

Student Council

Minutes

Tuesday 6 December 2022, 6.00 pm - Held via Zoom and livestreamed

Present

Azzah Abubacar, Chair of Student Council

Executive Committee:

Jojo Croft	VP Welfare
Saynab Sharif	Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences
Charlie Sellar	Vice President Barts and The London
Radhika Thiagarajan	Vice President Communities

Student Representatives and Part-time Officers

Matthew	Beach	Postgraduate Research Representative (HSS)
Elena	Erescov	Postgraduate Taught Representative (BL)
Ali	Hammed	Societies Officer (BL)
Shivin	Hassan	LGBT+ Representative (BL)
Rahma	Hegy	School of Medical and Dental Sciences Clinical (Medicine) Representative
Sofia	Heras Valdivielso	Volunteering Officer (Mile End)
Austin	Iroegbu	BAME Representative (BL)
Eileen	Jia Huey Lee	Disabled and Specific Learning Difference Representative (BL)
Amelia	Jones	Welfare Officer (BL)
Giritharadas	Kayatre	Womens Representative (BL)
Yunus	Khan	Welfare Officer (S&E)
Ivy	Lee Jia Jia	International Representative (BL)
Annie	Mae Wright	VP Barts
Liam	Nicholson	VP London
Shirin	Sadat Massroor	School of Medical and Dental Sciences Pre-Clinical (Medicine) Representative
Faizan	Sheikh	Disabled and Specific Learning Difference Representative (Mile End)
Janice	Tan	Volunteering Officer (BL)

Kaye	Tian Hoo	International Representative (BL)
Rob	Tucker	Welfare Officer (BL)
Melody	Zhao	School of Law Representative

In attendance:

Brad Coales	Secretary and Governance Adviser
Marianne Melsen	Student Voice and Insights Manager
Jak Curtis Rendall	Head of Communications and Marketing

Apologies

Apologies were received from the following:

- Kareemah Jaigirdar - Allied Courses Representative
- Aisha Qadi - International Representative (S&E)
- Adi Sawalha - QMSU President
- Muneer Hussain - Vice President Science and Engineering

1.0 Chairs Welcome and Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2.0 Chair's Introduction

The Chair reminded Members that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed.

The Chair reminded Members that she had been trying for some time to encourage Members to complete an online poll to approve the appointment of two additional members to fill the vacant positions of Sports Officer (ME), and School of Geography Representative, but so far had not received sufficient votes. Their statements had already been circulated several times, so Members were asked to vote whether, or not they were in favour of appointing to those positions. There were two separate votes, one for each position.

The results of the votes were as follows:

Sports Officer (Mile End)

For: 13
Against: 0
Abstain: 3

School of Geography Representative

For: 15
Against: 0
Abstain: 3

Although a majority of a quorate meeting were in favour of the appointments, the Bye-Law requires that a simple majority of Student Council (i.e. 50% plus one) vote in favour of the appointments, and the votes cast in favour at the meeting did not meet that threshold. Therefore, the Secretary would amalgamate the votes of those voting at this meeting with

those who had voted online, filter any duplication, and then see whether the combined totals met the threshold.

3.0 Student Council nominations for QMSU Appointments Committee

The Chair explained that Student Council needed to nominate two members to serve on the Union's Appointments Committee to appoint two new External Trustees to replace Hugh Murdoch who recently resigned from the Board of Trustees, and another External Trustee coming to the end of their term of office.

Azzah Abubacar, Chair of student Council and Matthew Beach, HSS PGR Representative both nominated themselves and, in the absence of any other nominations, were both appointed.

4.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Meeting of Student Council held on 18 October 2022. The minutes were duly approved.

5.0 Minutes from Sub-Committees

There were no minutes to consider at this meeting.

6.0 Report from the Scrutiny Panel and Executive Officer Updates

The Chair reported that the Scrutiny Panel had met on Monday 21 November.

The Panel members were: Azzah (Chair), Aisha Quadi International Representative (S&E) and Course Reps: Melody Minjun Zhao, Sara Othman, Faruq Yinusa

The Panel received reports from each of the Executive Officers and judged all of their work to be satisfactory.

The Panel recommended that the following Executive Officers should be recommended for Commendation:

- Charlie Sellar - VP Barts and The London
- Radhika Thiagarajan - Vice President Communities

Student Council approved the Panel's recommendations.

The Executive Officers were invited to give brief verbal updates on anything they wished to draw to the attention of Student Council, or anything occurring since the report to QMUL Council.

There were no questions to the Executive Officers.

Motions and Amendments

7. Byelaw Changes

The Chair introduce this part of the agenda by explaining that there were four Bye-Law changes for consideration - the first three were really housekeeping to clarify existing provisions and did not really change anything. In the absence of AS, SS would outline the reasons behind the first three, and CS would explain the fourth. As there was a very crowded agenda, Members were asked to take the supporting papers as read and to concentrate on the proposed changes.

