

**Joint Board and Academic Board strategy day notes – 28 September
2017
15 Hatfields, SE1**

Present

Jerry Cope (Chair)
David Phoenix
Sodiq Akinbade
Steve Balmont
Shachi Blakemore
Duncan Brown
Julie Chappell
Michael Cutbill
Peter Fidler
Hilary McCallion
Mee Ling Ng
Tony Roberts
Suleyman Said

Apologies

Douglas Denham St Pinnock
Carol Hui
Kevin McGrath
Jenny Owen

In attendance

Pat Bailey
Richard Flatman
Michael Broadway

1. Agenda for the day

The Chair welcomed governors, Academic Board members and Executive members to the meeting. New governors and members of Academic Board were introduced to the meeting.

The Chair noted that there were currently two contrasting themes for the meeting to consider as part of the day: 1) under-recruitment for 2017/18; and 2) the improving reputation of the University, for example achievement of TEF silver; moving up the University league tables, and being named University of the Year for Graduate Employment.

2. External environment

The Vice Chancellor presented a review of the external policy environment.

The meeting noted opportunities, including to:

- develop non-accredited training courses and the CPD offer;
- grow direct recruitment internationally and trans-national education (TNE), including through a potential joint venture with Applied Science University, Bahrain.
- develop the “family of educational institutions” concept to cover further education, secondary education, apprenticeships and enterprise

It was agreed that new business developments should be aligned with the corporate strategy and support LSBU’s core business.

The meeting noted challenges, including:

- the current political environment, including uncertainty over “Brexit”;
- the current political debate around university fee levels;
- recognition that the new regulator, the Office for Students, is likely to make significant changes to the sector and the regulatory environment.

It was noted that LSBU is well-placed to tackle uncertainties in a difficult environment, but that the HE sector, as a whole, faces challenges to promote the value of HE among the general public.

3. **Progress of the Corporate Strategy to 2020**

The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented a progress report on LSBU’s Corporate Strategy to 2020.

The meeting discussed the following points:

- the importance of metrics which, even though proxy measurements, provide performance insights into challenges and successes.
- the importance of the National Student Survey (NSS). Course Directors are a very significant factor in influencing NSS outcomes and are working to raise student satisfaction. It was noted that universities in urban areas tended to perform less well in the NSS.
- other key areas which impact on student satisfaction include estates, IT, and digital materials, which are separate key change projects.
- readiness to address the subject level Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), likely to begin in 2019/20.
- the executive is leading a drive towards simplification of business processes at School level.
- continued communication of positive messages to staff and a revised internal communication strategy is being developed.
- as noted above, recruitment is a key challenge which needs to be addressed at every level of entry and study mode.

4. **LSBU brand development and portfolio**

Session for the Board of Governors only

The Chief Marketing Officer gave a presentation on market trends and brand development and portfolio. A key focus was on the concept of the 'enterprising university'.

LSBU is reviewing its portfolio of courses and considering opportunities to offer pharmacy, biomedicine and fashion.

LSBU's distinctive offer in the marketplace includes the academic environment and style of teaching, integration with research, business and enterprise, and wider opportunities for students.

There was a free-flowing discussion around the themes of the presentation, including the following points:

- It is important to build a confident message with consumers and just not internally within the sector.
- LSBU currently has low brand recognition: a 6-9 campaign month is planned to develop brand awareness.
- Competitors are investing more in brand than LSBU.

Next steps include:

- Reviewing the size and shape of the business and its portfolio.
- Developing internal communications and use of social media

The Board is keen to help socialise the University's brand and message and would welcome key point briefing on the priority messages to communicate.

5. **Conclusions**

The Chair summarised the key themes of the day as:

- the importance of developing LSBU's brand and profile;
- the importance of articulating LSBU's message and successes both externally and internally; and
- there are significant opportunities for LSBU and that the University is well placed to address its challenges.