

COUNCIL
Thursday 11 October 2018

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Lord Clement-Jones (Chair)	Professor Colin Bailey	Professor Alison Blunt
Dr Véronique Bouchet	Monica Chadha (Vice-Chair)	Sarah Cows
Celia Gough	Stella Hall	Isabelle Jenkins
Ahmed Mahbub	Dr Darryn Mitussis	Bushra Nasir
Professor Mangala Patel	Luke Savage	Professor Bill Spence
Peter Thompson	David Willis	

In attendance:

Ella Harvey [2018.012]	Joanne Jones	Dr Maggie Leggett [2018.010]
Dr Nadine Lewycky	Tom Longbottom	Professor Peter McOwan [2018.013]
Jonathan Morgan	Redwan Shahid [2018.012]	

Apologies:

Kath Barrow	Professor Wen Wang
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Welcome and apologies

2018.001 The Chair welcomed:

- [a] Professor Alison Blunt, elected cross-faculty academic staff member, who had joined Council from 30 September 2018 for an initial four year term;
- [b] Ahmed Mahbub, who was attending his first meeting as QMSU President;
- [c] Tom Longbottom, Vice-President (Barts and The London), who was in attendance at the invitation of the QMSU President.

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 (Paper QM2018/01)

2018.002 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018.

Matters Arising (Paper QM2018/02)

2018.003 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 12 July 2018. The Audit and Risk Committee had considered a draft risk appetite statement and would review a revised draft in November prior to this being brought to Council for approval.

Chair's update (Oral report)

2018.004 The Chair said that:

- [a] A recommendation to appoint Karen Willcox to the new position of co-opted member on Remuneration Committee had been tabled and was duly approved by Council. Isabelle Jenkins was thanked for her role in helping to identify her.
- [b] The recruitment of a co-opted member on Finance and Investment Committee with property experience was in progress.
- [c] A suitable candidate had been identified for the current vacancy on Council but had not been permitted to take up the appointment by his employer. The Chair thanked Monica Chadha for her ongoing assistance in filling this vacancy.
- [d] Meetings for the Chairs of Council Committees had been reinstated and would be held every few months. The first meeting had been a useful opportunity to co-ordinate issues across the governing body's activities.
- [e] The Chair had participated in a broad range of Queen Mary events since the last Council meeting. A list would be circulated to Council members.
- [f] Work had commenced on the external review of Council effectiveness. The invitation to tender had been approved by Governance Committee and a shortlist of five prospective reviewers had been compiled.
- [g] The Chair would continue to meet with members on an individual basis this year to discuss Council and committee effectiveness. The meetings held last year had been extremely helpful.

Action: Council Secretariat [e]

President and Principal's Report (QM2018/03)

2018.005 Council **received** the President and Principal's Report. The President and Principal said that:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- [a] The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) annual report had been published in the summer and outlined proposed actions and changes to the management and governance of EDI within Queen Mary. Staff engagement with the report had been positive. The report represented a starting point from which to build activity in this area. Council members were invited to review the report and provide feedback.

Insecure contracts

- [b] Non-permanent contracts had been a major issue in the last industrial dispute. 33% of Queen Mary staff were on insecure contracts, including Postdoctoral Research Assistants (PDRAs) on externally-funded research projects, postgraduate research students and individuals delivering one-off lectures.

Seven Russell Group universities had a smaller percentage of staff on insecure contracts. 30 individuals who should not have been on insecure contracts had been moved to permanent contracts.

- [c] It was often difficult to contract freelancers and small businesses to work with the university owing to changes in the legislation for the self-employed. Some groups were exempt from the new regulations, which would facilitate the hiring process.

Senior personnel

- [d] Dr Philippa Lloyd would be joining Queen Mary in January as the new Vice-Principal (Policy and Strategic Partnerships). Laura Gibbs had resigned her position as Chief Operating Officer and had left the university.

Student recruitment

- [e] Student recruitment figures for the current year looked positive. Enrolment was ongoing and the numbers in the report reflected the number of students who were expected to enrol by 1 December 2018.
- [f] The most recent Open Day had been very successful and footfall had been high. The Director of Marketing and Communications said that this was thanks to an unprecedented amount of campaigning, dressing the campus, and making systematic improvements to each successive Open Day.

2018.006 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Going for Gold project was focusing on the metrics that were most important in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), such as employability and degree attainment. Most significantly, the project was being undertaken in partnership with students, the QMSU Executive Officers each having been assigned a stream of work. There was engagement with the project from across the university and progress was already being made in key aspects of student engagement and retention.
- [b] Queen Mary's strong recruitment this year in a challenging external environment was attributed to the university's reputation in China, where programmes had recruited well. Staff had worked hard during Confirmation and Clearing to ensure that students with the right grades were recruited.
- [c] The implications of this year's recruitment figures on the budget was not yet fully known. On postgraduate taught programmes, the decline in the number of home students had been off-set by an increase in the number of overseas. Budget assumptions had been made on the number of continuing students, which were being closely monitored.
- [d] The use of unconditional offers by universities had received negative attention in the media. Outstanding potential awards, through which applicants receive an unconditional offer on the basis of an additional interview, had been used successfully in the School of History for a number of years. The sector needed to use allies outside higher education to spread positive messages about this.

