

Student Number Growth	
Meeting and date:	Union Assembly, 19 th June 2023
Purpose of paper:	To set the Union's position on Lancaster University's student number growth over the next three years
Intended outcome:	For approval
Paper submitted by:	India Ellis, SU President
Restricted business:	No
Key contact(s):	India Ellis i.ellis@lancaster.ac.uk
Persons/committees consulted to date including student engagement (where appropriate):	Full-Time Officer Team Union Assembly
EDI considerations	Students with disabilities or long-term health conditions are disproportionately affected by student number growth, due to stretched resource in support services, limited accessible bedrooms available, overcrowding in teaching, learning and study space. NHS services in the local area would be under even more pressure, meaning students might not be able to access the healthcare they need. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds would be affected by cheaper rental properties being in high demand, hardship funding being stretched thin and mental health support services being oversubscribed. Part-time jobs will also be in higher demand, making it more difficult to get another income stream to support their living costs. International students often rely on PBSA availability to make it easier to find somewhere to live in a new country. These rooms will be under higher demand, also will continue to increase in price to an unaffordable level. It would be incredibly difficult for international students to be displaced from their university city, due to cost pressures of commuting, the anxiety of navigating public transport in a new country, and finding somewhere to live in a new country. Students with dependents will be hugely affected as student family homes are limited and will be under higher demand. There will also be higher demand on hardship funding and on part-time jobs which they may need for extra income to support their dependents. Nursery places will be oversubscribed, meaning childcare could be a barrier to accessing education. Students in liberation groups might receive less support from their forums and their representative officers as forums will grow in size and resource will be under higher demand. Students belonging to faith and cultural groups may experience similar.
Date paper produced:	30 th May 2023

This Assembly notes;

1. That Lancaster University have aspirations to grow in size, both physically as a campus and in student numbers. As it stands, there are enough bedspaces in Lancaster for the students who live here, and the university have assured they are monitoring this alongside their student number growth projection.
2. Other UK universities such as Durham, Bristol, Manchester and Manchester Met saw the consequences of unsustainable student number growth at the start of this academic year, having to send their enrolled students to live in towns and cities that are an hour away on public transport.
3. Lancaster University's Counselling and Mental Health service is currently oversubscribed and so is the LUSU Advice service.
4. We are currently in a cost of living crisis which is disproportionately affecting students. Living costs are one of the main causes of stress and anxiety for our students at the moment, and in some cases are leading to poor educational performance, intercalations and drop-outs.

This Assembly believes;

1. That all students who apply for Lancaster University should be guaranteed a bed space in Lancaster for the duration of their degree, regardless of whether they choose to take it or not. The university should take responsibility over monitoring student number levels alongside bed spaces in Lancaster.
2. The university should increase resourcing in vital student services such as Counselling and Mental Health, Disability Services and LUSU Advice, in line with student number growth. Whilst these services continue to be oversubscribed, the university should slow down student number growth.
3. The university should ensure that the Students' Union is not left behind as they increase student numbers; they should recognise that a larger university requires a larger Students' Union to ensure the wider student experience does not suffer, from recreation to representation.
4. The university should continue their commitment to supporting students through the cost of living crisis, and should avoid any action which might make university unaffordable or inaccessible to students due to increased living costs, such as students being displaced from Lancaster.

This Assembly resolves;

1. That the Union will engage with the University during recruitment periods to review their projected growth alongside bed spaces and student service resourcing.

2. If the Union deems the projected growth to exceed reasonable levels due to a shortage of bed spaces or in student service resourcing, the Full-Time Officer team will campaign against the University's student number growth via appropriate ways and means of their choosing.
3. If the Union deems the projected growth to exceed their own resource and capabilities to an unsustainable level, the Full-Time Officer team will campaign for an increase to the Students' Union block grant to prevent negative impact to the wider student experience.