

**Joint Board and Academic Board strategy day notes – 26 April 2018  
Avonmouth House, SE1**

**1. Introduction**

The Chair welcomed governors and members of Academic Board to the meeting, in particular, Asa Barber, the new Dean of Engineering.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Mike Molan, Dean of School of Business, who will be retiring in July 2018, and welcomed his successor, Sarah Moore Williams.

The Chair encouraged contributions particularly on the two key questions for the day:

- (i) confidence around medium term financial sustainability, and;
- (ii) additional areas to explore?

**2. Joint session: update**

The VC gave an update on key challenges and opportunities. The meeting noted and discussed:

- LSBU's position in the Complete University Guide league table had improved by 15 places, a key achievement as part of the corporate strategy;
- the Office for Students new regulatory framework and the challenges to student recruitment as a consequence of an increase in providers. In this context, there was a need to remain ambitious and optimise performance and achievements across the breadth of university activities;
- the need to ensure LSBU has the appropriate staff capacity and skills at both Schools and PSGs, and challenges for the Schools in re-shaping course portfolios, modules and assessment methodologies; and
- in response to income challenges, it was noted the Executive is reviewing staffing costs and opex budgets.

### 3. **Joint session: Finance update and 5-year forecast**

The CFO presented current and 5-year financial forecasts. The meeting noted and discussed:

- the challenging current financial position. Key factors include the challenges in UG recruitment, international student recruitment, and retention;
- the Executive is already taking action to reduce opex and staff costs to meet the target surplus of £1.5M.
- that a surplus is necessary to generate cash and facilitate borrowing for capital developments, e.g. estates and LEAP (student journey project);
- the 2018/19 budget is a greater challenge than the current year due to flat income and increasing staff costs. Any reduction in staff costs would need to ensure that the necessary capacity and skills were available to maintain improvements gained in recent years, as well as secure new successes in driving income streams;
- that a number of initiatives, e.g. the student journey project, would drive cost efficiencies in the medium/long term but not the short term; and
- that future financial plans are cautious with realistic student number targets.

### 4. **Joint session: Future financial sustainability**

The CMO presented a review of future financial sustainability. The meeting noted and discussed:

- the Executive now has a clearer understanding of the graduate recruitment market. Marketing the current UG tariff is important but presents challenges in relation to the quality of applicants and retention. Converting applications is the priority which is largely driven by the reputation of the School;
- the Executive is looking to reduce the number of courses without reducing the number of students;
- growth will be driven by the right course portfolio, and improving LSBU's reputation at subject, local and international levels; and
- opportunities exist in complementary course design, e.g. overlap between health, engineering and business courses.

### 5. **Board of Governors' session: discussion and conclusions**

Board and Executive members discussed the two key questions posed at the start of the day:

Governors were supportive of:

- the cautious approach to financial forecasting which does not rely on increased student numbers; however, it was noted £1.5M is not a comfortable surplus.
- the Executive's diverse approach to the current challenges and that standing still was not an option, but the focus needed to be on those practical initiatives with the best impact.

Governors did not identify any additional areas to explore and requested the Executive to continue to develop the organisational development (OD) function in the university.

Overall, the Board is broadly optimistic about the medium-term financial sustainability of the university.

## **Attendance**

Board of Governors: Jerry Cope (Chair), Douglas Denham St Pinnock (Vice Chair), David Phoenix, Sodiq Akinbade, Steve Balmont, Duncan Brown, Julie Chappell, Michael Cutbill, Peter Fidler, Jenny Owen, and Tony Roberts

Apologies: Shachi Blakemore, independent governor  
Kevin McGrath, independent governor  
Hilary McCallion, independent governor  
Mee Ling Ng, independent governor

Academic Board: Ian Albery, Research Staff Representative  
Craig Barker, Dean of Law & Social Science  
Janet Bohrer, Director of Academic Quality Development Office  
Patrick Callaghan, Dean of Applied Sciences  
Kirsteen Coupar, Director of Student Services  
Charles Egbu, Dean of Built Environment & Architecture  
Asa Barber, Dean of Engineering  
Gurpreet Jagpal, Director Research, Enterprise and Innovation  
Janet Jones, Dean of Arts & Creative Industries  
Mike Molan, Dean of Business  
Sarah Moore Williams, Director of Research and Enterprise, School of Business, new Dean of Business (for July 2018)  
Lesley Roberts, Head of Skills for Learning  
Warren Turner, Dean/PVC Health & Social Care  
Saranne Weller, Director, Centre for Research Informed Teaching

Apologies: Shushma Patel, Professorial Representative

University Executive: Pat Bailey, Deputy Vice Chancellor  
Richard Flatman, Chief Finance Officer  
Paul Ivey, Pro Vice Chancellor, Research & External Engagement  
Nicole Louis, Chief Marketing Officer  
Ian Mehrtens, Chief Operating Officer  
James Stevenson, University Secretary & Clerk to the Board of Governors  
Shân Wareing, Pro Vice Chancellor, Education & Student Experience

With: Michael Broadway, Deputy University Secretary  
Joe Kelly, Governance Officer