

Minutes of a Meeting of the Educational Character Committee  
held at 4pm on Wednesday, 12 February 2014  
in Room 1B27, Technopark, London Road, London SE1

**Present**

Douglas Denham St Pinnock	Chair
Barbara Ahland	SU President
Steve Balmont	
Hilary McCallion	
Mee Ling Ng	

Prof David Phoenix	Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive
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**In attendance**

Prof Phil Cardew	Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic)
Prof Mike Molan	Executive Dean, Arts and Human Sciences
James Stevenson	University Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Governors
Ruth Sutton	Governance Officer

**Welcome and Apologies**

1. No apologies had been received.

**Minutes of the last meeting**

2. The minutes of the meeting of 4 December 2013 were confirmed as a correct record (paper **EC.01(14)**). The minutes were approved for publication, and requested that the two actions in relation to equality data (minute 11) and the NSS action plan (minute 14) are completed.

**Matters Arising**

3. The Chairman reported that the committee members had just had an informative and encouraging pre-meeting in the Faculty of Business, meeting both students and academic staff.
4. The Chairman noted that a summary of the committee's visit to the AHS faculty before the last meeting had been circulated to all members.

## **Update on consultation: Developing Our Structures**

5. The Vice Chancellor introduced a consultation paper titled “Developing Our Structures” (paper **EC.02(14)**). This outlined the final composition of the seven schools and proposed new professional service groups. The committee noted that the Board would receive a presentation on the proposed change at their next meeting on 20 March 2014. Around 400-500 staff had attended meetings relating to this stage of the consultation. In addition, staff at the Havering Campus and the Students’ Union had been consulted.
6. The committee welcomed the paper and reiterated its support for the move from faculties to schools.
7. In addition, the committee discussed the strategy section of the Consultation paper, which proposes that by 2020, LSBU is externally and internally recognised as “An enterprising civic university that is addressing real world challenges”. The committee debated the meaning and use of the word “civic”, which was intended to convey LSBU’s history, its links to the community and its applied focus. Members commented that the word “civic” may be seen as old-fashioned, although it also noted that the term may be coming back into use.
8. The committee was keen that the professional service groups were built up in an appropriate way to support schools. The committee was concerned about staff redundancy arising from the proposed changes. Members requested that HR consider support packages for staff made redundant.
9. Comments from all stakeholders would be considered at the close of this phase of the consultation in early March 2014.
10. The committee agreed that the latest consultation paper would be circulated to the whole Board of Governors.

## **Recruitment of Deputy Vice Chancellor (‘DVC’) - update**

11. The committee noted the draft job description for the role of DVC (paper **EC.03(14)**) and that Saxton Bampfylde had been appointed as recruitment consultants. The Chair of the Board, Vice Chancellor, Educational Character Committee Chair, Chair of the HR Committee and an external senior academic will form a selection panel to recommend the final candidate to the Board of Governors.

### **Undergraduate faculty monitoring reports**

12. The committee noted the undergraduate faculty monitoring reports (paper **EC.04(14)**). It was noted that this report and the reports at minutes 13, 14 and 15 formed sections of the Academic Board's annual report to the Board.

### **Annual report on external examiners**

13. The committee noted the annual report on external examiners (paper **EC.05(14)**).

### **Report on Undergraduate Student Progression**

14. The committee noted a report on undergraduate student progression (paper **EC.06(13)**). The committee noted that the data is now being monitored to module level to determine factors affecting progression.

### **Report on complaints**

15. The committee noted a report on internal complaints and cases taken by students to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (paper **EC.07(13)**). It was noted that for 2012/13 there were 124 OIA cases (81 in 2011/12). Actions following the PwC report of October 2013 would be reported to the Audit Committee. The committee agreed that triage and mediation procedures to resolve problems at an early stage should continue.

*Hilary McCallion left the meeting.*

### **Educational Character Committee and Academic Board – good governance**

16. The committee discussed the role and work of the committee since it was formed in 2012 (paper **EC.08(14)**). The committee had been established to inform governors of key academic matters given that one of the primary responsibilities of the Board of Governors is to approve the educational character of the university.
17. The committee agreed that as the Board and all committees were shortly to undergo a full governance review, its future should be determined as part of that review.

### **Any other business**

18. The committee requested that prior to their next meeting they would like to meet the Students' Union Board of Trustees.

**Next Meeting**

19. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 4 June 2014 at 4pm, preceded by a visit to the Students' Union.

**Confirmed as a correct record**

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**Chair**