Queen Mary
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Senate

Paper Title	President and Principal's Report to Senate
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note and discuss the attached report.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	The President and Principal will provide a written report to each Senate meeting. This provides an opportunity to highlight key issues and developments to Senate members, for information and also discussion at the meeting as appropriate. This report covers the following: • Pensions, pay and staff wellbeing. • Updates on senior personnel. • Developments in the external HE policy environment. • Student recruitment. • Development of new University strategy.
Questions for Senate to consider	N/A
Regulatory/statutory reference points	N/A
Strategy and risk	Relates to all aspects of QMUL strategy and all sections of the Risk Register.
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	For Senate only
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Sponsor	Professor Colin Bailey, President and Principal

President and Principal's Report
Senate Meeting – 13 December 2018

This report provides Senate with updates on a range of key issues.

1   Staff Matters

1.1   USS Pension Scheme

Further to Council approval, we submitted our employer response to UUK's consultation on the report by the Joint Expert Panel (JEP). This has been shared with all staff and can be accessed on Connected via the following link:
http://connected.qmul.ac.uk/news/items/update-on-universities-superannuation-scheme-uss-on-monday-29-october.html

UUK have now confirmed that sector employers are supportive of the JEP recommendations as a platform for achieving a resolution to the pension issue. Based on its recommendations, there would need to be a 3.2% increase in contributions in order to maintain current benefits. If a 65/35 cost sharing principle is applied (in line with the current USS approach) then the employer contributions would rise to 20.1% and member contributions to 9.1%. Employers, including Queen Mary, have confirmed that they are willing to meet this new level of contribution, which is an increase of 2.1% compared to current levels.

UCU, representing all members (including those who are not members of the Union) has also confirmed its support for the JEP outcomes. We now wait for a response from the USS, regarding its view on the JEP recommendations and on any linked additional requirements it might put forward to address its perception of the level of risk associated with the funding of the scheme. The views of the Pension Regulator will also be crucial. UUK and UCU will also need to engage on identifying an agreed way forward, informed by the views of USS and the Pension Regulator.

Senate are reminded that in the absence of any formally agreed alternative proposal at this stage, USS have undertaken a consultation on implementing the Clause 76.4 mechanism, which would enforce a 6.9% increase in contributions for employers and a 3.7% increase from members.

1.2   Pay

The main unions have been balloting their members following the recent pay offer for staff on Grades 1-7. The unions have recommended that their members reject the offer and vote for industrial action.

The UCU ballot closed on 19 October, and at the vast majority of universities the vote did not reach the 50% threshold that is legally required for it to be considered valid. At Queen Mary, 43% of eligible members cast their vote, with 77% of those votes being in support of industrial action. This result was broadly in line with the rest of the sector. A small number of institutions, including Nottingham and Sheffield, did pass the threshold and may experience industrial action in due course.

It has recently been announced that UCU will now re-ballot members. This would be on an aggregate basis (i.e. all results counted together) and this would take place between January and March 2019.

1.3   Staff Wellbeing

The University has held a 'Wellbeing Fortnight' of activities aimed at supporting staff in considering their mental and physical wellbeing. This has included a range of talks, sessions and events, involving our staff and students, as well as a range of external agencies. A wellbeing fair on the first day of the programme was attended by approximately 500 colleagues.

This initiative is part of a broader response on the issue of staff wellbeing. External consultants, Affinity at Work, were commissioned in December 2017 to undertake focus groups across Queen Mary to gather qualitative information to help better understand the drivers behind staff experiencing stress, bullying/harassment and work-life balance difficulties. A summary of recommended actions, progress to date, and further required work is attached as Appendix 1.

Work on these issues are monitored on an ongoing basis by the University's Wellbeing Group. We also continue to review and discuss other key issues in this broad area, including non-permanent contracts, which will be the subject of further discussion at the next Senate meeting.