USS Pension scheme (QM2018/04)

2018.007 Council **reviewed** and **discussed** QMSE's recommended response to the UUK consultation on the future funding of the USS pension scheme. It was noted that the internal members and officers had disclosed an interest in the matter prior to the meeting. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] All members of staff had been invited to comment on the UUK consultation. There had been few responses, but views had been gathered from earlier efforts to engage with staff, such as the President and Principal's visits to schools during the industrial dispute. There was a growing understanding of the issues among staff which reflected improvements in the quality of communications from UUK and USS.
- [b] Finance and Investment Committee had considered the affordability of the proposed increase in employer contributions to 21% and determined that any increase could only be met through savings and an increase in income, and not by the current cash generation, which was at significant risk from external factors.
- [c] Council remarked that the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) report offered a pragmatic way forward for the sector and that it would be important for UUK and the UCU to reach consensus on it in order to resolve the issue.
- [d] The time required to reach a decision and consult with USS members meant that the increase in employer contributions in April 2019 to 19.5% under clause 76.4 of the scheme would almost certainly come into effect. There was a possibility that the increase to 22.5% in October 2019 would also need to be implemented. Contingency planning for the increases in employer contributions under clause 76.4, up to 24.9% in April 2020, was under way, with schools, institutes and directorates being asked to increase their income and reduce their cost base in the current budget setting round.
- [e] Council **approved** QMSE's response to the UUK consultation on the basis that increases in employer contributions could only be met through savings and an increase in income. It was further agreed that the response should be made public and that a communication should be sent to all members of staff explaining Queen Mary's position on the consultation and the decision-making process.

Action: President and Principal [e]

Private placement approval (QM2018/13)

2018.008 *Minute 2018.008 is confidential.*

2018.009 *Minute 2018.009 is confidential.*

Health and safety compliance (QM2018/05)

2018.010 *Minute 2018.010 is confidential.*

Marketing and Communications update (presentation)

2018.011 Council **received** a presentation from Dr Maggie Leggett, Director of Marketing and Communications. The following points were noted:

- [a] The presentation covered the Director's first year in post, which had focused on increasing campaigning to improve Queen Mary's reputation and brand awareness. Brand guidelines had been developed and shared across the university and a new homepage and course finder pages had been created for the website. 70% of visitors to the website were prospective undergraduates and work was being done to improve the web journey for prospective undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.
- [b] Queen Mary's unique selling point was diversity and market testing had shown that it was the word most commonly associated with the university. A refreshed narrative had been developed by an agency and would be rolled out for use in schools, institutes and directorates, providing a more consistent approach to our public image which would improve our reputation. A conversion piece for use with leads and schools would be the next focus.
- [c] The narrative was felt to be aspirational and the claim to diversity was not entirely supported by the figures. Although Queen Mary had a very diverse undergraduate student population, this was less the case with the staff population. All brand narratives were aspirational and the statement was intended to galvanise members of the university community. Students felt that they could connect with the statement and that it set Queen Mary apart from other universities.
- [d] Work was on-going to improve how to communicate Queen Mary's story to brand ambassadors, including Council members, and wider ambassadors who were leaders in their fields. Many Queen Mary graduates went on to become thought leaders in their fields and case studies about them would help to illustrate the idea that diversity resulted in excellence.
- [e] Council remarked that the narrative would be appealing to corporate organisations who were seeking to increase the number of people they employed from different backgrounds. It also noted that, since Queen Mary was the product of the merger of different institutions, the narrative could be used to build a greater sense of community.

QMSU President's report (Paper QM2018/06)

2018.012 Council **received** the QMSU President's report. The QMSU President said that:

- [a] Welcome Week had been very successful with an 8% increase in turnout at Mile End and a 4% increase at Whitechapel. The hugely successful events had put pressure on the available space on campus.
- [b] The Students' Union was working with Phoenix School, Tower Hamlets Council and the charity Tower Project to deliver Project SEARCH, an education-to-work programme for young persons with disabilities. Full-time, one-year internships were being offered in QMSU, Professional Services and academic schools and institutes. Queen Mary was the first university in

England to deliver this programme.

