

COUNCIL
Thursday 16 May 2024

DRAFT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

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| Lord Clement-Jones CBE | Serena-Amani Al Jabbar | Professor Colin Bailey CBE |
| Gil Baldwin | Ken Batty | Professor Kavita Datta |
| Professor Yang Hao | Indy Hothi | Isabelle Jenkins |
| Patricia Gallan QPM | Celia Gough | Dr Natalie McCloskey |
| Professor Mangala Patel | Dr Anthony Phillips | Dr Alix Pryde |
| Melissa Tatton CBE | Peter Thompson | |

In attendance:

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| Amaan Abbas | Matthew Beach | Dr Sharon Ellis |
| Karen Kröger | Dr Nadine Lewycky | Jonathan Morgan |
| For m. 2023.071 only: | Louise Lester | Alex Prestage |
| For m. 2023.072 only: | Jovani Palnoni | Aisha Qadi |

Apologies:

Maryanne Matthews

Welcome, apologies and declaration of interests

2023.059 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. There were no declarations of interests.

Chair's update

2023.060 Council **received** a list of the Chair's recent activities. The Chair said that:

[a] the Research and Innovation Awards had been inspirational and showcased the breadth of research from across the University;

[b] he and the Vice-Chair had been meeting the Heads of Schools, which provided great insight into school-level activities.

President and Principal's Report (QM2023/52)

2023.061 Council **considered** the President and Principal's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] Our undergraduate application numbers for next year remained strong but

the next few weeks would be important as students made their choices. Applications for overseas postgraduate students were down, which was a trend seen across the sector.

- [b] The Migration Advisory Committee's (MAC) review of the post study work (PSW) visa had recommended that it be retained. However, any decisions about retaining the visa scheme were tied up in politics about immigration. Our scenario planning showed that, in the event of the PSW visa being discontinued, we could expect an impact of £30–55m on tuition fee income. We were reviewing our cost base and identifying actions that would have a quick impact.
- [c] The Office for Students (OfS) had published a report stating that 40% of providers were expected to be in deficit by the end of 2023–24. The data underpinning the report was a year out of date, and the external environment had meanwhile become even more challenging, but the report gave a picture of the financial challenges facing the sector.
- [d] The encampment on the lawn in front of the Queens' Building at Mile End had assembled without the approval required under the Code of Practice on Free Speech. We continued to monitor the encampment's activities and to ensure that the campus provided a safe space for all staff and students to continue normal activities. Following an escalation of activity around the encampment, which included criminal damage to the campus, the occupants had been asked to disperse and a controlled entrance had been put in place. The University had not so far engaged with the encampment over its demands, at least some of which conflicted with the University's academic mission and values. As similar encampments had assembled at a number of different universities, the sector was sharing experiences and drawing on support from local agencies as required.
- [e] Procurement of goods and services from the European Union had become more complicated after Brexit, which was having a knock-on effect on research and productivity. If Labour were to form the next government, it was expected that they would be cautious about how they move the relationship with the EU forward, but there was a feeling within the sector that the current negative narrative about universities would change.

QMSU President's report (QM2023/53)

2023.062 Council **considered** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Students' Union President had offered to support engagement between the University and the encampment at Mile End. The Chair emphasised the importance and value of effective communication with internal stakeholders at this time.
- [b] The results of the QMSU elections had been published and Council congratulated the incoming sabbatical officers.

Remuneration Committee report (QM2023/54)

2023.063 Council **considered** the Remuneration Committee report.

Governance Committee report (QM2023/55)

2023.064 Council **considered** the Governance Committee report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Governance Committee had considered the initial proposals on the review and redrafting of the Ordinances and the Delegation Framework. The Ordinances had been updated to reflect the new Charter and codify decision making between Council meetings. The other standing Committees of Council and Senate would be consulted on the draft Ordinances and Delegation Framework in the coming months before seeking approval from Council in July.
- [b] The Committee had considered an update to the Memorandum of Agreement between QMSU, QMSU Services Limited and the University. The update incorporated new terminology and reduced the frequency of formal reviews to every three years. Council **approved** the updated Memorandum of Agreement on the recommendation of the Committee.

