

## Board of Governors

### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 20 October 2021 at 10am via Teams.

#### Minutes 6815 – 6883

**Present:** Mr J Hanley (Chair), Dr J Aldiss (Senior Independent Governor), Ms J Andrew, Mr M Brockbank, Ms R Collins, Professor C Egbu (Vice-Chancellor), Ms T Ford-Escobar, Mr A Gilliland, Mr A Grills, Ms C Grooby, Mr M Holden, Mr R Marchant (Vice-Chair), Mr B McCarthy, Ms E Reed, Ms E Richards, Mrs S Rix, Mr P Southern, Rt Rev M Stock, Ms A Wilson and Mr M Wilson.

**In attendance:** Mr D Butcher (Director of Finance & University Secretary), Mr P Dixon (Chief Operating Officer), Professor M Todd (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor C O'Connor (Pro Vice-Chancellor), Mr C Williams (Clerk to the Board of Governors and Company Secretary), Dr A Torn (Union Rep).

**Apologies:** Mr M Feely

#### Welcome & Opening Prayer

6815 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, welcomed Mr B McCarthy and Professor C O'Connor (PVC) to their first meeting, advised all in attendance that the meeting was being recorded and Bishop Marcus opened the meeting with a prayer.

#### Declaration of Interest:

6816 There were no declarations of interest.

**Noted**

#### Chair's Report

6817 **Received** a report from the Chair of the Board of Governors (paper G 21/72) providing an update on key activity undertaken by the Chair since the last meeting.

6818 The Board noted the Chair's report.

**Noted**

#### Minutes of Last Meeting

6819 The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

**Approved**

#### Matters arising, including progress on action log from previous meetings

6820 **Received** the table of actions (paper G 21/73). The Board reviewed and noted the table of actions.

**Noted**

6821 The Board took feedback from a member's meeting with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and marketing team on social media, marketing and student accommodation matters and the COO touched on pending work with the member on the interior design of new and existing student spaces.

6822 Mr P Southern requested access to campus to get an understanding as to the nature and feel of the campus and to speak with students (to include Ms E Reed and Ms C Grooby)

**COO**

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### Health & Safety Update (Reporting by Exception)

6823 **Received** a verbal update from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) who confirmed that there had been no reportable health and safety cases since the last Board meeting on 7 July 2021.

6824 The Board noted the verbal report.

**Noted**

### **Covid-19 Update University Response**

6825 **Received** a report from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) on the University's management of issues and implications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (paper G 21/74).

6826 The COO reported on the government's approach, return to campus, the return to a full on-campus timetable, agile working arrangements, student 'Intro Week', residences and outbreak management and benchmarked infection rates.

6827 The Board queried whether the University was using CO2 monitoring devices in lecture theatres and seminar rooms and the COO outlined that all options are being considered alongside a rigorous cleaning regime across the University, use of face coverings and that a student returners survey had identified that the vast majority of students had had vaccinations.

6828 The Board questioned the compliance with face coverings on campus and the COO reported that the requirement was on the whole being adhered to but was a constant challenge with some students.

6829 The Board discussed some issues with students accessing vaccinations locally, discussed the student experience with the move back to some in person teaching and some on-line teaching, that the new normal (in teaching and learning terms) may be a different and better offer and that on-going evaluation of the impact on students is shaping developments.

6830 The Board questioned arrangements for students who are living in close proximity to each other in halls, questioned how students and staff are being thanked for accommodating the changing circumstances and requirements and discussed the need for Governors to take a lateral flow test before coming on campus.

6831 The Board welcomed the report and positive responses to questions raised.

6832 The Board noted the report.

**Noted**

## **PERFORMANCE**

### **National Student Survey (NSS):**

#### National Student Survey (NSS): University Response

6833 **Received** a report which provided an overview of the University's response to the 2021 NSS results from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (paper G 21/75 A).

6834 The Chair introduced the item by reflecting on the NSS results (circulated 23<sup>rd</sup> July and the Action Plan which was circulated on 13<sup>th</sup> August for comment), the need for the Board to understand the implications, how we got here and the plans to address whilst recognising and giving thanks for the extra time and effort that the team have put in to addressing the issues concerned.

