

	<b>PAPER NO: AC.02(12)</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Audit Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> February 2012</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Students' Union</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Dr Phil Cardew, PVC (Academic)</b>
<b>Executive sponsor:</b>	<b>Dr Phil Cardew, PVC (Academic)</b>
<b>Recommendation by the Executive:</b>	<b>The Committee is asked to note this update on the Students' Union and proposed next steps</b>

### **Executive summary**

Following questions raised by Audit Committee (regarding uncompleted Internal Audit requirements) and the Board of Governors, the PVC (Academic) engaged in further consultation with the Students' Union General Manager and Sabbatical Officers regarding:

1. The SU Council
2. Strategic Plan and KPI's
3. Constitution

This paper provides an update on these areas.

	<b>Board/Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>
Matter previously considered by:		
Further approval required?	For SU Constitution – P&R Board	26 Jun 2012 19 July 2012

Communications – who should be made aware of the decision?	Confidential
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## **Student Council**

16 council members have now been elected. Process is underway to elect the remaining 17 members.

## **Strategic Plan**

The SU engaged a firm of consultants to assist with a survey of students and the construction of a new Strategic Plan (with associated KPIs). This activity was due to be concluded at the end of January, but has, since, been put on hold due to considerations of the SU's future model.

### *Future Model*

The University required the Students' Union to consider their current, and future, structure, in preparation for the move into the Student Centre in August. The SU were required to consider the full scope of its activity and present alternative models, justifying their decision and paying full regard to their ability to better represent the whole student body of the University.

Additionally, following discussions with the National Union of Students (NUS), as to ways in which we could modernise the Students' Union to better serve the students of LSBU, the NUS established a specialist team to review student union activities with this very purpose in mind, and agreed (with the consent of the sabbatical team) to audit the SU and make recommendations.

The recommendations were that:

- The SU should move away from managing and delivering commercial services
- The SU should focus its advice function solely around academic advocacy. This would be supplemented by enhanced signposting to providers of other aspects of advice and advocacy.
- The SU should dramatically enhance its student voice proposition to include evidence based, and measured representation systems and methods that sit at the heart of the SU.
- Student Activities should be maintained as a co-produced SU and University function but should become strategically realigned to focus on enhancing skills and employability.
- Elected officers roles should be amended to become something similar to President, Employability and 2 x student experience (open portfolio) VP's.

The sabbatical officers have endorsed these recommendations.

Based on the above it has been recommended that the Union should be split into two departments: Student Voice and Advocacy and Student Activities and Employability. Central support and back office work would be carried out directly by the University. In terms of senior staff, a charity style Chief Executive would be recruited to ensure the union develops into a more dynamic, forward thinking organisation with better trusteeship and governance and improved student impact focus as its key charitable benefactor.

A full strategic plan will be developed later this year. The draft key objective of the new strategy is seen as:

“To help members build their future by providing representation, advocacy and enhanced skills, delivering value for the modern student.”

Detailed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be included within the full strategic plan.

## **Constitution**

A draft prepared by the SU is ready for review, but this has also been put on hold due to the consideration of future model as outlined above.

It is anticipated that a new SU Constitution and a Memorandum of Understanding governing the University's relationship with the SU will be ready for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee in June 2012 before approval by the Board of Governors in July 2012. Given that union elections are due soon, P&R will be asked to approve the proposed new sabbatical structure on 21 February 2012.

Following approval of the SU Constitution the SU will formally register with the Charity Commission.

## **Next Steps and Timeline**

### *Improvement Board*

An Improvement Board will be established to operate in the next 18 months to drive change and recovery.

The group will consist of:

- Students' Union Officers
- 1-2 CEO/Senior managers from other students' unions
- Representative(s) from University Management

The group's first tasks will be to settle the issue of the senior staff role, and to accelerate the pace and broaden the nature, of change within the union. It should act as a written statement of intent, clearly describing how the union intends to turn around an organisation that has been underperforming for many years, and updates on it forwarded to the university on a regular basis.

Timeline:

Approval of sabbatical officer structure – Policy and Resources Committee	21 Feb 2012
Formation of Improvement Board and SU Elections	March 2012
Draft constitution considered by the Policy and Resources Committee	26 June 2012
Constitution approved by the Board of Governors	19 July 2012
“New Union” launched	September 2012