QMUL / QMSU MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT REVIEW PANEL
25 September 2019

DRAFT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:
Sarah Cowls (Chair)               Megan Annetts               Mike Wojcik

In attendance:
Kerry Johnson                    Nadine Lewycky

Apologies:
Bushra Nasir                     Brad Coales                   Talhah Atcha

Part 1: Preliminary Items

1. Welcome

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. 29 May 2019 meeting
   • Minutes [RP21-01]

2.1 The MoA Review Panel confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2019.

   • Actions [RP21-02]

2.2 Action 2.2[a]: Code of Practice
   [a] The SU Code of Practice had not been signed at the July Council meeting as the QMSU President had sent apologies. The Code of Practice would be signed before the next Council meeting and reported to Council in the Chair’s update.

Action 5.1[a] Report on current QMSU issues
   [b] The Chair had an upcoming meeting with the Head of Events and would report back to the Panel on the issues relating to the scheduling of Graduation ceremonies.

Action 5.1[b] Report on current QMSU issues
   [c] Student space at Charterhouse Square would be added to the December agenda. The Head of Strategic Space Management would be invited to attend to address any concerns raised.

Action 7.1[f] University of London Institute in Paris
   [d] Dr Rosemary Clyne, Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Sciences and Academic Lead for International Student Experience, had written a response to the QMSU recommendations for improving the integration of Queen Mary students based at partner institutions abroad. The QMSU President would provide an update at the next meeting.
3. Declarations of interest

3.1 No declarations of interest were made.

4. MoA Review Panel Terms of Reference [RP21-03]

4.1 The Panel considered a proposed update to the Terms of Reference. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The Terms of Reference would be updated to show that the Review Panel would be co-chaired by the QMSU President and an external Council member. Panel membership would include a member of the Senior Executive Team, preferably the Vice-Principal (Education) or Vice-Principal (Policy & Strategic Partnerships) or a nominated deputy. There would be at least two meetings per academic year. Quoracy would be increased from three to four to be comprised of at least two from Queen Mary and two from QMSU. The Director of Student and Academic Services would continue to attend as the representative of the Chief Operating Officer. The Terms of Reference would be formally reviewed at the start of each academic year and included with the papers for each meeting.

[b] The Chair has been provided with a briefing on the role of the Panel in discharging the responsibilities of Council in relation to the Education Act 1994. She would circulate this to Panel members for information.

Actions: [a] Assistant Registrar (Governance)  
[b] Chair

5. BLSA Charity [Oral report]

5.1 [a] The BLSA President reported that no further progress had been made on resolving the status of the BLSA charity. As the issue had been on the Panel agenda for a number of years, the Chair and QMSU CEO would meet with the BLSA President before the next Panel meeting to move the issue forward.

Action: [a] Chair, QMSU CEO, BLSA President


6.1 The Review Panel received an oral update on the QMSU Democracy Review. The following points were noted during the discussion:

[a] A student consultation on the proposed changes had started. A survey had been made available to all students and would close on 4 October. At the time, approximately 650 responses had been received, including 100 responses from alumni.
Among the proposed changes was a revised Student Council structure which would include two new sabbatical officers for the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering. Any changes would be informed by the results of the student consultation process, with the aim of improving representation for all students and moving towards a faculty-based model. The QMSU President was preparing a paper to be considered by SET, Council and Student Council. Changes to the byelaws would also need to be approved by the Student Council.

A review of QMSU staff was being undertaken in parallel with the Democracy Review.

The Panel would receive an update at the December meeting.

Action: [d] QMSU President


7.1 [a] A formal HR investigation had been launched into incidents involving student volunteers and staff during the move-in weekend. Concerns had been raised in relation to the obligations and duties placed upon QMSU volunteers.

[b] Facilities costs had increased unexpectedly and had an impact on the running of Welcome Week. The Chair would follow up on the loan charges for equipment that had been imposed and increased portering charges.

Actions: [b] Chair

8. Report from the QMSU CEO [RP21-04]

8.1 The Panel received the QMSU CEO’s report. The QMSU CEO said that:

Maintenance

[a] Monthly SLA meetings with the Estates and Facilities Directorate had been scheduled. Long standing maintenance issues in QMSU buildings would be discussed.

QMotion capital expansion

[b] The initial proposal had been scaled down, and meetings were taking place to move the plans forward. Under the current proposals, QMotion would be closed during summer 2021 to allow for the works to be carried out with minimal disruption.

Finances

[c] The financial position for the year ending July 2019 was better than budget and better than forecast. The operating surplus of the Group stood at £61.7k. The subsidiary company surplus was £202k, worse than budget, but in line with year-end forecasts. QMSU had made its final repayment of a loan from the university dating back to 2006.

Sustainability
[d] The new Sustainability Coordinator was in post. The role was in partnership with Estates and Facilities and would be working with the Directorate to create a joint action plan.

Social Cohesion Community Sport

[e] In addition to its core function supporting student groups delivering social purpose programs in the community, the team were supporting the new Degree Apprentice Business Degree (Social Change), and in discussion about the Global Futures leaders program.

9. Annual QMSU internal audit plan [Oral report]

9.1 The Panel received an update from the QMSU CEO on the annual QMSU internal audit plan. It was noted that:

[a] Estates & Facilities had declined to participate in a joint internal audit.

[b] The Panel was concerned that an audit plan had been agreed and then plans subsequently changed by Estates & Facilities. In the interests of transparency, the Panel requested further information on how decisions were made in relation to commercial spaces on campus, including information on student consultation, sustainability, and confirmation that robust systems and procedures were in place.

[c] The QMSU CEO would liaise with the Finance Director regarding the above and would bring back recommendations to the Panel at a future meeting.

Actions: [b], [c] QMSU CEO

10. Review of revised SLAs and other agreed arrangements [RP21-05]

10.1 The Panel received an update on the revised SLAs and other agreed arrangements. The following points were noted:

[a] QMSU had updated the list of committees and other meetings at which there was student representation. The university would review the spreadsheet to ensure that all meetings had been captured.

[b] Student representation was broad across the university. QMSU would continue to work with its representatives to ensure that they had the skills to contribute effectively.

[c] The MoA included a list of SLAs that fell within its remit. The existing SLA documents would be circulated to Panel members for review.

Actions: [a] Chair; Assistant Registrar (Governance)  
[c] Assistant Registrar (Governance)

11. QMSU Block Grant 2019/20 [RP21-06]

11.1 The Panel noted the 2019/20 Block Grant letter. The following points were raised in the discussion:

[a] The Sports and Societies Grant was restricted to activities accessible to all Queen Mary students. Student Council would consider changes to the associated byelaws.
[b] It was not expected that there would be any issues relating to competition between clubs and societies that were historically only for BLSA or QMSU students, although capacity was a concern, especially in relation to Health and Safety.

[c] Mechanisms were in place to ensure that the Merger Cup would not be funded through the Block Grant.

[d] The Welcome Fair had been a success with a high level of student engagement.

[e] The Liberation Fund had been used to fund Black History Month activities including the largest Black-owned business fair of any Russell Group university on 2 October.

12. Any other business [Oral report]

12.1 There was no other business to report.

Meetings in 2019–20:

- Tuesday 10 December 2:30-4:00pm, Matt Spencer Boardroom, SU.