- a) Should the Students' Union amend its bye-laws to specify the term in office for Executive Officers?
- b) Should the Students' Union amend its bye-laws to clarify who can hold part-time officer positions?
- c) Should the Students' Union amend its bye-laws to ensure the elections rules are fair and clear?
- d) BLSA Board Student Council Positions

a) Should the Students' Union amend its bye-laws to specify the term in office for Executive Officers?

Proposed by: Adi Sawalha (SU President)

Seconded by: Saynab Sharif (Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences)

SS introduced the motion, as per the covering paper and as there were no questions, and there being no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 13

Against: 0

Abstentions: 4

The motion was **passed**

b) Should the Students' Union amend its bye-laws to clarify who can hold part-time officer positions?

Proposed by: Adi Sawalha (SU President)

Seconded by: Saynab Sharif (Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences)

SS introduced the motion, as per the covering paper and as there were no questions, and there being no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 13
Against: 1
Abstentions: 3

The motion was **passed**

c) Should the Students' Union amend its bye-laws to ensure the elections rules are fair and clear?

Proposed by: Adi Sawalha (SU President)

Seconded by: Saynab Sharif (Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences)

SS introduced the motion, as per the covering paper and as there were no questions, and there being no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 14
Against: 0
Abstentions: 3

The motion was **passed**

d) BLSA Board Student Council Positions

Proposed by: Charlie Sellar (BLSA President)

Seconded by: Jumainah Fardaus Rahman (Pre-Clinical Rep), James Tavner and Rahma Hegy (Clinical Rep), Kareemah Jaigirdir (Allied Courses Rep), Sabir Saleh (Dental Faculty Representative), Annie Mae Wright (VP Barts), Liam Nicholson (VP London)

CC introduced the motion, as per the covering paper and as there were no questions, and there being no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 11
Against: 0
Abstentions: 5

The motion was **passed**

8. Motions

The following motions were not debated at the Annual Members Meeting held on 28 November as the meeting ran out of time. They are therefore being brought to Student Council for debate instead. Their proposers and seconders have been invited to attend the meeting.

- a) Should the Union Lobby the University to support and invest in a Queen Mary Nightline service and to more broadly improve the Mental Health service offered to students?
- b) Should the university look into reducing the financial burden on international students?
- c) Should the Union lobby the University to enable undergraduate International Students studying Law to access Vacation Schemes?
- d) Can the Union Shop allow students to heat their own food in the microwave?
- e) Should the Union organise an annual 'Idea for Humanity' summit?
- f) Should QMSU be more generous in using its Liberation funds, society funds and other funds to allow students to spend on food (and not just cultural food) when QMSU events are organised? QMSU reps and reps that sit on boards to make financial decisions should also do the same.
- g) Should the Students' Union lobby the University that all PhD students at Queen Mary University of London that did not receive the stipend increase announced by UKRI on the 2nd of September 2022, should receive a one-time payment?

Council were then asked to approve the text of a letter re. to the University from the Students' Union concerning the BL Rebrand, as per the motion passed at the AMM.

- h) Approval of Letter re. BL Rebrand.

a) Should the Union Lobby the University to support and invest in a Queen Mary Nightline service and to more broadly improve the Mental Health service offered to students?

Proposed by: Radhika Thiagarajan (VP Communities)

Seconded by: Adi Sawalha (QMSU President), Saynab Shariff (VP HSS)

RT spoke in favour of the motion. There being no questions and no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 11

Against: 0

Abstentions: 5

The motion was **passed**

b) Should the university look into reducing the financial burden on international students?

Proposed by: Kaye Tian Hoo and Ivy Lee Jia Jia (international Rep (BL))

Seconded by: Radhika Thiagarajan (VP Communities) Aisha Qadi (International Rep (S&E))

Ivy and Kaye shared a speech in favour of the motion. There being no questions and no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 13

Against: 4

Abstentions: 1

The motion was **passed**

c) Should the Union lobby the University to enable undergraduate International Students studying Law to access Vacation Schemes?

Proposed by: Ananya Mukherjee

Seconded by: Aks Khurana

Melody Zhao spoke in favour of the motion. There being no questions and no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 12

Against: 2

Abstentions: 4

The motion was **passed**

d) Can the Union Shop allow students to heat their own food in the microwave?

Proposed by: Nimat Choudhury

Seconded by: Sahra Yusuf

As neither the proposer or seconder were present to speak for the motion, it was not debated. However, the Secretary said that Union policy was not required to raise the question of whether there could, or should be access to a microwave on the Godward Square side of the campus. Therefore, they would raise this request with the commercial services team to see what could be done.

e) Should the Union organise an annual 'Idea for Humanity' summit?