Role description and process to approve the next Chair of Council (QM2023/56)

2023.065 Council **considered** the role description and process to approve the next Chair of Council. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The proposed process was based on previous practice and had been recognised as an example of good practice in recent conversations with potential recruitment partners. The basic role description and person specification had been tightened, but the process to be followed would provide opportunities for Council members to feed into a more detailed recruitment brief.
- [b] The process would be led by a search committee with the terms of reference and membership set out in the paper. The terms of reference included to engage relevant stakeholders in the recruitment process and to make regular reports to the Council. The search committee's first task would be to appoint a search partner from an initial list of five.
- [c] Council highlighted the importance of adapting the recruitment brief and selection process to the specific skills and qualities Council was seeking in its next chair.

Degree Outcomes Statement (QM2023/57)

2023.066 Council **considered** the degree outcomes statement. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Degree Outcomes Statement supported our compliance with the OfS's conditions B4 and B5. The data was used in the league tables published by *The Times* and *Sunday Times*. We had been the bottom of the Russell Group for good honours and while we had gone up, we remained in the lower half. Most of the data was now being reported through the Teaching

Excellence Framework (TEF).

Minutes of the last meeting (QM2023/58)

2023.067 Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2024.

Matters arising (QM2023/59)

2023.068 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 28 March 2024.

Use of the Common Seal (QM2023/60)

2023.069 Council **noted** the use of the common seal since the last meeting.

Draft agenda for the next meeting (QM2023/61)

2023.070 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the meeting on 11 July 2024.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (QM2023/62)

2023.071 Council **received** a presentation on the annual pay gap and EDI reports. The following points were noted in the discussion:

EDI annual report

- [a] We had reviewed our job descriptions, adverts and person specifications to ensure that they supported inclusive recruitment. New approaches to interviews and academic promotions were designed to value experience and potential as much as qualifications.
- [b] Improving the ethnic diversity of our senior leadership was an ongoing challenge and we were unlikely to meet the target set out in the Strategy by 2030. We had taken actions that were embedded into the whole staff cycle and were having an impact, but not as quickly as we hoped.
- [c] The staff survey results showed that disabled and LGBTQ staff reported having a less positive experience than women and ethnic minority staff. Survey responses on bullying and harassment were triangulated with other data sets to identify areas that needed additional support.

Pay gap report

- [d] We had run our first disclosure campaign in the lead up to the staff survey to encourage colleagues to share protected characteristics. Human Resources was working with the Staff Disability Network on ways to promote disclosure.
- [e] The University had been an early adopter of many positive action development programmes for women. We were working to carve out a space for BAME women by ring-fencing development programmes or spaces. Changes to the academic promotions process had benefited BAME women particularly from Grade 7 and up.

- [f] There was no correlation between disability and disciplinary procedures in the last annual report, but the process was monitored regularly. We were working with the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) to be proactive in supporting needs.

QMSU Strategy (Presentation)

2023.072 Council **received** a presentation on the QMSU Strategy. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The new QMSU Strategy built on the previous one with the addition of a fourth pillar focusing on mental health and wellbeing.
- [b] Students' Union projects were underway to respond quickly to student needs. A number of projects were focused on engaging with groups that had previously not engaged with the Students' Union, such as postgraduate and degree apprenticeship students. The Students' Union was piloting different ways to collect feedback from those groups.
- [c] The Students' Union was working with the University to create social spaces for students who might not engage with sports clubs or societies. Academic groups and student voice committees provided other ways for students to meet their peers.
- [d] Council said that, given the Students' Union offered a wide variety of services and possible touch points with students, it may be helpful to create a visual to help students recognise the many opportunities for engaging with the SU throughout the student journey.

Dates of Meetings 2023–24

- Thursday 11 July 2024 at 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Queens' Building.