changing the language around teaching and learning to generate excitement, ambition and passion.
- [c] Other Russell Group universities had responded more quickly to the TEF than Queen Mary by making improvements to learning and teaching, and to student engagement. Although the issues varied between schools and institutes, there were quick wins that could be gained across the university, such as in retention and teaching quality.
- [d] Infrastructure had been put in place to monitor and support the TEF 5 submission and visits to all schools had been planned at which individual action plans would be considered. Performance against TEF metrics would be monitored on a regular basis to identify areas requiring further attention and to build evidence for the narrative submission.

- [e] Council expressed its support for the 'Going for Gold' project, which had been enthusiastically adopted by schools, institutes and professional services, and observed that there was a collective responsibility to maintain focus on improving performance in this area.
- [f] Value for Money was an important consideration in evaluating the quality of university teaching provision. The results of a recent NUS survey, for example, showed that students across the sector wanted increased contact time with staff. It would be important to think creatively about the different types of activities that constitute contact time and to ensure that expectations are communicated effectively to staff and students.
- [g] The Queen Mary Model, which was launched in all schools and institutes in September 2017, addressed many of the same priorities identified in the 'Going for Gold' project. The main components of the Model would be folded into the new Project so that students would continue to receive all of the benefits that they had expected.
- [j] Management processes for teaching and learning, and the student experience, were currently fit for purpose, but were being reviewed to make them more agile and capable of accommodating different types of provision, such as CPD, e-learning and distance learning.

Student well-being and mental health (paper QM2017/69)

2017.098 Council **received** a report on student well-being and mental health. The Director of Student and Academic Services said:

- [a] Queen Mary had seen a rise in the number of students reporting mental health issues, and a greater complexity in the cases, which mirrored the national picture. Thankfully, Queen Mary had not experienced the same rise in the number of suicides seen at some other universities.
- [b] In September 2017, UUK introduced the #stepchange Mental Health in Higher Education framework in response to growing concerns. The framework advocated a whole institution approach to supporting mental health, moving away from this being seen as the sole responsibility of centrally-located advisory and counselling services. Work had begun within Queen Mary to complete the self-assessment provided as part of the UUK framework and a list of actions was being drawn up. Over the coming year, a review would be conducted into the role and resourcing of Student Support Officers in schools and institutes. Work would also be undertaken with the Interim Vice-Principal (Education) to improve the status and support for personal tutors, whose role was critical to student success.
- [c] Senate would be asked in November 2018 to establish a Student Well-being Committee with responsibility for considering impact statements for new policies and procedures, annual reports on mental health and counselling services usage, and oversight of the implementation of the #stepchange framework.
- [d] Online platforms providing mental health and well-being services were

available in the sector and would allow a greater range of students to access support. Such a platform would complement the specialist mental health services currently provided by Student and Academic Services.

- [e] A report on progress against the implementation of improvements to student mental health and well-being would be submitted to Council annually.

Action: Director of Student and Academic Services [e]

2017.099 The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] There were a number of ways in which Queen Mary could quite quickly reduce stressors put on students, such as by spreading out deadlines for assessed work. The university was also working in partnership with local NHS services to co-ordinate care more effectively and to ensure that students living in the local area were able to access mental health support. Mental health and well-being would need to become embedded across the university's strategic plans, activities and behaviours in order to deliver significant, long-term improvements.
- [b] Student Support Officers in schools and institutes, and Student Experience Officers in faculties, would be receiving front-line training and support with identifying students who may be struggling with mental health issues or an undiagnosed learning difficulty.

Financial Position and Planning: Period 9 management accounts (Paper QM2017/70)

2017.100 *Minute 2017.100 is confidential.*

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (Paper QM2017/71)

2017.101 Council **received** the minutes of the Finance and Investment Committee meeting held on 19 June 2018. The Chair of the Finance and Investment Committee said that:

- [a] The Finance team had been focusing on the debt issue with a view to bringing a mandate for approval by Council in November.
- [b] The Committee had raised concerns over the degree of slippage in capital projects which had been attributed to over-optimism in the scheduling of projects, the capacity and capability of the Directorates to deliver them and the lack of timely notification when projects began to slip. The Committee had requested from the senior executive information about controls that were being put in place to reduce the likelihood of future slippage. The Committee had been pleased with the response of the senior executive to its request for greater transparency.
- [c] Council welcomed the focus on capital investment, as the failure to deliver on capital projects would have a cumulative impact on the student experience which had not been adequately surfaced previously.