Proposed by: Yash Jangid

Seconded by: Mahak Kharb

As neither the proposer or seconder were able to be present to speak for the motion, it was not debated. However, the Secretary again said that Union policy was not required to explore this suggestion. Therefore, they would put the proposer and the Union's President in touch outside of the meeting to discuss the proposal in more detail.

f) Should QMSU be more generous in using its Liberation funds, society funds and other funds to allow students to spend on food (and not just cultural food) when QMSU events are organised? QMSU reps and reps that sit on boards to make financial decisions should also do the same.

Proposed by: Radhika Thiagarajan (VP Communities)

Seconded by: Jojo Croft (VP Welfare)

RT spoke in favour of the motion. There being no questions and no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 12

Against: 2

Abstentions: 2

The motion was **passed**

g) Should the Students' Union lobby the University that all PhD students at Queen Mary University of London that did not receive the stipend increase announced by UKRI on the 2nd of September 2022, should receive a one-time payment?

Proposed by: Luca Marinelli

Seconded by: Matthew Beach

Luca spoke in favour of the motion, and Matthew added that QM had accepted lower payments for some PGR students knowing that they were insufficient. The 20hr working rule for international students compounded the issue. The University said that they were 'encouraging' funders to increase the payments, but this was not a very effective lobbying position.

There being no questions and no speaker against, the motion was put to a vote:

In Favour: 11

Against: 6

Abstentions: 0

The motion was **passed**

h) Student Council to agree text of letter to be sent to QMUL re. BL Rebrand as per motion passed at AMM

Proposed by: Charlie Sellar (BLSA President)

Seconded by: All other QMSU Executive Officers

CS introduced the item. The letter was the result of the related motion passed at the AMM and the text had been circulated within the papers. Student Council were being asked to approve the text, as the letter would be signed by the Executive Officers and sent on behalf of the Students' Union. There being no questions and no speaker against, the letter was put to a vote:

In Favour: 14

Against: 1

Abstentions: 2

It was **agreed** that the letter as circulated should be sent to the University on behalf of the Students' Union.

9. Policy Renewal

- 8.1 *Policy passed more than two academic years earlier shall be presented to Student Council with a recommendation from the Executive Committee to renew, embed or*

lapse.

- 8.2 *Any policy that is renewed will be debated again after 2 years.*
- 8.3 *Any policy that is embedded will be considered permanent policy until Student Council brings it back for debate to retain or lapse.*
- 8.4 *Recommendations shall require the approval of a simple-majority of Student Council to be passed and should be done in 1 vote for all policies at the same time.*
- 8.4.1 *Student Councillors should make clear to the Chair any individual recommendations they would like to be debated separately, the Chair shall bring these forward for debate before being voted on. The rest of the recommendations shall then be voted on in 1 vote.*
- 8.5 *A Union member may, at any time, bring policy that is considered to be out of date to the attention of Student Council to be debated.*
- 8.6 *Policies which exceed the 2-year limit for any reason shall be brought forward for debate at the next meeting of Student Council.*

The following policies (see next page) were now due for review and could be lapsed, renewed or embedded:

These had been discussed by the Executive Officers, who had made recommendations for each as follows (it was indicated on the presentation where policies had been Covid related):

There being no speakers against any of the recommendations contained in the block, it was put to a vote in a single motion:

In Favour: 10

Against: 2

Abstentions: 4

The motion was **passed** and therefore the recommendations of the Executive Officers were accepted.

9. AOB

LN commented that the attendance at Student Council was very poor this year and that this was not acceptable. SS added that there were also attendance issues with her Board. CS and RT had not had the same experience with their Boards.

It was agreed that there should be some form of post Xmas 're-launch' to try and understand possible causes and address them to improve engagement.

Policy	Recommendation
Should the Union lobby the University to ensure no teaching from 1-2pm on Fridays?	Renew
Should QMSU do more to help the PGR community at QMUL?	Renew
Should QMSU work on a national scale to refund fees for University students?	Lapse
Tuition fees reduction according to the "blended learning"	Lapse
Should the Students' Union lobby for postgraduate research students to get automatically assigned to an external "personal" academic mentor for the duration of their PhD?	Renew
QMUL Rent Strike Campaign Motion: 'Should QMSU commit to supporting QMUL Rent Strike Campaign in the following specified ways?'	Lapse
This year the 'Race and the Desire for Difference' module has been 'suspended' due to COVID	Lapse
Reduce International Fees	May be superseded by new policy from the ASM (now referred to Student Council)
Should the Students' Union lobby the university to instate a 'no-detriment' policy?	Lapse
Clarity and Communication for Postgraduate Research Students	Embed
COVID Motion (Support of QMSU Rent Strike)	Lapse
Disability Awareness Week	Embed
The Union should support and commit to pushing the re-evaluation of Queen Mary's ethical investment policy	Renew