

COUNCIL
Thursday 09 May 2019
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Lord Clement-Jones (Chair)	Ade Adefulu	Professor Colin Bailey
Professor Alison Blunt	Dr Véronique Bouchet	Monica Chadha
Sarah Cowls	Professor Colin Grant	Stella Hall
Isabelle Jenkins	Dr Philippa Lloyd	Ahmed Mahbub
Dr Darryn Mitussis	Bushra Nasir	Professor Mangala Patel
Luke Savage	Peter Thompson	Professor Wen Wang
David Willis		

In attendance:

Joanne Jones	Dr Maggie Leggett [minute 2018.078 only]	Dr Nadine Lewycky
Tom Longbottom	Jonathan Morgan	Aaron Porter [minute 2018.076 only]
Kaya Wiles	Mike Wojcik [minute 2018.072 only]	

Apologies:

Kath Barrow	Celia Gough
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Welcome and apologies

2018.064 The Chair welcomed Professor Colin Grant to his first Council meeting as the President and Principal's nominee.

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2019 (Paper QM2018/52)

2018.065 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2019 subject to the following amendments:

[a] Minute 2018.052[e] to read 6% of students in the university.

[b] Minute 2018.054[b] to read 'defined benefit pension scheme'.

Matters Arising (Paper QM2018/53)

2018.066 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 28 March 2019.

Chair's update (Oral report)

2018.067 The Chair:

- [a] Said that the launch of the 2030 Strategy had been a triumph in terms of the concept, selection of guests, speech writing and staff. He had received good feedback from guests about the event and about Queen Mary.
- [b] Congratulated Bushra Nasir on her appointment as CEO of the Drapers' MAT.
- [c] Said that Queen Mary had received notification from the OfS that it had demonstrated due regard for the Prevent duty and was not considered to be at higher risk in this regard.

President and Principal's Report (QM2018/54)

2018.068 Council **noted** the President and Principal's Report. The President and Principal:

- [a] Thanked the staff who worked on the Strategy 2030 launch event and Council members for their support. It had been a successful start to the new strategy. The team would nonetheless reflect on ways to improve future events and the preparation of guest lists.

2018.069 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The current lease on Charterhouse Square would expire in 2032 and Queen Mary was in discussions with The Medical College of Saint Bartholomew's Hospital Trust, which manages the site, over an extension. It was the view of management that a longer lease with the flexibility to accommodate teaching and research in disciplines other than medicine and dentistry would permit longer-term investment in the site. Planned developments had been put on hold since January pending the outcome of discussions with the Trust. Council asked whether inadequate facilities on the site could impact on the delivery of the strategy and future REF performance, and was told that development would continue at the Whitechapel and Mile End campuses.
- [b] A long list of applications for the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) role had been assembled and included a number of very strong candidates. External Council members would be invited to sit on the selection panel for this and the Vice-Principal (Science and Engineering) role.
- [c] The increased number of offers to potential students this year had resulted from an increase in applications and quicker turnarounds in making offers. Entry standards had increased and Medicine, for example, would be accepting students with A*AA. Recruitment for overseas and postgraduate taught students was strong thanks to an improved marketing and recruitment strategy. Undergraduate student numbers were in line with expectations, but further increases were possible.

President's Report [QMSU] (QM2018/55)

2018.070 Council **noted** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The visit to ULIP had been successful in clarifying the relationship between QMSU and the University of London Union and the expectations of Queen Mary postgraduate students based in Paris.
- [b] The online 'Big Change Survey' had been undertaken to understand the needs and priorities of current students. The responses would be used to inform the Going for Gold work streams, including the 'Sticky Campus' Working Group and other improvement projects.
- [c] Asian Heritage Month in February had included a South Asian mental health panel discussion. The university was currently without any BAME counsellors able to offer support to students from similar backgrounds.

QMSU Returning Officer's election report (QM2018/56)

2018.071 Council **noted** the QMSU Returning Officer's election report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Voters who wished to vote for any of the liberation positions were now required to self-define as a member of that community. Confusion over the new policy may have contributed to the lower voter turnout seen this year. More candidates overall had stood for positions, but fewer for the executive roles. A high number of self-nominated candidates had withdrawn. The SU would be working with the voting software provider to improve accessibility.

