

COUNCIL
Tuesday 30 June 2015

DRAFT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Sir Nicholas Montagu (Chairman)	Professor Richard Ashcroft	Professor Simon Gaskell
Elizabeth Hall (Vice-Chair)	Richard Learwood	Simon Linnett
Cheryl Mason	Bushra Nasir	Dola Osilaja
Professor Morag Shiach	Professor Richard Trembath	David Willis

In attendance:

Margaret Ayers	Nirmal Borkhataria	Eleanor Crossan
Joanne Jones	Carolina Mantzalos	Sian Marshall
Jonathan Morgan	Gulshin Rafiq	Professor David Sadler
Mike Shore-Nye		

Apologies:

Professor Paul Anderson	Kath Barrow	Dr Veronique Bouchet
Dean Curtis	Professor Raymond Kuhn	Patricia Newton
Luke Savage	Professor Geraint Wiggins	John Yard

Part 1: Preliminary Items

2014.081 The Chairman:

- [a] welcomed Joanne Jones, Director of Finance, and Carolina Mantzalos, President Elect of QMSU, who were attending their first meeting of Council.
- [b] noted that the meeting was quorate. Council had been inquorate on more than one occasion during 2014–15 and members **agreed** that Governance Committee would be asked to consider the size of the external membership of Council if the issue persisted in future.

Minutes: 19 May 2015 (Paper QM2014/70)

2014.082 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2015, subject to the following amendment:

- [a] Minute 2914:063[c]: to remove the sentence ‘There was a spike in staff turnover ahead of the REF census date in October 2014’.

Matters Arising (Paper QM2014/71)

2014.083 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 19 May 2015.

Chairman's Opening Remarks (Oral Report)

2014.084 The Chairman **reported** that:

- [a] The Chairman of Council, Vice-Chair of Council and President and Principal had attended a meeting with representatives from UCU to discuss the rates of pay of hourly paid teaching staff within the institution. The Chairman and Vice-Chair of Council supported QMSE's decision to establish a working group, chaired by Professor Morag Shiach, to review the position of hourly paid teaching staff, with the recommendations to be implemented for the 2016–17 academic year. In addition, and as an interim measure, the rates for hourly paid staff would be raised in line with the 2015 national pay increase once agreed. Council would be informed of the outcome of this work in due course.
- [b] Nirmal Borkhataria, Interim Finance Director, and Dola Osilaja, QMSU President, were attending their final meeting of Council. The Chairman expressed his thanks for their considerable contributions to QMUL.
- [c] Professor Richard Trembath, Vice-Principal (Health) would be leaving QMUL to take up the post of Executive Dean for the Faculty of Life Sciences and Medicine at King's College London on 1 September 2015. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Professor Trembath for his contributions to QMUL and wished him well for his new appointment.

Actions:

Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences), Council Secretariat: [a]

President and Principal's Report (Paper QM2014/72)

2014.085 Council **received** the President and Principal's Report which had been circulated by email on 26 June 2015.

2014.086 The President and Principal **reported** that:

- [a] Almost 16,500 visitors attended the open days held on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 June, which represented a 77% increase on the previous year. The event was considered to be a success and was a positive start to the 2016–17 application cycle.
- [b] The Government had acknowledged that immigration targets would not be met unless action was taken to address overseas student numbers. This could be achieved by imposing further restrictions on overseas students, at a time when other countries, such as Australia, were actively working to increase their share of the market, or by removing student numbers from the immigration figures. UUK and the Russell Group were lobbying Government for the latter option. There had been reports from other institutions of students being denied visas for apparently spurious reasons, but QMUL had yet to receive reports of its own students facing such difficulties.
- [c] Detailed information on the obligations of universities arising from the Counter Terrorism and Security Act had not been included in the primary

legislation but was expected to be announced ahead of the parliamentary recess, with guidance published in late August or early September. The agency to be responsible for monitoring compliance had yet to be formally identified but was expected to be HEFCE rather than the Home Office. A task and finish group had been established to respond to the initial consultation, monitor the publication of guidance and engage with events and conferences organised for the sector. It was expected that QMUL would need to provide training and ensure structures were in place to identify and safeguard individuals against the risk of radicalisation. QMUL would be seeking to balance its obligations in relation to the Prevent agenda with the need to maintain freedom of expression. Further work would be undertaken once the detailed guidance was available.

