

# UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## COURT

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2011

The meeting was attended by 60 members and 37 apologies for absence were received.

### 10-11/9 **Membership**

The Chancellor welcomed the following new members who were attending their first meeting:

- Professor Nicola Spence (*CEO, Science City York*)
- Jessica Grant (*Director, Higher York*)

### 10-11/10 **Appointment of Pro-Chancellor**

The Court **approved** the recommendation from the Nominations Committee that Deian Tecwyn (*lay member of the Council; Deputy Treasurer*) be appointed as a Pro-Chancellor for three years from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2014, in succession to Dr Robert Brech.

### 10-11/11 **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

The Vice-Chancellor **reported** on developments in the higher education (HE) sector, drawing particular attention to the following:

- government cuts in teaching funding of 80% and raising of the tuition fee cap to £9k from 2012/ 13;
- requirement for approval by the Office for Fair Access (OEFA) of an access agreement if fees were set above £6k;
- government plans to open up HE to new providers;
- Treasury financial assumption of an average fee of £7.5k;
- parliamentary approval for an enabling Bill (December 2010) ahead of publication of a White Paper (expected in June 2011);
- submission of institutional access agreements to OFFA by 19 April 2011;
- relative merits of, and support for, fee waivers, bursaries and outreach work as different elements of access agreements;
- possible government measures, through the White Paper, to ensure that HE's contribution to deficit reduction delivered against the initial financial assumptions by the Treasury;
- the principles adopted by the University to inform the fee-setting process (decision to be made by University Council in June 2011);

- the University budget-setting process for 2011/ 12 and current expectations in respect of fee income and delivery of a surplus;
- completion of expenditure on Heslington East (Phase 2), development of Heslington West (e.g. library refurbishment), recruitment of high quality academic staff and investment in marketing resources in preparation for the new funding regime.

In response to questions from members of the Court, the following points were **noted**:

- a) As a political compromise arising from coalition, the government had not accepted the recommendation from the Independent Review into Higher Education Funding and Student Finance (the 'Brown Report'), which had proposed complete removal of the tuition fee cap as a means of creating a free market in higher education.
- b) The overseas student market remained strong and overall the University had experienced a 50% increase in student applications for 2011/ 12.
- c) A number of unintended consequences were likely to arise from changes to the funding regime and emerging differences between the devolved administrations of the UK (e.g. in terms of cross-border flows of students).
- d) The government had launched a major PR exercise to clarify the new fee and support arrangements to prospective students and their parents, and the University would support this through its school liaison and outreach work.
- e) The new fee regime would be in place across the sector from 2012/ 13, even though elements of the surrounding legal and strategic framework remained to be clarified and agreed by government. It was clear that deficit reduction had been the principal driver for the coalition government in its introduction of the new funding system.
- f) The University's performance in widening access was better than many comparators, which provided challenges and opportunities. Investment of additional fee income in this area of activity would be above the minimum level required by OFFA.

**10-11/12      Development of Sport at York**

The Court **received** a presentation from the Director of Commercial Services and the SU President on the development of sport at the University.

In response to specific queries it was **noted** that:

- the York Sports Village on Heslington East would be open by July 2012;
- in terms of inclusivity, 50% of the student population participated in sporting activity;
- sports clubs played an outreach role with the local community (e.g. through provision of coaching).

**10-11/13      York Festival of Ideas**

The Court **received** a presentation from the Director of External Relations on the inaugural York Festival of Ideas to be held 16 June – 10 July 2011 (<http://yorkfestivalofideas.com/>).

**10-11/14      Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 9 December 2011.