QMSU Democracy review (QM2018/57)

2018.072 Council **noted** the QMSU Democracy review. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] QMSU had undertaken a review of its democratic processes in the last year during which time improvements had been made to the bye laws. Areas of concern had been identified regarding the engagement of student representatives which were broader than the scope of the original review.
- [b] Council felt that QMSU had not addressed the issue raised previously about the composition of the student council. Council was obliged under the Education Act (1994) to ensure that QMSU operated in a democratic fashion. The Memorandum of Agreement Review Panel, being the mechanism through which Council oversees QMSU governance, would be meeting in due course to help QMSU to formulate a plan. Council requested that an action plan be prepared and agreed in time to be handed over to next year's sabbatical officers.

Action: [b] QMSU President

Current Financial Position (QM2018/58)

2018.073 *Minute 2018.073 is confidential.*

Financial implications of the new university strategy (Presentation)

2018.074 Council **received** a presentation on the financial implications of the new university strategy. The following points were noted in discussion:

[a] *Minute 2018-074[a] is confidential.*

[b] It had been agreed at the last Finance and Investment Committee meeting that the Committee would be given the opportunity to look at establishing effective controls for the release of revenue and capital funds.

OfS letter on student recruitment and financial sustainability of universities (QM2018/59)

2018.075 Council **considered** the OfS letter on student recruitment and financial sustainability of universities. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The OfS had written to chairs of governing bodies to express their concerns about unrealistic student growth forecasts. A comparison between the OfS analysis and the university's own figures showed that the overall base case student number growth was less than the assumed sector-wide percentage increases. The forecast decline in the population of 18 year olds was not expected in east London, where the number of 18 year olds was predicted to increase. Mechanisms were in place for the release of resource based on income. Although the assumptions for overseas student growth were large and the multiplier was bigger than for home students, this area would be monitored via a specific KPI. Transnational Education (TNE) was built on a partnership model which reduced risk.

External review of Council effectiveness (QM2018/60)

2018.076 Council **considered** the external review of Council effectiveness. Aaron Porter, Associate Director (Governance), AdvanceHE, said that:

[a] It was a positive report and the fundamentals of good governance and basic compliance were clearly evidenced. The majority of recommendations were minor, but there were four key areas to highlight.

[b] The report had not considered in depth the committee structure, which was considered appropriate for the institution. Further thought should be given to how the risk appetite would be considered through Audit and Risk Committee in the light of the new strategy.

[c] The work of the Secretariat had been highly commended. Comments had been made about the high volume of papers, but this was not unique to Queen Mary. Papers could be improved by ensuring that they related to the strategy and by drawing out more clearly the key input required from Council.

[d] The student voice was well respected and actively sought. Specific recommendations to build on this included improving reporting between Council and Senate and adding a student member to Finance and Investment Committee.

[e] The proposed approach to the KPIs for the new strategy should be commended for providing greater clarity. Council should ensure that it has the means to track performance over time as well as in absolute terms. Non-

financial measures would also provide information on critical success factors and tell a more holistic and timely narrative about performance.

2018.077 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Chair congratulated AdvanceHE on an excellent report and commended its focus on culture over than compliance.
- [b] The Chair of Audit and Risk Committee said that he would like the Committee members to have the opportunity to discuss the recommendations on strategic risk management before approving them. Risk management had been given higher priority at the Senior Executive Team meetings and had improved. A review of the university's approach to strategic risk would enable Council to consider risk at a more strategic level while deep dives would allow for a focus on formative discussions. Improved data collection was needed to support the KPIs.
- [c] The Registrar and Secretary commented that the creation of Task and Finish groups with Council members risked blurring the distinction between governance and management. A formal structure was not necessary, but management should consider ways in which it could take advantage of the expertise of external Council members.
- [d] The financial scenarios and the articulation of the financial capital required to deliver the new strategy had been thoroughly considered, but Council should be given more assurance that there is the capacity to deliver the strategy in terms of people, estates, infrastructure and social capital.
- [e] The Secretariat would proceed with implementing the 'quick wins' and would report back to Council and Governance Committee in July with a plan and timescale for the larger tasks. It was anticipated that some medium-term recommendations would be implemented by September. Not all of the recommendations from the last effectiveness review had been implemented and this had not been adequately explained, so a record of implementation would be kept this time. Finance and Investment Committee and Audit and Risk Committee would consider the report at their meetings in June and report back to Council in July.
- [f] Council thanked Aaron Porter and Kim Ansell for their excellent work in a very tight timeframe.