2   Updates on Senior Personnel

2.1   Vice-Principal (Research)

We have now shortlisted for this key role and formal interviews will be held on 30 November. Candidates have undertaken informal visits to the University and discussions (in person and on the phone where necessary) with key individuals ahead of this date. The Panel for the formal interviews includes members of QMSE, the President of QMSU, a senior academic and a senior member of Professional Services.

The new appointee will be replacing Professor Bill Spence, who is stepping down from QMSE at the end of his second term in January. Some colleagues may be aware that due to family reasons, Bill has been away from the University for the last few weeks. We have appointed Professor Adrian Smith to lead on our preparations for REF, which has been announced to all staff. This is a critical role, providing day-to-day leadership and direction, and reporting in to the VP Research, who can provide the strategic oversight. While Bill is away, this role will report directly to me. This post will continue until the REF submission is concluded at the end of 2020. Given Bill's likely extended absence from the University, we are also looking to make arrangements to cover other key aspects of Bill's portfolio, on a suitably flexible basis, so that Bill can engage as appropriate and possible over the coming months. Again, details of any arrangements will be communicated to all staff.

2.2   Other Vice-Principal Recruitment Processes

We have initiated the search process for a substantive appointment to the VP Education position, with the aim of the new appointment being in post towards the end of the Academic Year. This would allow for a handover with Professor Stephanie Marshall, who is taking forward plans to strengthen our teaching and learning activity as our Interim Vice-Principal (Education). The firm assisting us with the Vice-Principal Research process will provide similar support for this search.

Professor Wen Wang has taken on the role of Vice-Principal and Executive Dean (Science and Engineering) following the departure of Edmund Burke. In the New Year we will look to initiate a search to make a substantive appointment to this role.

2.3   Professional Services Leadership

Senate will be aware that Laura Gibbs resigned last month from her post as Chief Operating Officer. I've asked the Director of Finance, Jo Jones, and the Academic Registrar and Council Secretary, Jonathan Morgan, to take on the leadership of Professional Services on

an interim basis. Maggie Leggett, Director of Marketing and Communications, will be providing support to Jo and Jonathan on certain aspects of their leadership roles.

QMSE are discussing longer-term arrangements for leadership and oversight of Professional Services and I will update Senate and colleagues more broadly once further information is available to share. QMSE has a high level of confidence in Jo and Jonathan's ability to provide the required leadership for Professional Services while the longer-term picture is clarified. The Professional Services Leadership Team is supportive of this arrangement and the continuity and stability it provides in terms of oversight of our support functions.

3   External Environment

I attached to my previous report a detailed overview of the external environment, which had been originally developed for a meeting of Audit and Risk Committee. The sections below outline key developments since this was written.

3.1   Fees and Sector Finances

There has been considerable speculation in recent weeks about the potential reduction in fees for UG Home students, as an outcome of the review currently being undertaken by the Government into the funding of post-18 education. Recent suggestions have included a reduction in the fee to £6,500 for most subjects, with STEM programmes possibly being able to charge up to £13,500. The level of any government funding to address shortfalls in fee income is unknown, but we should be pessimistic that any contributions would cover the full extent of income loss associated with such a model. Accordingly, we continue to scenario plan for the worst case situations. We should also remember that we are currently not expecting any formal announcements relating to the review to be made until early 2019.

The fee level speculation has happened alongside press coverage that a small number of universities are in significant financial difficulties, following a series of increasing competitive student recruitment cycles. In response to this speculation, the Chair of the Office for Students, Sir Michael Barber, was clear in stating that the Office for Students would not step in to prevent a University from going out of business.

Sir Michael visited Queen Mary on 8 November, for a long-arranged visit. It provided an opportunity to discuss sector issues, as well as to share with him the unique nature of our University and the very high quality of our activity. His visit concluded with a session with the Students' Union and his feedback was very positive on everything he had learned about Queen Mary.

3.2   Brexit

There continues to be a high degree of uncertainty about the likely outcomes of the Brexit process, which is very concerning for universities and our staff and students.

