

To the Acting President,
Queen Mary Students' Union.

3 June 2020

Dear Megan,

I am writing to follow up with you on the two motions passed by the Student Council of QMSU last Thursday.

These were circulated to members of Council, who have confirmed their full confidence in the President and Principal.

Although I acknowledge the strength of feeling over payments to student workers while QMSU's commercial outlets remain closed, I do not propose to debate further QMSU's interpretation of the furlough scheme on the grounds that Council has already discussed this and published its position. As you know, the University has taken external legal advice that validates its concerns over QMSU's approach. So it is all the more important that student workers are reassured by QMSU, as their employer, that they are to be paid in full as if the commercial outlets were operating normally.

Council members have contacted me to express disagreement with your characterisation of the discussion of the furlough issue at the recent Council meeting. As a matter of fact, the meeting was extended by half an hour to give adequate time, in addition to what is routinely given to QMSU matters, to discuss the issues you wanted to raise. The record shows that the discussion lasted over 45 minutes. QMSU's communications on the furlough issue and student engagement were added to the Council papers beforehand for full transparency and to ensure that members came to the meeting fully informed. I therefore invite you to correct the record with the Student Council of QMSU on these facts.

The President and Principal and I wrote to you jointly on 20 May to reaffirm the University's strong commitment to co-creating a world-class education and student experience with students, citing recent initiatives that have been prompted and shaped by this approach.

The agreement at Council to produce a document on co-creation should help to clarify expectations going forward. Council takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that student views are understood, but this depends on student representatives raising issues in an open and timely fashion.

It should not be the case that Council members on the MoA Review Panel, which met on Wednesday last week, had no indication that a motion on student engagement was about to be presented to the Student Council of QMSU or indeed that Monica and I had no indication from our very constructive and productive meeting with you and the senior managers of QMSU services in the week before Council that a campaign was due to be mounted on the furlough issue.

I would hope that student representatives also feel the need to be transparent in feeding back to the students they represent. I do not pretend that this is easy, especially in cases when a decision disappoints; but students should not gain a false impression that their views have not been considered.

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Council will continue to reflect on the issues you have raised. Current and future plans for student engagement are front and centre in our thinking and our priorities and in turn good relations between QMSU and the University are of crucial importance.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Clement-Jones', written in a cursive style.

Lord Clement-Jones CBE
Chair of Council