[d] Interviews for the Vice-Principal (Health) would be held on 17 September and would include the Chairman of Council as part of the selection panel. The head hunters had indicated that a good level of interest from credible candidates had been received.

[e] *Minute 2014.086[e] is confidential.*

[f] A ballot of UCU members had rejected with a small majority the final pay offer of 1% for 2015–16 made by UCEA. Members had indicated their support for action short of strike, but not strike action, as part of the ballot.

[g] HEFCE was consulting on a number of proposed changes to the system of quality assessment, which was currently conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), an organisation co-owned by UUK and GuildHE under contract from HEFCE. The review had been prompted in part by concerns that the QAA's approach was excessively burdensome and restrictive for institutions. As part of the consultation, it was being proposed that governing bodies should have greater responsibility for providing assurance about the quality of students' academic experience and academic output standards. It was noted that self-validation by the governing body was unlikely to provide the same level of confidence, particularly for overseas institutions, compared to the existing kite mark of quality issued by an independent organisation. QMUL would develop a formal response to the consultation, highlighting these concerns.

[h] UUK had announced that it would be stepping up its campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of European Union membership for the higher education sector, which would include a series of events in conjunction with institutions. Owing to its charitable status, UUK is not permitted to express general political views, but it is entitled to advocate specific positions in support of its charitable objectives. It was noted that an internal assessment of risks arising from a potential exit from the EU was not currently planned. The President and Principal undertook to discuss with QMSE the approach that should be taken to planning for the various possible scenarios that could arise from the referendum.

Actions:

President and Principal: [h]

QMSU President's Report (Paper QM2014/73)

2014.087 Council **received** the QMSU President's Report.

2014.088 The President **reported** that:

- [a] Three students had completed the London Marathon on 26 April 2015, raising over £4,000 for the London Air Ambulance, Barts Cancer Institute and the Barts and The London Charity.
- [b] Work was being undertaken to resolve gas and electricity supply issues and to address the poor ventilation at the Barts and The London Students' Association building in Whitechapel.
- [c] Staff pay at QMSU would be subject to a 3% increase during 2015–16; QMSU intended to pay the London Living Wage from 2016–17.
- [d] It had been a key priority for QMSU to communicate to students that the increase in tuition fees to £9k had not resulted in additional funding to universities and that expectations needed to be set accordingly. It was important for QMUL staff to continue to reiterate this message to students.

Part 2: Performance Review

Vice-Principal (International)'s report (Paper QM2014/74)

2014.089 Council **received** the Vice-Principal (International)'s report. The following points were made:

- [a] Applications from EU and non-EU students were strong at both undergraduate and postgraduate taught level. Applications for the Study Abroad programme had also increased and there was growth in the range of opportunities and engagement by students with the international exchange programme. It was noted that participation by non-medical students in the Study Abroad programme was low; there was potential for growth in this area through existing links with Chinese institutions.
- [b] The tightening of immigration controls posed a risk to the recruitment of international students. It was also a concern that there appeared to be an emerging narrative that international students were taking away places that could be filled by UK students. In reality, overseas recruitment resulted in a broader range of study options; many postgraduate taught programmes could not be offered without the recruitment of overseas students.
- [c] A task and finish group had been in place since January to develop the International Strategy, which would be considered by QMSE in the coming months.
- [d] The Vice-Principal (International)'s role involved oversight of all significant partnerships activity through Professor Sadler's chairmanship of Partnerships Board. The Board was responsible to Senate for both international and UK partnerships, including large scale research collaborations and any initiatives carrying significant reputational risk. The

Board reviewed the Register of Collaborative Provision on an annual basis and had mechanisms in place for terminating partnerships as required.