The Home Office confirmed recently that phase two of the EU Settlement Scheme pilot would open to EU nationals working in higher education on 15 November. This scheme allows EU citizens to apply for UK immigrations status, and thereby retain the right to live and work in the UK, and access public services such as healthcare and benefits. To support EU national colleagues through the pilot process, Queen Mary is hosting information sessions with our legal adviser Eversheds. They will provide an update on the present status of EU citizens in the UK and information on the introduction of the settled status scheme. This will include providing assistance for staff with their applications. The University has also agreed to pay the associated application fee for registration certificates and permanent residence documents for employees.

3.3   'Grade Inflation'
The UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) has launched a consultation on potential changes to the degree classification system. This is in response to a report undertaken by UUK and others, which 'explored the reasons behind the increase in the proportion of graduates receiving first and upper second class degrees in the UK, and proposes sector-wide solutions to address them'. We will be seeking input from Senate members to our response, which is due by early February.

More information can be found via this link:
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/degree-classification-system-consultation

4   Student Recruitment

This section outlines the current position for applications to start programmes in September 2019 (correct as of 27 November).

4.1   Home Undergraduate
The following key points are highlighted:
- At this point last year 41% of Home Undergraduate applications had been received.
- Our ability to draw stronger conclusions from comparing current performance to that seen last year will be more evident as we approach and pass the January UCAS applications deadline.
- Applications are currently 2% down compared to last year, but the issuing of offers to applications is ahead of last year (+18%).
- Applications for medicine and dentistry programmes have an earlier deadline of 15 October and the vast majority of expected applications have now been received. Applications to medicine are down by 4% and to dentistry by 15%, although we anticipated that there would be a decline in applications for these programmes in line with increasing the offer to A*AA. There is confidence that targets will be met for both these programmes.

4.2   Overseas Undergraduate
The following key points are highlighted:
- At this point last year 26% of Overseas Undergraduate applications had been received. Again, stronger predictions about trend can be made following the January UCAS deadline.
- Applications are currently level compared to last year but offer making is well ahead of last year (+44%).

4.3   Sector Comparisons at Undergraduate Level
Data from UCAS shows our combined (home and overseas) undergraduate applications to be 3.4% below this time last year, compared with a sector wide decrease of 5.2% and an increase for our aggregated competitor group of 3.8%. Our position is skewed at this stage by the decrease in applications to medicine and dentistry, as noted in section 4.1.

4.4   Postgraduate Taught
The following key points are highlighted:
- Home applications are currently down 3%, with the issuing of offers to applicants being 7% down on last year. At this point last year only 9% of Home PGT applications had been received.
- Overseas applications are up significantly by 33%, with offer making up by 25%. At this point last year 27% of Overseas PGT applications had been received.

4.5   Summary

At undergraduate level, it is quite early in the cycle and it is therefore not advisable to extrapolate from the current data. We are also aware of trends over recent cycles, where applications are being submitted closer to the 15 January deadline each year. These points notwithstanding, it is vital that we are proactive as possible in our work on applications, with a particular focus on enhancing the speed with which a response is sent to applicants combined with highly effective conversion activity. QMSE is closely monitoring turnaround times from application to offer, having allocated some additional resources to the Admissions Team earlier in 2018. The potential deployment or reallocation of further resource is being discussed.

We are also considering extending our offer of accommodation so that all first year UG students are guaranteed access to student residences (currently we do not offer this for students from inside Greater London). We would anticipate that this would have an impact in this cycle on the conversion of applications to acceptances.

At postgraduate level, the large increase in postgraduate applications from overseas markets is welcome, although again should be tempered given that we are in the early stages of the cycle. Turnaround times are particularly critical for this cohort and QMSE is monitoring these closely

5   New Strategy

We continue to work on the development of a new strategy for the institution. Following a series of all-staff workshops at the end of the last Academic Year, and a QMSE away day last month, we held an event for approximately 100 senior colleagues from across the University on 19 November. This was a productive session, which focussed on issues relating to the future size and shape of Queen Mary, and whether we should be looking to grow in a controlled and quality-focussed way over the next strategy period. The prevailing view, which aligns with feedback from earlier workshops, is that we should be aiming for growth that is controlled and quality-focussed.