Financial and Student Number Forecasts (Paper QM2017/72)

2017.102 *Minute 2017.102 is confidential.*

Treasury Management Policy (Paper QM2017/73)

2017.103 Council **approved** the Treasury Management Policy on the recommendation of the Finance and Investment Committee.

Approval of changes to Lloyd's loan agreement (Paper QM2017/74)

2017.104 *Minute 2017.104 is confidential*

2017.105 *Minute 2017.105 is confidential.*

***Review of the Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation of Financial Authority and Travel and Expenses Policy (Paper QM2017/75)**

2017.106 Council **received** the Review of Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation of Financial Authority and Travel and Expenses Policy, **confirmed** the changes to the Scheme of Delegation of Financial Authority and **noted** the planned work to refresh the policies.

Equality and diversity report 2018 (Paper QM2017/76)

2017.107 Council **received** the equality and diversity report 2018. The Chief Operating Officer said that:

[a] The goal was to embed inclusivity in all aspects of the university. Strengthening our data collection and analysis would improve our understanding of the current situation and help identify areas for improvement. Previous equality and diversity data had not been consistent and had not provided a reliable baseline against which improvements could be measured. Although there had been a lot of activity, particularly in relation to Athena Swan, the impact had not been measured.

[b] The membership and terms of reference of the steering group that oversees the equality and diversity work was being reviewed to ensure that the membership was commensurate with the importance and scope of the work. More accountability for achieving against equality and diversity targets would be allocated to the Faculties and Schools.

[c] The data showed that only 25% of professors at Queen Mary were female but comprised 45% of all academic staff. This figure had not changed in the previous five years despite activities taking place under Athena Swan. BAME staff were also significantly under-represented at senior levels of academic staff and at all levels of professional services staff.

[d] Student attainment was a concern across the university, but was a particular concern in two areas: white males who underperformed against females in good honours programmes; and mature students who were more likely to receive a third class degree than 21–24 year olds.

2017.108 The following points were made in discussion:

- [a] Queen Mary promoted itself as being both diverse and inclusive and it was important that this was reflected in the policies and activities of the university. Reviews of the procedures for academic promotions and related appeals were being conducted to reduce any forms of bias that could enter the system. A policy on the conduct of relationships between staff members, and between staff and students, was currently being considered by the trade unions.
- [b] Council encouraged senior staff to engage with external organisations that could provide guidance, training and data to help the university make more progress in this area. It was also suggested that role models should be identified for students and staff that reflect the diversity of our student population and promote leadership.
- [c] It was expected that future reports on equality and diversity would provide Council with a clear articulation of the actions and priorities. This would enable Council to give the necessary assurances that Queen Mary was compliant with the relevant legislation. An action plan would be provided to Council at its meeting in October.

Action: Chief Operating Officer [c]

Ongoing conditions of registration with the Office for Students (Paper QM2017/77)

2017.109 Council **received** an update on the ongoing conditions of registration with the Office for Students. The Academic Registrar and Council Secretary said that:

- [a] The requirements for reporting to the Office for Students (OfS) were being released over the summer. A group would be convened to ensure that Queen Mary was in a position to understand and meet the requirements.
- [b] Detailed guidance had not yet been published by the OfS on its approach to monitoring institutions once they were registered. The response from the OfS to our application for registration was expected by mid-July. It was not known whether the OfS would set conditions for registration for all universities, whereas HEFCE had set these only for new entrants.
- [c] Initial guidance for reporting on compliance with the Prevent Duty had been published and suggested that there would be a more risk-based interaction between institutions and the OfS with a greater emphasis on the role of the governing body.

Audit and Risk Committee report (Paper QM2017/78)

2017.110 Council **received** the Audit and Risk Committee report. The Academic Registrar and Council Secretary said that:

- [a] The discussion on the deep dive report on student experience (retention) had considered whether the full range of risks related to student experience were being sufficiently captured in the strategic risk register. Further work would be done on the strategic risk register to ensure that it was capturing all possible risks, and not just those that could be easily monitored.

