



## Minutes

### SEN24-M1

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024.

#### Attendance

Nick Jennings

Siân Adiseshiah  
Kerri Akiwowo  
Karen Blay  
Lot Burgstra  
Ash Casey  
Steve Christie  
Paul Conway (ab)  
Malcolm Cook  
Jennifer Cooke  
Georgina Cosma  
Charlotte Croffie  
Cees de Bont  
Claudia Eberlein  
Tony Edwards  
Jan Godsell (ab)  
Suzana Grubnic  
Tarek Hassan

Simon Hogg (ab)  
Michael Hoyler  
Ella-Mae Hubbard  
Kemafasu Ilfie  
Will Johnson  
Sophia Jowett  
Nawaf Junaidi  
Allyson King (ab)  
Mark Lewis (ab)  
Baihua Li  
Chris Linton  
Jo Maher  
Miguel Martinez Garcia  
Carolynne Mason  
Andrew Morris  
Thomas Otter  
Molly Page  
Sarah Parker

Dan Parsons  
Liz Peel (ab)  
Giulia Piccolino  
Tanja Radu  
Rahul Rahulamathavan  
Catherine Rees  
Chris Rielly  
Duncan Robertson  
Merve Sancak (ab)  
Vadim Silberschmidt  
Rachel Thomson  
Cansu Unver-Erbas  
Ashley van Bruygom  
Emma Walton (ab)  
Darren Watts  
Eve Zhang  
Diwei Zhou

#### ***In attendance:***

Chris Dunbobbin, Jennifer Nutkins, Alex Owen, Richard Taylor.

#### ***Apologies received from:***

Paul Conway, Jan Godsell, Mark Lewis, Liz Peel, Emma Walton, Simon Hogg, Allyson King, Merve Sancak.

#### **24/1 Minutes**

Senate confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023 (**SEN23-M5**).

#### **24/2 University Strategy**

##### **2.1 Update on International Student Recruitment**

Senate considered a verbal update on international student recruitment.

Institutions across the sector were being affected by significant volatility and increasing competition in the international student market, driven by a range of geopolitical and local

factors. For most institutions, international student fees were a key element of income diversification in view of the erosion of the real terms value of UK student fees since 2012.

For 2024 entry, the University had taken a number of actions including: reviewing/revising fees and scholarship offerings; focussing on interventions to improve conversion rates; working with the University's new Private Pathway Provider and with "link tutors"; reviewing the size and shape of the University's education portfolio to ensure it was responsive to international student demands and expectations; and investing in an international student experience team, including careers, employability support, and opportunities for internships and work experience. For 2025, a number of new programmes in the Loughborough Business School, Design and Creative Arts, and Engineering Management would be offered. Other medium to long term initiatives under consideration included investigating the purchase of a new CRM system to communicate with applicants; introducing new degree programmes with sizeable potential markets, both within and without existing LU expertise; and reviewing the viability of consistently small programmes especially at PGT level.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- i) A number of initiatives with agents were being pursued. The key issues being highlighted by agents related to employability and the University's world ranking.
- ii) Clarification was provided that the University's global engagement team were empowered to make on-the-spot offers to students where appropriate.
- iii) Particular consideration was being given to address a large decline in the number of applications from India, and suggestions in this space were welcomed.
- iv) It was emphasised that consideration would be given to the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration across multiple Schools when planning the introduction of new programmes.
- v) Confirmation was provided that the University was continually monitoring the possibility of new markets and the development of existing smaller markets, in order to minimise reliance on a few large countries.
- vi) Reassurance was provided that considerations around infrastructure including accommodation and catering, and student experience including specific cultural needs, were integral to the University's desire to maintain and grow international student numbers. There were specific accommodation issues in relation to the LU London campus, but Loughborough's offer in 2024-25 would be significantly improved with the availability of several hundred additional student rooms on the Olympic Park.
- vii) There was scope for further exploration of international student recruitment opportunities in relation to PhD and Masters by Research programmes. The University would also continue to monitor potential opportunities in online teaching.

## 2.2 Governance arrangements for the delivery of the new University Strategy

### **SEN24-P1**

Senate noted developments in relation to governance arrangements underpinning the delivery of the new University Strategy, integrated planning, and budgetary decision-making activity.

