

COUNCIL
Thursday 11 July 2019
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Lord Clement-Jones (Chair)	Ade Adefulu	Professor Colin Bailey
Dr Véronique Bouchet	Monica Chadha [to minute 2018.094]	Sarah Cowls
Celia Gough	Professor Colin Grant	Stella Hall
Isabelle Jenkins	Dr Philippa Lloyd [to minute 2018.096]	Bushra Nasir
Luke Savage	Peter Thompson	Professor Wen Wang
David Willis		

In attendance:

Shamima Akter	Megan Annetts	Talhah Atcha
Ella Harvey	Joanne Jones	Dr Nadine Lewycky
Tom Longbottom	Jonathan Morgan	Annika Ramos
Redwan Shahid	Kaya Wiles	

Apologies:

Kath Barrow	Professor Alison Blunt	Ahmed Mahbub
Dr Darryn Mitussis	Professor Mangala Patel	

Welcome and apologies

2018.082 The Chair:

[a] Welcomed the QMSU Executive Officers for 2018–19 and 2019–20.

[b] Congratulated Professor Wen Wang on his appointment as Vice-Principal for Science and Engineering.

Minutes of the meeting held on 09 May 2019 (Paper QM2018/65)

2018.083 Council **approved** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 09 May 2019.

Matters Arising (Paper QM2018/66)

2018.084 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 09 May 2019.

Chair's update (Oral report)

2018.085 The Chair said that:

- [a] He had attended a number of events at Queen Mary recently and had been very impressed by the Open Day for prospective students. The day had been well run and there had been a great atmosphere on campus.
- [b] There would be a memorial service for Professor Peter McOwan and the information would be circulated to Council members when available.

President and Principal's Report (QM2018/67)

2018.086 Council **received** the President and Principal's Report. The President and Principal said that:

- [a] The Universities and College Union (UCU) had plans to conduct two separate but concurrent ballots for industrial action relating to the national pay award and the USS pension scheme. UCU had rejected the employers' final offer on pay and related issues without balloting members.
- [b] The unions Unite and Unison had rejected the national pay award in consultative ballots with their members. The dispute process with UCEA had been invoked and the unions would ballot their members on industrial action if the pay offer was not improved.
- [c] Professor Wen Wang had been appointed as the Vice-Principal (Science and Engineering). An appointment had also been made to the role of Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) which was in the process of being finalised. It was an excellent appointment for Queen Mary as the individual was well-known in the sector and would be bringing a large research team.
- [d] Queen Mary hosted its largest ever Open Day for prospective students and their families this year, with 12,000 people visiting the Mile End and Whitechapel campuses. The student ambassadors had been especially important in creating a welcoming atmosphere.
- [e] *Minute 2018.086[e] is confidential.*
- [f] *Minute 2018.086[f] is confidential.*
- [g] The staff survey had closed with a response rate of 54%, which was lower than the 70% that had been anticipated. This would need to be taken into account when analysing the results.
- [h] Queen Mary had not improved its position in the 2020 Guardian university rankings following a drop in 2018, which resulted from a change in the methodology and poor NSS scores. The overall 2019 NSS results had been disappointing, although some Schools had performed well. Performance had improved in questions relating to feedback and the student voice, which reflected the work that had been done in these areas in the past year. The Vice-Principal (Education) would present Council with a detailed analysis of the results in October.

- [i] *Minute 2018.86[i] is confidential.*

Action: [h] Vice-Principal (Education)

2018.087 The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] *Minute 2018.087[a] is confidential.*

[b] *Minute 2018.087[b] is confidential.*

[c] The target for the 2019 NSS had been to improve overall student satisfaction by several percentage points. The Going for Gold strategy had made significant progress, but this had not been reflected in the scores. Council noted that the NSS surveyed students at the end of their three years at university and the responses may reflect historic issues. A review of the detailed findings would show differences between Schools and good practice that could be identified and shared.

[d] Council asked for the findings of the Pulse staff survey in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to be shared at the next meeting.