The outcomes from this key meeting will be used as a platform for extended discussions with Council on 6 December. We will share with Council the positions that we have been developing in relation to where we want to be by 2030 in our core areas of activity, and crucially what we need to do to achieve this. Following discussions with Council we will draw up a formal draft strategy in the New Year. This will be the subject of further consultation with colleagues, ahead of submitting the full and final strategy document to Council for approval in March.

I'd like to thank all colleagues who have engaged in the various strategy events that we have held since May.

6   Events on Campus and Freedom of Speech

There have been no issues since the last meeting relating to events on campus and freedom of speech that require flagging with Senate.

7   Other Matters

I will report orally to Senate on other matters that may have arisen between the preparation of this report and the Meeting.

Colin Bailey, 28 November 2018

Affinity Health at Work (AHW) recommended actions, progress to date and further work to do

The left hand column outlines the actions recommended by Affinity Health at Work (AHW) consultants to address the priorities highlighted from their work at Queen Mary. In the right hand column we have outlined progress to date, some of which were already underway at the time of the report and some built on AHW suggestions and recommendations.

Recommended actions	Progress to date
1. Develop a comprehensive health and well-being strategy and build a culture where staff health and well-being is prioritised.	➢ A wellbeing strategy has been drafted and will be consulted with stakeholders across Queen Mary in January 2019, prior to implementation. Members of the Wellbeing group, Human Resources, Equality Diversity & Inclusion and Occupational health will be involved to implement and help embed. ➢ The membership of the Wellbeing group has been revisited and representation from Students Union, Communications and academic colleagues is being strengthened. ➢ The Wellbeing group will report to the Health and Safety Committee in future and an update report provided to the Health and Safety Committee as a standard item on the agenda. ➢ The Principal has asked to be a regular attendee at the wellbeing group and agreed to nominate a Wellbeing Champion at Queen Mary. ➢ Members of the Wellbeing Group are being encouraged to champion wellbeing matters within their areas- to feedback instances of good practice and what needs addressing to the group and take back key discussion points back to their respective faculties/departments.

	➢ Discussions are taking place at the Wellbeing group meetings as well as other forums about putting in place more robust mechanisms to measure the impact and effectiveness of our wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and interventions. ➢ The new HR structure has additional HR Partnering resources who will be working closely with Heads of Schools and departments to cascade information related to health and wellbeing and implement any action plans. ➢ A number of training sessions are available on raising Mental Health awareness for managers. We have trained 198 Mental Health First Aiders who meet regularly to discuss and share best practice. ➢ A Wellbeing fortnight and Fair has been arranged to take place from 5 – 16 November. The fair will be launched on 12 November.
2. Set and communicate clear strategic priorities with full consideration of resource requirements associated.	➢ Wellbeing and Inclusivity are key objectives within our People and OD strategy and delivery plans are currently being developed. ➢ A number of sessions were arranged across Queen Mary to engage and involve people in the review of Queen Mary's Strategic plan. ➢ The Principal has a range of meetings arranged throughout the year with Schools and departments. Other members of QMSE also have a number of regular meetings/sessions where colleagues have an opportunity to discuss matters informally and these forums help staff understand the key strategic drivers and priorities from members of QMSE and for the QMSE members to take on board staff suggestions, concerns and perspectives.