[b] The Committee had received three internal audit reports. The quality of service provided by the internal auditors had been discussed and was not felt to be delivering value for money. There was no value in retendering for internal audit services, but the work done by the internal auditors would be monitored more closely.

[c] The internal audit on Risk Management recommended that the risk appetite of Council should be formally documented. A one page statement on Council's appetite to risk would be drafted for Council approval.

Action: Academic Registrar and Council Secretary [c]

Governance Committee report (Paper QM2017/79)

2017.111 Council **received** the Governance Committee report. The Academic Registrar and Council Secretary said that:

[a] John Yard would be stepping down when his term of office ended on 31 August 2018. The Committee had agreed criteria and a process for recruiting his successor, which was well under way. Approval of the appointment would be sought by circulation, with the new member joining Council in October 2018.

[b] An external effectiveness review of Council was due to take place in 2018–19 and a tender document for this was being put together. It had been decided that, given the rapid changes in the sector, it was preferable to employ an individual with higher education experience. Council would be provided with more information later in the calendar year, as it was expected that the reviewer would attend a Council meeting and interview members as part of the review.

Remuneration Committee report (Paper QM2017/80)

2017.112 Council **received** the Remuneration Committee report. The following points were made:

[a] The main item of business had been to look at the outcomes of the recent reviews of Professorial and Professional Services Grade 8 staff. An external review had been commissioned to determine whether establishing sub-divisions within the Grade 8 salary band would make it easier to demonstrate comparability across different functional areas. The review was due to report back in six weeks' time.

[b] A review of the academic promotions procedures had been set up to ensure greater consistency of process and approach across the faculties and improve the quality of appraisal in some areas. The review would initially focus on Lecturer and Senior Lecturer grades after which consideration would be given to the Professorial level.

[c] The Committee had asked to receive regular reports, including an impact assessment, on the quality of engagement with the appraisal processes and on the progression of staff in BAME groups, which would be shared

with Council.

- [d] Council **approved** the change to the Committee's membership to enable the co-option of an external senior reward specialist.
- [e] The terms of reference would be amended to state explicitly that the President and Principal was not a member of the Committee and would not be attending the meeting in October, when his performance and remuneration would be discussed.

Action: Academic Registrar and Council Secretary [d; e]

Senate report (Paper QM2017/81)

2017.113 Council received the executive summary of the meeting of Senate held on 7 June 2018. The Academic Registrar and Council Secretary said that:

- [a] Senate had received the OIA's annual statement for 2017. Queen Mary continued to see a reducing number of students referring their complaints to the OIA and fewer complaints being upheld.
- [b] Work was being undertaken to improve the complaints handling process in consultation with the student body and QMSU.
- [c] Senate had received a presentation on equality and diversity. Members had noted that actions were planned in response to a number of issues particularly with regard to gender and ethnicity. A panel had been established to review the academic promotion policy and practice across the university.
- [d] Senate had approved the introduction of a single policy for the application of penalties to work that had been submitted after the published deadline, and the introduction of semester-based examinations from 2019-20. This would spread the load of assessment across the year and would be made available for all students, except those in professional or clinical programmes where the assessment requirements differ.

Council schedule of business 2018–19 (Paper QM2017/82)

2017.114 Council **approved** the annual schedule of business for the academic year 2018–19. The Academic Registrar and Council Secretary said that:

- [a] An additional strategy away afternoon would be scheduled in early December.
- [b] The internal effectiveness review showed that members would welcome better signalling of strategic items coming to Council. The weekly Friday email to Council members would therefore be used to highlight upcoming business, and the draft agenda for the next meeting would include more contextual information.
- [c] Members were encouraged to put forward topics for discussion, as Council should be addressing the issues which members felt were most important.

Agenda for the next meeting (Paper QM2017/83)

2017.115 Council **received** the draft agenda for the next meeting. Although work would be commencing for the accountability return and much of Council's business was fixed, feedback on the suggested presentations would be welcomed. Input into whether the scheduled presentations were appropriate would be welcomed.

Dates of Meetings 2018–19

- Thursday 11 October 2018, 1600 hours
- Thursday 29 November 2018, 1600 hours
- Thursday 28 March 2019, 1600 hours
- Thursday 9 and Friday 10 March 2019 – annual conference plus Council meeting
- Thursday 11 July 2019, 1600 hours