[e] Council members were invited to Queen Mary for Clearing on 15 August. Those wishing to attend should contact the Council Secretariat.

Actions: [d] Senior Executive Team

[e] Council members

USS Pension consultation (QM2018/68)

2018.088 Council **considered and approved** the university's response to the latest Universities UK (UUK) consultation in relation to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension scheme. The President and Principal said that:

[a] The 2017 valuation remained in place and increases in contributions had been enforced in April, with further imposed increases due in October 2019 and April 2020. Three options had been presented to employers to complete the 2018 Valuation. The sector overwhelmingly favoured Option 3 as an interim solution, subject to three conditions.

[b] In its response to Question 1, the Executive agreed that the two-year moratorium offered a practical way forward to ensure that the covenant remained strong, but there were concerns that this would permanently change the position of employers in the scheme and give more power to the Trustee. In response to Question 2, the Executive agreed in principle with USS debt monitoring on the basis that the joint working group would ensure that the agreed reporting and metrics would not be onerous for employers. The Executive could not agree to Question 3 in its current form, as the proposal could have an adverse impact on the long-term financial sustainability of the institution.

2018.089 *Minute 2018.089 is confidential.*

Procuring additional space (QM2018/69)

2018.090 Council **considered and approved** the paper on the entering of operating lease agreements for Empire House and Department W.

[a] Two leases were being negotiated to address the shortfall in space in the early years of the strategy. The proposed leases were at Empire House in Whitechapel and Department W on Mile End Road which, together with the new School of Business and Management building, would deliver 12,000m² of the 26,000m² required. Empire House could accommodate 180 occupants and it was proposed that it would be used to house the new Digital Environment Research Institute. 450 staff could be accommodated at Department W in an open plan environment, and options were being explored to use the accommodation for educational purposes as well as for research and office support space. Options as to which staff are moved into Department W to release capacity for growth in teaching and research on existing campuses have not yet been fully assessed.

[b] *Minute 2018.090[b] is confidential.*

[c] *Minute 2018.090[c] is confidential.*

[d] *Minute 2018.090[d] is confidential.*

[e] There had previously been no policy at Queen Mary for the governance of leases. Finance and Investment Committee had charged the Executive with developing appropriate criteria for approval. The Executive decided that approvals for leases should follow the same criteria as for capital expenditure, that is, where the lease expenditure exceeds £5m, approval would be required by the Senior Executive Team, Finance and Investment Committee and Council. Owing to the timing of the negotiations, the paper was being presented to Council and the co-opted members of Finance and Investment Committee concurrently. Co-opted members of Finance and Investment Committee had agreed that they were content with the leases, subject to the risk on rent increases being mitigated as much as possible.

Action: [e] Director of Finance and Resources

Council effectiveness review update (QM2018/70)

2018.091 Council **noted** the update on Council effectiveness and **approved** the updated terms of reference and membership of Finance and Investment Committee. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] Governance Committee was responsible for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations and would receive an update on progress at each meeting. Some recommendations from the previous effectiveness review had not been implemented and it was necessary to ensure that this did not happen again. Council would receive regular updates from the Committee. A number of quick wins had already been completed.

QMSU President's report, including

- **Update on QMSU democracy review (QM2018/71)**

2018.092 Council **noted** the QMSU President's report. The QMSU Vice-President (Barts and

the London) said that:

- [a] Three new BAME counsellors had been appointed, one with experience in CBT and two placement counsellors. QMSU thanked the university for their efforts to address concerns in this area.
- [b] Three new external trustees had been appointed to the QMSU board. 20 high quality applications had been received.
- [c] QMSU representatives would meet next week with Philip Augar, Chair of the government's review of post-18 education.