	➤ Increased resourcing has been agreed for an Academic Lead for EDI and this postholder will have increased capacity to progress EDI and wellbeing matters.
3. Embed a behavioural culture change across the University	➤ A Behavioural framework has been developed as part of the Professional services' 'Working better together' programme. Professional Services Leadership Team have been consulted and are signed up to this and currently discussions are underway with academic colleagues about the approach and key principles. ➤ Once the framework has been agreed, it is expected that these will be communicated to all, focus groups will be held to generate shared understanding of the 'behavioural model' and subsequently embedded in recruitment, induction and performance management activities. ➤ The key principles of the behavioural framework and soft skills would also be embedded in all training and development programmes reinforcing positive behaviours, inclusivity and fairness in all we do.
4. Empower schools and departments to make decisions	➤ The roles of Faculty HR Strategic Partners (FSHRPs) have been introduced as part of the new HR structure to ensure Faculties and Schools have more support with their strategic people management matters. As they will be part of the Faculty Executive groups, the FSHRPs can more proactively advice on the impact of initiatives which can help with expediting decision making processes or enable quicker decision making processes. ➤ In addition to publishing our new and revised HR policies, we will communicate, engage and implement them meaningfully by sharing and briefing our colleagues in their use to support and inform on management decision making.

5. Address communication and change management practices	- Building in regular informal meetings with Unions and JCF sub committee meetings so that discussions about changes in the horizon can be discussed at an early stage. - Increased HR Partnering resources will help with supporting staff and managers in the management of the change and smooth implementation processes. - Discussions underway with Communications team about more regular and proactive information regarding QM wide/HR initiatives and encouraging staff to be involved in these programmes/initiatives. - HR web pages to be reviewed - Policy review and development strategy will include a communication plan to enable us to communicate, engage and implement policies meaningfully with our colleague's university-wide to ensure that they become familiar with them and on how to apply them appropriately. This includes initial briefings, use of relevant internal media and training workshops (as/if appropriate).
6. Improve decision making authority, accountability and empowerment of staff	- HR is working on a 'This is your new HR Department' information/leaflet with a list of who is who and where to go for support in the new HR structure. - The Working better together Function leads are looking at a number of ways to ensure that there are smooth interfaces where there are possible crossovers, to avoid duplication and to help streamline processes. - Project groups are formed to ensure there are joined up thinking when looking at service enhancements (e.g. HR, ITS and Planning

	working together on some data quality enhancement projects, HR/Finance working together on Relocation Policy, changes to One off payments etc). ➢ The introduction of Faculty EDI Group means that additional opportunities are available to discuss and address local awareness raising and other concerns relating to this agenda. ➢ Education of internal and external staff groups in understanding and use of revised and new policies as once agreed by QMSE which will give staff members/groups knowledge and confidence to interpret and apply policies coherently and consistently.
7. Develop and implement a robust performance management system that is supported by appropriately skilled staff	➢ Appraisal guidelines for academic staff have been revisited. Feedback from the recent Academic promotions review process however shows that more work may be needed. ➢ Areas requiring further work are objective setting, timing of the appraisals, completion rates, linking to the overall objectives of the Organisational and Professional development team etc. ➢ Consideration to be given to make appraisals mandatory/are there any consequences for non-completion? How can appraisal be deemed meaningful to both staff and managers? ➢ The remit of the Appraisal monitoring Group will be explored. ➢ More support will be available to managers by HR going forward to help manage performance going forward
8. Address the disconnect between Professional Services functions and academic faculties	➢ Faculty HR Strategic Partners to be part of the Faculty Executive groups will help build relationships and develop more collaborative working and joint problem solving.

	➢ Discussions are underway for more PS Function leads to attend School/Faculty level meetings on a regular basis to discuss their areas of work/specific projects to build a understanding of each other's perspectives and rationale for certain actions/decisions. ➢ There are a number of Forums where PS and academic colleagues meet such as QMSE, Council, EDI related meetings, various Strategy Boards. Explore the possibility of developing more joint forums?
9. Provide management training for all those with line management responsibility	➢ A number of management development training sessions are available via the Organisation and Professional development team. A programme is in the pipeline aimed at Heads of Schools and academic management.
10. Develop a robust bullying and harassment policy, supported by appropriately skilled staff	➢ The Dignity at work statement and Procedure is available on the Human Resources web pages ➢ Dignity Disclosure officers (DDO) have received initial training. A project manager is to be appointed to develop the Dignity Disclosure network and develop processes for recording and sharing information on disclosures.