- 6835 The DVC and PVC reported in detail in eight parts; results, management questions and reflections, the role of student voice, codifying what 'name not a number' means, the teaching model, accountability, student demographic and support and governance and workstreams.
- 6836 The Vice-Chancellor (VC) thanked members for feedback to date on the draft Action Plan (which have been acted on) reported that the Executive and staff of the university are highly disappointed with the NSS results, that the responsibility and accountability for the poor performance lies squarely on the Executive and the senior management team and as VC of the University he took overall responsibility for the very poor results, that the presentation and discussions aim to provide reassurance to the Board and give confidence in the processes and systems that are being put in place to address the issues.
- 6837 The VC reflected on comments at Audit Committee the previous evening in terms of the differential between the Student Experience Internal Audit and the NSS survey results and the respective issues behind the differential. The VC asked members to focus on what is different and the issues behind material changes in results for some particular demographics.
- 6838 The VC, DVC and PVC delivered a presentation entitled "National Student Survey – actions and progress" that covered the university's response which included the following item on Action Plan (posted to the meeting folder on BoardPacks for members reference <https://leedstrinity.boardpacks.com/knowledge/default.aspx#kp=Boardand21032019103540|BoardofG13102021152257?2>).
- 6839 The Chair thanked the Executive for the presentation and outlined that progress on this key issue would be reported through the new AASE Committee and Board as standing items and the Chair then opened the item up for member comment.
- 6840 The Board had a full and frank debate on the University's response to the disappointing NSS results and management gave an initial response to the following issues raised:
- The need for root cause analysis that explains the issues, the implications of the 'name not number' value in terms of Covid impact and reducing personal contact.
  - Reflected on changes following the 2017 intake that have resulted in the declining trend over the years and asked the questions why and whether there were any themes emerging from the feedback (in terms of how staff are communicating and understanding effectively student's specific circumstances and the required skills set involved).
  - Queried the personal tutor role, reflected on proportion of positive and negative comments, queried immediate changes for level 6 students and implications of the hybrid model for casual face to face support opportunities.
  - Questioned the investment and resources involved with delivering the Action Plan, whether this would bring an additional burden for staffing and whether there were any resource gaps as a result of Covid pressures.
  - Questioned what the outstanding courses were doing, key priority actions in the Action Plan for governors and cost of delivering the plan in terms of whether provision has been made in the budget.
  - Questioned what had been done in 2019 to achieve an improved NSS position in 2020 and whether we were concentrating too much on delivery and not listening enough to students and the importance of the analysis of feedback from Asian students.
  - Questioned the Executive and leadership team's engagement and interaction with students and possible opportunities for Governors to engage with students and the role of the Chaplaincy in supporting the Action Plan.
  - Learning and Teaching (and support) excellence framework is appropriate to embrace, need to go beyond 'name and not a number' with personalised responses and need to improve the Student Experience Survey response rates.

- Any false assumptions that underpinned the new Strategic Plan and whether any changes are required.
- Questioned the confidence that some students have in support staff understanding their personal and domestic circumstances and needs.

Points raised in the Chat room for inclusion in Action Plan tracking for AASEC and Board

- Informal, opportunistic support offered by in person attendance are important.
- Suggestion of a student 'Vox Pop' directly to the Board with say, 10 students listing their top 3 loves and hates.
- It is envisaged that a member's walk around campus with the COO and learning about the estate masterplan (to include more social / breakout spaces) will hopefully create an environment that better supports informal interaction, support and a return to the sense of community and belonging.
- How is the passion point carried forward and built upon?
- Can we just pick up on the KPI point - the feedback loop and how we know interventions are working and then adapt and flex our approach based on that.

Mr P Southern and Ms T Ford-Escobar withdrew from the meeting

6841 The Chair requested that the points raised in the meeting (including issues posted to the Chat room) are included in the review of the Action Plan so that the Board may track responses and actions that address their respective points. **DVC & PVC**

6842 The Chair requested that any follow up questions to the VC are copied to the Chair and Mr A Grills as Chair of the AASE Committee.

6843 The Board deferred monitoring of the Action Plan to the newly formed Academic Assurance and Student Experience Committee which will report to Board accordingly as a Standing Item. **AASEC**

6844 The Board noted the report. **Noted**

National Student Survey (NSS): Institutional Action Plan

6845 **Received** the Institutional Action Plan from the Vice-Chancellor (VC), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (paper G 21/75 B).

6846 The VC, DVC and PVC reported on the detail outlined in the NSS 2021 Institutional Action Plan, the enhanced governance structures that ensure the delivery of the action plan and department action plans and on detailed NSS work.

6847 The Board noted the report. **Noted**

**Key Performance Indicators 2020/21**

6848 **Received** the KPI template with supporting indicators from the Director of Finance and University Secretary (DFUS) (paper G 21/76).

6849 The DFUS reported on the seven KPIs being reported for the year since the last meeting (four red and three green) and on the four KPIs which are reported for the year (all red).

6850 The DFUS expanded on the employment and employability KPI and reflected that the new methodology for graduate survey (now 15 months after graduation) which means that the data is based on students who graduated in 2019 and who were surveyed in autumn 2020 at the height of the pandemic.

6851 The Board discussed the staff costs as a percentage of income in terms of core business and the need to track staff costs KPI as a core business issue and management commented that this would be monitored in reports to Board.