2018.093 Council **received** a presentation from the QMSU Executive Officers on the Democracy Review. The following points were noted:

- [a] The Executive Officers presented an update on the progress of the review. The issues identified included a lack of engagement from elected student representatives; challenges in engaging with commuter students; and ensuring that Student Council meetings were quorate.
- [b] A consultation with Student Council showed that processes needed to be more efficient and accessible, with more online engagement options. Other Students' Unions were effective in using online engagement and greater devolved policy making.
- [c] The proposed new structure involved creating Education and Welfare zones with policy-making powers which would be overseen by part-time Vice-Presidents. Other committees, such as for sport, would continue to sit alongside the zones.
- [d] The proposals had been presented to Student Council and a consultation with the wider student body would be held this autumn. It was expected that the final review would be passed by December 2019 and implemented in full for the 2020-21 academic year.

2018.094 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Council asked whether the proposed changes would result in a more unified SU structure, as this was not explicit in the proposal. The improvements were intended to ensure that SU activities were open to all students and that the three faculties were equally represented. The Executive Officers said that it was necessary to get a balance of representation on the Student Council and on the Executive body.
- [b] In response to a question from Council about advice for the incoming Executive Officers, the current Executive Officers said that they would promote stronger engagement with overseas campuses through online engagement. The Executive Officers felt that engagement with the medical students at Gozo had improved this year. A Council member said that degree apprenticeship students were finding it difficult to engage with the SU and its activities. The incoming Executive Officers would need to consider how to engage with students on non-traditional courses, such as degree apprenticeships and distance learning provision.

- [c] Council asked the incoming QMSU Executive Officers to provide an update on the consultation proposals at the next meeting in October. Council thanked the 2018-19 QMSU Executive Officers for their contributions over the past year.

Action: [c] QMSU Executive Officers 2019–20

Current financial position (QM2018/72)

2018.095 *Minute 2018.095 is confidential.*

Tuition fee regulations 2020–21 (QM2018/73)

2018.096 Council **approved** the tuition fee regulations for 2020–21. Council noted that QMSU had argued successfully for the cap on future tuition fee increases to give students security going forward.

Freedom of speech policy update (QM2018/74)

2018.097 Council **approved** the Freedom of Speech policy. The following points were noted:

- [a] Council has a statutory duty to uphold freedom of speech on campus, which was also prescribed in the university's Charter. The Policy had been reviewed in light of new guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). Senate had considered the Policy at its last meeting and agreed that it aligned with the key principles of the EHRC guidance.

Audit and Risk Committee report (QM2018/75)

2018.098 Council **noted** the Audit and Risk Committee report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Committee reviewed the revised Strategic Risk Register which had a new format and incorporated information on risk appetite and tolerance. Council members were provided with hard copies of the Register and asked to direct any questions to the Council Secretariat. A discussion on the Strategic Risk Register would be added to the Council annual schedule of business for 2019–20. The Executive was preparing a risk summary sheet and a document explaining the relationship between the Risk Register, the KPIs and the strategy for Council. Where the risk score and the risk appetite were not aligned, the topic would become a subject for a deep dive. Council expressed its thanks to the Director of Strategic Planning and her team for their work on the register.
- [b] The Committee received two internal audit reports with an amber-red rating. The recommendations had been agreed by management and would be monitored by the Committee.

Actions: [a] Council members; Council Secretariat

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2018/76)

2018.099 Council **noted** the Finance and Investment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 20 June 2019. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The Committee noted that good progress had been made on the student residences strategy. This was being driven forward by a Residences Strategy Group which included representation from QMSU.

[b] *Minute 2018.099[b] is confidential.*

Senate report (QM2018/77)

2018.100 Council **noted** the report of the Senate meeting held on 13 June 2019.

Council schedule of business 2019–20 (QM2018/78)

2018.101 Council **approved** the schedule of business for 2019–20. The Council Secretariat would identify a suitable meeting for Council to discuss the revised Strategic Risk Register.

Action: Council Secretariat

Agenda for the next meeting (QM2018/64)

2018.102 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the meeting on 10 October 2019.

Dates of Meetings 2019–20

- Thursday 10 October 2019, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.
- Thursday 21 November 2019, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.
- Thursday 26 March 2020, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.
- Thursday 21 May / Friday 22 May 2020 – Residential conference including Council meeting.
- Thursday 09 July 2020, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.