- [e] The implementation agreement for the Confucius Institute, which had been approved by Council earlier in the year, was close to being finalised. Staff to be seconded from Shanghai had already been appointed.
- [f] A task and finish group had been established to consider the increasing need to employ staff overseas, which required a diverse range of contracts to be issued for the different educational models, and to ensure compliance and a credible level of HR support for these activities.
- [g] A small international student experience team had been created to address issues specific to the international student population, overseen by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning), but who met monthly with the Vice-Principal (International).
- [h] The Vice-Principal (International) had travelled to India, the USA, Indonesia and China in support of existing activity and to develop new partnership and collaboration opportunities. Information about these visits and their outcomes was communicated to staff via the QMUL intranet. Through the UUK International Unit, QMUL hoped to be in a position to access new growth territories such as Indonesia and Mexico and to develop long-lasting relationships.
- [i] Audit and Risk Committee had recently considered a 'deep dive' report on international partnerships, which had provided reassurance to the Committee on the management of risk within this area. The diversification of overseas activities in order to reduce the reliance on China for overseas partnerships and the flying-faculty model had been highlighted as a key priority.
- [j] It was suggested that future Vice-Principal reports could better highlight the link between current activities and the QMUL Strategy by including information about progress with the achievement of the key performance indicators, which was currently reported annually in the stocktake.
- [k] The Chairman thanked the Vice-Principal (International) for the helpful and interesting report.

Staff survey (presentation) (Paper QM2014/75)

2014.090 Council **received** a presentation on the actions to be taken in response to the staff survey results. The following points were noted:

- [a] The survey had been conducted by Capita, one of the largest providers of staff surveys in the sector and in industry, in order to review QMUL's performance as an employer, identify improvements that can be made, and to demonstrate to staff that their views are important. The survey received a response rate of 59%, improved from 47% in 2011; the results were communicated to staff in January, with action plans to respond to issues raised submitted in April. The next survey would be conducted in Spring 2016.

[b] The outcomes from the survey highlighted the following areas of strength:

- staff feeling supported and valued;
- quality of service and performance;
- role and responsibility;
- line management;
- pride and motivation;
- diversity, equality and fair treatment;
- receiving information;
- senior management leading the Institute/School/Department well.

[c] The outcomes from the survey highlighted the following areas requiring most improvement:

- different parts of QMUL communicating effectively with each other;
- QMSE listening to and responding to the views of staff;
- stress and work-life balance;
- appraisal completion rates.

[d] The survey data had been benchmarked against seven other Russell Group institutions, which highlighted that QMUL staff feel more engaged with the institution and better valued than others. QMUL scored lower than the average on the question 'the university is a good place to work', but nonetheless received a score of 81%.

[e] The results broken down according to equality categories would be considered by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. The results indicated that disabled staff felt they had fewer opportunities for development and more concerns about their managers dealing effectively with harassment and bullying. The issue of disclosure of disability would be addressed in the next survey.

[f] The primary actions taken in response to the survey results included:

- i. a task and finish group had been convened to consider the issues raised in relation to stress and work-life balance, which was an issue for QMUL and other institutions in the sector. From 01 August 2015, Occupational Health would form part of the Human Resources Department, which would enable these issues to be addressed more effectively.
- ii. a group had been reconvened to monitor and review the appraisal process on an annual basis, to be chaired by Professor David Sadler.
- iii. improved communication between QMSE and staff would be addressed through a monthly video briefing on QMSE's work by the President and Principal, and an opportunity for staff to meet with QMSE. Focus groups would be held to support the development of a local engagement strategy.

- iv. discussion at local-level had enabled qualitative data to be better understood; action plans had been submitted to the Faculty Vice-Principals and Chief Operating Officer. QMSE would receive a progress update in December.
- v. the HR Directorate would be working with schools, institutes and professional services to address any specific issues raised. The results and action plans had been shared with trade union staff to ensure transparency.

[g] Members **agreed** that a one page report on progress should be submitted to the February meeting of Council.

Actions:
Director of HR: [g]

Student recruitment report on admissions (Paper QM2014/76)

2014.091 *Minute 2014.091 is confidential.*

Part 3: Strategic Planning

Northwestern Polytechnical University (Paper QM2014/77)

2014.092 *Minute 2014.092 is confidential.*

Life Sciences (Oral report)

2014.093 Council **noted** that an update on Life Sciences had been provided in the President and Principal's report to Council (see minute 2014.086[e]).

Renewal of Barclays Revolving Credit Facility

2014.094 *Minute 2014.094 is confidential.*

Part 4: Legislative and Conformance Issues

HEFCE Annual Accountability Return, Financial Forecast Tables to 2017–18 (Paper QM2014/79)

2014.095 *Minute 2014.095 is confidential.*

Review of the Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation of Financial Authority and Treasury Management Policy (Paper QM2014/80)

2014.096 Council **approved** the revised Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation of Financial Authority and Treasury Management Policy.

