

**Joint Board and Academic Board strategy day notes – 29 September
2016
Avonmouth House**

Theme – the sustainability of the University

1. Welcome and Achievements

1. The Chair welcomed governors, Academic Board members and Executive members to the meeting.
2. The Chair outlined the purpose of the day was to consider the following question:
Is the Board optimistic that the actions being taken by the Executive are sufficient to deliver the agreed strategy?
3. The current corporate strategy was until 2020.
4. The meeting noted the numerous achievements that had been delivered over the past year, including:
 - a. Moving up the league tables;
 - b. Good financial performance for 2015/16;
 - c. New brand was launched;
 - d. Quality of data had been improved;
 - e. Purchase of Hugh Astor Court unlocking estates development plans;
 - f. Position in the top 100 of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index;
 - g. Implemented the academic framework providing defined career progression for academic staff;
 - h. Developed sector leading apprenticeship provision, including trailblazing, higher and degree apprenticeships;
 - i. The number of student appeals was down by 75%;
 - j. The Accounting and the Marketing divisions were in the top 20 in the UK in all categories of the National Student Survey;
 - k. Parts of the University were delivering sector leading research;
 - l. There were sector leading facilities across the University, including Elephant Studios and the DAR lab; and
 - m. The opening of the University Technical College in Brixton and the opening of the sixth form in the Academy.

5. The meeting noted the challenging environment in which the university was operating:
 - a. The Higher Education Bill;
 - b. Removal of student number cap;
 - c. EU referendum result;
 - d. Demographic changes; and
 - e. Increased competition.

2. **Financial scenarios**

6. The Chief Financial Officer gave a presentation on financial scenarios. The meeting discussed:
 - a. The financial KPIs to 2020 and current forecasts;
 - b. Financial scenarios showing a 5% and 10% drop in income; and
 - c. Current recruitment figures, which were expected to be off target.
7. Conclusions from the session were that:
 - a. Recruitment targets would be missed and that the 2750 target would remain tough;
 - b. 2016/17 budget was manageable;
 - c. Overall 2020 income target was achievable but stretching;
 - d. Need to explore online learning opportunities; and
 - e. Improving progression remained vital.
8. The Board requested a strategy on online learning to a Board meeting in early 2017.
9. The meeting discussed borrowing and agreed that any borrowing would only be for recognised capital expenditure to meet clear strategic purposes.

3. **Retention and completion**

10. The Pro Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) gave a presentation on retention and completion. The 2020 target for year one to year two progression was 85% (in 2014/15 it was 71.9%). The meeting noted the importance of improving retention without comprising quality (a discussion on quality took place in session 4).
11. The meeting noted the actions being taken to improve retention and completion:

- a. Sector leading facilities and equipment in some areas;
- b. Good learning resources;
- c. The floor on entry tariffs had been maintained;
- d. Mentors and coaches from industry for students;
- e. Improving communications to students;
- f. Improving feedback to students; and
- g. Improving support and CPD to lecturers

12. The meeting noted the development of learner analytics which would be launched this academic year.

13. The meeting emphasised the importance of improving retention.

4. **Growth plans**

14. Growth plans for the Schools were discussed in detail. It was noted that based on market share analysis, there was an opportunity for at least the Schools of Applied Science, Arts and Creative Industries, Business, and Law and Social Sciences to increase student numbers.

15. There is a long-list of potential evolutionary growth initiatives, which all link to education, including:

- a. a polyclinic;
- b. a nursing recruitment agency; and
- c. new courses in HLT (hospitality, leisure and tourism) and fashion.

16. In addition, the introduction of the employers' levy for apprenticeships will provide significant opportunity.

17. The estates re-development plans a conference centre, which could be run by students.

18. If any of these initiatives is successful, then they could significantly increase income and surplus, but in considering them the Board would need carefully to balance risks and opportunities.

5. **Quality assessment and TEF2**

19. The Pro Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) gave a presentation on quality assurance and TEF.

20. The regulatory landscape is changing rapidly and is creating a degree of uncertainty in the HE sector. The new HE & Research bill provides for power to remove DAPs where HEIs do not meet required quality standards. LSBU's quality team have been monitoring the changes very closely.

21. A significant change is the requirement for the governing body to make an annual accountability assurance statement to HEFCE. The board agreed that it would be appropriate for the Audit Committee to review the assurance process within LSBU prior to the board signing-off the annual statement.

22. The Executive would provide assurance to the Board on quality through:

- a. An overview of internal processes that assure standards;
- b. A summary of the key findings from the reports, referenced to the appropriate committee (Academic Board, Quality and Standards, Student Experience, Research); and
- c. An action plan of how LSBU will continue to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes

23. The conclusion from the session is that growth in student numbers is not possible without academic quality.

6. **Conclusions on the sustainability of the current university plan**

24. LSBU's overall approach and strategy should be able to underpin the sustainability of the University;

25. That LSBU should not move away from its current growth plans and should continue to focus on delivering income growth of 25% to £170m by 2020, a surplus of 5% and an EBITDA margin of 15% (this is consistent with 12 (c) in the report);

26. The meeting agreed that the executive's focus should be on recruitment and retention. Governors agreed that a core strategic objective should be continued improvement in progression on a school by school basis.

27. In addition to that core activity, that evolutionary growth plans should be developed. There was recognition that non-organic growth may be necessary as well, which could include strategic alliances with education partners.

28. The board agreed that any additional borrowing, which could be sensible for the right proposal, should only be used to fund capital development.

29. The board emphasised the need to continue to boldly market LSBU, given the sector-leading academic facilities, for example the DAR lab and Elephant Studios. The social media presence needed to be understood more.

30. The board agreed that further insight into the student experience would be a helpful topic for a future strategy day.

Present

Board of Governors:

Jerry Cope (Chair), Andrew Owen (Vice Chair), Temi Ahmadu (Students' Union President), Steve Balmont, Shachi Blakemore, Michael Cutbill, Douglas Denham St Pinnock, Carol Hui (*until lunch*), Neil Gorman, Hilary McCallion, Mee Ling Ng, Jenny Owen, Tony Roberts, Calvin Usuanlele (Chair of Student Council) and Roy Waight (co-opted member of the Audit Committee).

Additional members of the Academic Board:

Janet Bohrer, Director of Academic Quality Development Office
Kirsteen Coupar, Director of Student Services
Charles Egbu, Dean of Built Environment & Architecture
Janet Jones, Dean of Arts & Creative Industries
Raymond Lee, Dean of Applied Sciences
David Mba, Dean of Engineering
Mike Molan, Pro Vice Chancellor (Enhancement), Dean of Business
Shushma Patel, Director of Education and Student Experience, Engineering

Members of the Executive:

Pat Bailey, Deputy Vice Chancellor
Mandy Eddolls, Executive Director of Organisational Development and Human Resources
Richard Flatman, Chief Finance Officer
Ian Mehrtens, Chief Operating Officer
James Stevenson, University Secretary & Clerk to the Board of Governors
Shân Wareing, Pro Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)

With:

Michael Broadway, Deputy University Secretary

Apologies:

Stephen Barber, Reader and Programme Manager, Business
Craig Barker, Dean of Law & Social Science
Paul Ivey, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and External Engagement)
Gurpreet Jagpal, Director of Enterprise
Kevin McGrath, Independent Governor
David Phoenix (Vice Chancellor)
Lesley Roberts, Head of Skills for Learning
Warren Turner, Dean PVC Health & Social Care