## 2.3 Opportunities for the University in Saudi Arabia (KSA)

### **SEN24-P2**

Senate considered and commented on potential opportunities for the University for in-country teaching delivery in KSA. The context was KSA's wish to educate and train its workforce to drive the sports sector of its economy; one of the key areas identified in its journey away from dependency on oil. The likely focus of Loughborough's educational offer would be UG and PGT Sport Management, with scope to consider other areas including Teacher Training in PE and Executive Education. It was anticipated that it would be several years before any in-country presence was established, and in the interim the University would seek to educate Saudi students in Loughborough across the broad range of LU's sport portfolio, in the expectation that some of the graduates from this activity would be potential employees for future in-country delivery. Any initiative of the type envisaged would carry risks, and it was proposed that these

would be assessed by a set of tests established by a Project Management Board (PMB). To date, a feasibility study had been completed and internal discussions with internal stakeholders including Staff Network Chairs, LSU Executive Officers, Unions, and the LGBT+ staff network were ongoing. A decision on whether to proceed would need to be taken by the end of the 2023-24 academic year, and it was anticipated that draft proposals would be submitted to Senate and Council in March 2024, prior to a final proposal in June 2024.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- i) The proposed initiative offered the opportunity to enhance the University's global visibility and reputation, and to generate substantial revenue. It would be important, however, to be fully cognisant of moral, ethical and reputational issues particularly around human rights, censorship and EDI; and practical issues associated with delivery on an overseas satellite campus. It was highlighted in this context that the University had a range of existing links with KSA and with many other countries with laws and cultural values which were not fully-aligned with the UK, and that an approach of engagement in such circumstances provided the opportunity to champion progressive values and support positive developments (albeit that expectations needed to be realistic around the extent to which LU, as a single institution, could influence change).
- ii) Several other UK HEIs were pursuing initiatives in KSA.
- iii) There had been extremely rapid progress towards gender equality in KSA in recent years, but much more limited evidence of progressive changes in relation to LGBT+ issues.
- iv) The next stage of the project would be for the PMB, through engagement with colleagues and potential working groups, to create a detailed educational offer and business case, to flesh out the University's response to the opportunity in practical terms. Discussions with internal stakeholders around the broader issues would continue, and consideration would also be given to consulting with external organisations concerned with human rights and EDI.
- v) LSU members suggested it would be helpful for the University to engage with students through small focus-group style discussions.
- vi) The option of delivering in-country teaching in some form of partnership with a well-established University in KSA would be explored.
- vii) Any agreement would contain detailed and clearly articulated exit mechanisms which would allow for a prompt withdrawal if necessary.

Members were encouraged to send any additional comments or feedback to any member of the Senior Leadership team, directly or via staff networks or unions.

\*2.4 Senate noted:

- i) Proposed amendments to the terms of reference of Council and joint Council-Senate Committees in line with the new University Strategy would be brought to the March 2024 meeting of Senate.
- ii) An Effectiveness Review of Council would be undertaken during 2024.

### **24/3 Appointment of Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

- 3.1 Senate considered a verbal update. A job description and recruitment pack had been created and a head-hunter appointed. An advertisement was due to be posted in the days following the meeting. It was anticipated that interviews would be held during April. Members were invited to feedback thoughts on potential internal and external candidates.
- 3.2 Senate noted the election of Jennifer Cooke as the elected member of Senate on the Appointment Committee.

### **24/4 Matters for Report by the Vice-Chancellor**

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following:

- i) Thanks were offered to all colleagues who had been involved in the December graduation ceremonies. Excellent feedback had been received.
- ii) Work was ongoing on the implementation of a change to the delegation of authority within Schools such that all academic staff would not be formally line-managed by the Dean. Individual School structures would remain a matter to be determined locally, informed by best-practice across all Schools. Formal proposals would be submitted to Senate and Council in March.

#### **24/5 Repeal of Regulation XXIV (Special Regulations for the Diploma in Economics)**

##### **SEN24-P3**

Senate approved the repeal of Regulation XXIV (Special Regulations for the Diploma in Economics).

#### **24/6 Validation of Higher Education Provision at Loughborough College**

##### **SEN24-P4**

On the recommendation of Learning and Teaching Committee, Senate approved the validation and revalidation of provision delivered by Loughborough College for a period of five years from the academic year 2024/25.

#### **24/7 Revisions to University Safeguarding Policy**

##### **SEN24-P5**

Senate approved revisions to the University Safeguarding Policy.

#### **24/8 Dates of Remaining Meetings in 2023-24**

Wednesday 13 March 2024, timings to be confirmed, *LU London*

Wednesday 12 June 2024, 10am

Author – Chris Dunbobbin

Date – January 2024

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