6852 The Board noted the report on KPIs.

**Noted**

### **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

6853 **Received** a report from the Vice-Chancellor (VC) (paper G 21/77) that outlined key developments since the last meeting (detailed report on BoardPacks via embedded link).

6854 The VC reported on policy context and external factors, core student recruitment 2021-22, centre for apprenticeships, work-based learning and skills, academic partnerships unit (APU), graduate employability, international and research.

6855 The Board questioned the process and criteria behind the government's intention to reduce the number of Initial teacher training (ITT) providers and the VC expanded on his discussions and meeting with government officers to flag LTU's position and concerns (government report on process is pending) to mitigate risks.

6856 The Board questioned the reasons behind the drop in teacher education recruitment and management reflected on the government's investment in and profile of a teaching career, LTU's market position and restrictions on engagement with potential students.

6857 The Board requested a paper on student recruitment marketing strategies with granular analysis in particular areas such as ITT, for the February meeting.

**COO**

6858 The Board noted the Vice-Chancellor's Report.

**Noted**

### **BUDGET & FORECAST PERIOD**

#### **Financial Update Report**

6859 **Received** a report from the Director of Finance & University Secretary (DFUS) which provided a headline update of the draft financial outturn for 2020/21 and any indications to date for 2021/22 (paper G 21/78).

6860 The DFUS reported on the draft financial outturn for 2020-21, indications to date for 2021-22 and that the final position for 2020-21 and an updated forecast for 2021-22 would be reported to the Finance & Resources Committee in early November before coming to the November Board meeting.

6861 The Board questioned the rate of surplus and the DFUS commented on the investment in estate and core business and how the business will be re-balanced in core terms once pending developments are costed up in investment terms.

6862 The Board noted the report.

**Noted**

### **STRATEGY**

#### **Strategic Objectives Action Plan for 2020/21**

6863 **Received** a report on the updated strategic objectives action plan for 2020/21 from the Director of Finance & University Secretary (DFUS) (paper G 21/79).

6864 The DFUS reported on the progress to date as highlighted in red in the Action Plan.

6865 The Board welcomed the improvement in BAME recruitment and questioned the impact of the move to Post Qualification A and management reported on their work tracking and planning for the pending changes in arrangements.

6866 The Board noted the report.

**Noted**

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **Written Resolution on Appointment of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC)**

6867 **Received** a report from the Clerk to the Board of Governors which sought to formally notify members of the result of the written resolution regarding the appointment of Professor Catherine O'Connor to the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor. (paper G 21/80).

6868 The Board noted the report.

**Noted**

Dr A Torn withdrew from the meeting

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

### **Audit Committee: Unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021**

6869 **Received** the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 30 September 2021 from the Chair of Audit Committee (paper G 21/81).

6870 The Chair of the Committee reported on the key points from the meetings on 30<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> October (the latter involved the Internal Auditors Annual report and opinion) regarding the blended learning review, audit plans for 2021-22 (informed by a PwC report that had been shared with members) and that a recent allegation against a partner had been investigated and found that the allegation was without foundation, that no further action was required and that the OfS had been informed accordingly and on positive benchmarked feedback from PwC as part of their Annual Report.

6871 The Board discussed the limited scope of some audits, possible disconnect between audit feedback and other processes such as NSS and the possible need for swifter feedback arrangements on NSS issues.

6872 The Board noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 23 June 2021.

**Noted**

### **Academic Board: Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2021**

6873 **Received** the confirmed minutes of the Academic Board Committee meeting held on 30 June 2021 from the Chair of Academic Board (paper G 21/82).

6874 The Board noted that these would in future first go to AASE Committee and the VC briefly talked through the key points highlighted in his covering report.

6875 The Board noted the minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 30 June 2021.

**Noted**

### **Academic Board: Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2021**

6876 **Received** the confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2021 from the Chair of the Academic Board (paper G 21/83).

6878 The Board noted the minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 9 July 2021.

**Noted**

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR NOTING ONLY**

## **Governor Training & Development Report**

6879 **Received** a report from the Clerk to the Board of Governors of the formal training and informal development sessions and other plans for Governor development in 2021-22. (paper G 21/84).

6880 The Clerk reported on on-going development work with members, that members were welcome to raise development needs and opportunities with him and reported on pending development session at the Development Day on LCR local labour market information (following feedback from the Board performance survey over the summer).

6881 The Board noted the update report.

**Noted**

## **Any Other Business**

6882 MS R Collins reminded members of the invitation sent 18<sup>th</sup> October for the Black History community event on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

## **Date of next Meeting**

6883 Thursday 25 November 2021 at 4pm, the Board discussed whether it was feasible and safe to meet in person and it was agreed that the meeting would be moved to Teams with an aspiration to meet in person before the Christmas break.

**Noted  
Clerk**

**Meeting closed at 13:01**