- [c] The QMSU Vice-President (Education) and Interim Vice-Principal (Education) had visited schools and institutes as part of the Going for Gold project. A core TEF metric was graduate salary and many Queen Mary graduates entered sectors with lower salaries, such as not-for-profit and charities. A key piece of work would be done around empowering students during their time at university to ensure that they were getting the support they needed. The Executive Officers in QMSU would look to improve how they communicated with students the work they were doing with QMSE to improve the student experience.
- [d] The QMSU Vice-President (Education) had visited Florida International University to learn about Peer Led Team Learning. The university had a similar student profile to Queen Mary and had been able to improve their attainment and retention. The visit had also been informative for showing how their students' union communicated with the student body.
- [e] The President of Barts and the London Students' Association reported that he had visited the medical school in Malta and was working to ensure that the students there were being represented. Similar consideration would be given to students on our programmes in China.
- [f] The QMSU Vice-President (Welfare) said that the Zero Tolerance campaign, which included any form of hate crime or violence, would be launched in the following week to coincide with the launch of new university policies on staff and student misconduct. A new online reporting tool would be introduced later in the year to enable students to report incidents if they wish without going through the formal complaints procedures.

QMSU Priorities for 2018–19 (Presentation)

2018.013 Council **received** a presentation from the QMSU Executive Officers on their priorities for 2018–19. The following points were made.

- [a] The priorities for the QMSU President for the coming year were:
 - i. Student voice – increasing awareness of the SU's decision-making process and getting students involved in delivering priorities;
 - ii. Belonging – inclusive opportunities;
 - iii. Student spaces – improving use of space and inclusivity;
 - iv. Class Dismissed – Access to education at QMUL – support for students in Tower Hamlets and lower income students to access education at QMUL.
- [b] The priorities for the Vice-President (Education) for the coming year were:
 - i. Empowering course reps and part-time officers – improved training and communication;
 - ii. Teaching Excellence Framework – working with Going for Gold – ensuring student engagement throughout;
 - iii. BME student experience – create KPIs around attainment.
- [c] The priorities for the Vice-President (Welfare) for the coming year were:
 - i. Building better mental health support;

- ii. Community inclusion – improve communication of available support ;
 - iii. Dismantling cultural of sexual violence at university – clear policies and procedures, and implementation of a report and support system.
- [d] The priorities for the Vice-President (Barts and The London) for the coming year were:
- i. Increasing welfare support for students – mentoring scheme for first year medical students;
 - ii. Improve BLSA events and marketing;
 - iii. Accessible Union for all students – involve students based in Malta and postgraduate students.
- [e] The shared priorities for the QMSU Executive Officers for the coming year were:
- i. Access to education at QMUL;
 - ii. International Students and satellite campuses around the world;
 - iii. Engaging events;
 - iv. Library access and resources;
 - v. BME student experience;
 - vi. Zero tolerance / against sexual violence;
 - vii. Teaching Excellence Framework;
 - viii. Student safety.

Vice-Principals' Reports (Papers QM2018/07 and QM2018/08)

2018.014 Council **received** presentations from the Vice-Principal (Public Engagement and Student Enterprise) and the Vice-Principal (Research). The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Vice-Principal (Research) had overall responsibility for the submission to the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) and was supported in this work by Deputy Vice-Principals focusing on Impact and Enterprise. Greater amounts of government funding were being allocated to interdisciplinary research undertaken with industrial partners. The research office had been reorganised and a team created to support bidding for this type of funding.
- [b] Key indicators of success in research funding which Council could measure related to how Queen Mary performs against its competitors for the government's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and the total amount of funding won.
- [c] Preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) had been improved. All eligible staff would have to be submitted to the next REF under the new guidelines and work was being undertaken to improve the overall quality of publications for submission.
- [d] The Chair thanked Professor Spence and Professor McOwan for their presentations and for their contributions to the senior executive over several years, noting that both were due to complete their terms in office in the coming months.

Audit and Risk Committee Report (Paper QM2018/09)

2018.015 Council **noted** the Audit and Risk Committee report. The following points were made:

- [a] The external audit was progressing well and the internal audit opinion had been positive.
- [b] QMSE had adopted a more robust approach to risk management involving the wider membership of the senior executive. The Strategic Risk Register was being revised to present to the Committee in November.
- [c] The last internal audit from 2017–18 on Preparing for REF 2021 had been received from KPMG and had been given a rating of significant assurance (green). Although it was anticipated that Queen Mary might not sustain previous levels of performance in the upcoming REF, the Committee had been assured that everything possible was being done to maximise the submission.

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (Paper QM2018/10)

2018.016 Council **noted** the Finance and Investment Committee minutes. The two most important items on borrowing the affordability of pensions had been discussed elsewhere on the Council agenda. The Committee had been pleased to see that a Residences Strategy was being developed and would be delivered in line with the new university strategy.

Use of the Common Seal (Paper QM2018/11)

2018.017 Council **noted** the paper on the use of the common seal since the last meeting.

Agenda for the next meeting (Paper QM2018/12)

2018.018 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the meeting on 29 November 2018.

Dates of Meetings 2018–19

- Thursday 29 November 2018, 1530 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