Carbon Management and Implementation Plan (Paper QM2014/81)

2014.097 Council **considered** the revised Carbon Management and Implementation Plan. The following points were made:

- [a] The Plan had been amended to address the revised reporting requirements introduced by HEFCE and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to introduce a revised interim target of 30% by the end of 2017–18 (previously this had been 30% by the end of 2014–15). The revised Plan would be submitted to HEFCE. Members acknowledged the need for improved progress and **agreed** that a clearer summary of progress against the targets set should be provided in future reports.
- [b] QMUL had achieved a 7% reduction in carbon emissions in 2014–15, largely owing to favourable weather conditions which had allowed for reduced consumption of gas and electricity. Around £900k of capital expenditure would be made available during 2015–16 for emissions reduction work. The existing programme of capital refurbishment projects also included measures to reduce carbon emissions.
- [c] Funding had been approved through PAR to commission an external review of the estate and the level of investment that would be required to enable QMUL to achieve the absolute carbon emissions target of 34% by 2020. The outcome from the review would be considered by the Finance and Investment Committee. It was acknowledged that significant investment was likely to be required, particularly given the additional carbon burden arising from QMUL's overseas expansion.
- [d] On an annual basis QMUL was required to purchase an additional carbon allowance, essentially a tax on emissions, which was expected to be around £460k for 2014–15. In addition to the financial implications, missing the target posed a significant reputational risk to QMUL.
- [e] Council **approved** the revised Carbon Management and Implementation Plan.

Actions:

Director of Estates and Facilities [a]

Notification following change of external auditors (Paper QM2014/82)

2014.098 Council **noted** a letter from QMUL's outgoing external audit provider, PricewaterhouseCoopers, confirming that there were no circumstances connected with their removal which they considered should be brought to Council's attention.

Part 5: Other Matters for Report

Finance and Investment Committee report including Current Financial Position (Paper QM2014/84)

2014.099 *Minute 2014.099 is confidential.*

Governance Committee report and proposals for 2015–16 (Paper QM2014/84)

2014.100 Council **considered** the report and recommendations from Governance Committee, which met on 24 June 2015. The following points were made:

- [a] Council **approved** the appointment of Stella Hall and Dr Annette Doherty

as members of Council from 06 July 2015 and 01 October 2015 respectively, each for an initial term of four years.

- [b] A number of high quality applications had been received for membership of Council following placements in the Guardian and the London Review of Books. The Chairman intended to meet with the five strongest candidates to discuss how best to involve them with QMUL until such time as further vacancies on Council became available.
- [c] Council **approved** the role descriptions for the Vice-Chair of Council and the Secretary to Council. External members would be invited to self-nominate for the role of Vice-Chair as the current Vice-Chair would be stepping down in December.
- [d] Council **approved** the revised Delegation Framework, which had been subject to minor updating.

Audit and Risk Committee report including reappointment of the internal auditors (Paper QM2014/85)

2014.101 Council **considered** the report and recommendations from Audit and Risk Committee, which met on 03 June 2015. The following points were made:

- [a] *Minute 2014.101[a] is confidential.*
- [b] *Minute 2014.101[b] is confidential.*
- [c] QMUL's risk management framework had been reviewed by the Internal Auditors, who, in giving a green rating, had concluded that robust and effective procedures were in place. Members commended the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning), the Vice-Chair of Council and staff in the Strategic Planning Office on the excellent outcome.

Senate report (Paper QM2014/86)

2014.102 Council **noted** the report from Senate, which met on 11 June 2015.

Final annual schedule of business 2015–16 (Paper QM2014/87)

2014.103 Council **approved** the final annual schedule of business for 2015–16.

Use of the Common Seal of the College (Paper QM2014/88)

2014.104 Council **noted** a report on the use of the Common Seal of the College and action taken by the Chairman since the last meeting of Council.

Draft Agenda for next meeting (Paper QM2014/89)

2014.105 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the next meeting on 27 October 2015.

Dates of Meetings 2015–16

- Tuesday 27 October 2015 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Tuesday 24 November 2015 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Wednesday 17 February 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Tuesday 5 April 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Tuesday 28 June 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room