Action: [e] Council Secretariat

Access and Participation Plan (QM2018/61)

2018.078 Council **noted** the contextual information on the Access and Participation Plan. The Director of Marketing and Communications said that:

- [a] The OfS had moved to a five-year plan setting out outcome targets. While the move had been welcomed, the short timeframe for submission created challenges for effective engagement. Increased governance requirements meant that Council was required to approve the Plan prior to submission. The Plan described the university's work in improving access, success and

progression for underrepresented groups of students, much of which was addressed in the Education pillar of the Strategy. Queen Mary was successful in recruiting students from underrepresented backgrounds but inclusion could be improved by supporting these students throughout the student journey.

- [b] How inclusion was defined and monitored was being discussed. There were various measures that could be used to track inclusion, such as differential degree attainment and staff diversity.
- [c] Gaps in success, attainment and progression were reflected in the above average non-continuation rates for all students, but particularly those from BAME backgrounds. The Plan focused on closing these and other statistically significant gaps. Missed targets could result in the university having to complete an annual monitoring return to the OfS.
- [d] As Queen Mary recruited a wider diversity of students than most Russell Group universities, the Russell Group average may not be the most appropriate benchmark. Useful comparators could be found in universities with similar student profiles, such as Nottingham Trent, Westminster and Aston, and how they achieve success in retention. Internal KPIs would also be developed.
- [e] It was anticipated that the government would move towards centralising funding for access and participation to be distributed on a responsive basis. Investment to support the initiatives in the Plan would need to be amended if the funding regime were to change. Research showed that bursaries levelled the playing field, but this evidence was not being considered by the regulator. It was Queen Mary's position that bursaries make a difference.
- [f] Data was collected on circumstances which impacted on student attainment such as care leavers, estranged students, those with caring responsibilities, and commuter students. It was important to raise aspirations of students so that attending university was not the destination but to support them to progress to highly skilled jobs. A student statement from QMSU in support of the Plan would be appended. The Plan would be circulated to Council following the meeting for approval.

Actions: [f] Director of Marketing and Communications

Equality and Diversity report (QM2018/62)

2018.079 Council **considered** the update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] New governance structures had been introduced, including an EDI Steering Group chaired by the Vice-Principal (Policy and Strategic Partnerships). The recent departures of staff members in EDI created an opportunity to revisit the support structure. Operational systems and processes to support data collection to underpin the university's EDI activities would be improved.
- [b] The Dental Institute had been successful in achieving an Athena Swan silver award. Council congratulated Professor Mangala Patel for her excellent

work in leading the application and hoped that good practice could be shared from this success. The Interim Vice-Principal (Science and Engineering) had been appointed as the new Athena Swan champion, and was driving forward the university's next application for an institutional award in April 2020. Applications for Athena Swan awards were the product of a culture in which EDI was embedded in the working culture, as set out in the Strategy. Several Schools were in the process of preparing award applications.

[c] Council requested that a report on EDI become a regular agenda item. The President and Principal reported that consideration was being given to the creation of a new Vice-Principal role for People, Culture and Inclusion which would have oversight of health, wellbeing and inclusion.

Action: [c] Council Secretariat

Remuneration Committee report (QM2018/63)

2018.080 *Minute 2018.080 is confidential.*

***Agenda for the next meeting (QM2018/64)**

2018.081 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the meeting on 11 July 2019.

Dates of Meetings 2018–19

- Thursday 11 July 2019, 1600 hours, Room 1.21 Garrod Building, Whitechapel.