

# Council

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 26 May 2022 at 0930-1330hrs in the School of Management Building, Church Lane, CL/A/023X**

## Meeting Attendance

Members present:	Denise Jagger, Chair and Pro-Chancellor Professor Dame Vicki Bruce Philip Carpenter, Pro-Chancellor Andy Durrant Jonny Exon Lindsey Fussell Professor Kieran Gibson Professor Charlie Jeffery, Vice-Chancellor & President Professor John Loughhead Professor Nicky Milner Dr Philip Rycroft Professor Lesley Stewart Professor Saul Tendler, Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost Chris Thompson, Pro-Chancellor, Treasurer & Senior Independent Lay Member Professor Kiran Trehan David Watson Patrick O'Donnell, YUSU President
In attendance:	Dr Adam Dawkins, Secretary to Council Pierrick Roger, YUSU President Elect
Apologies:	Professor Simon Best, Viviane Yuxin Cao, Judith McNicol, Amanda Nevill

## Section 1: Standing Items

### Apologies, Welcomes and Valedictions (Oral Report)

- 21-22/087 The Chair **reported** that:
- she wished to send Council's best wishes to two independent Council members who had sent their apologies for this meeting, both linked to family bereavements;
  - this would be Patrick O'Donnell's final meeting as a Council member as his second term of office as YUSU President came to end in early July 2022. Patrick was thanked for his significant contribution to the work of Council and as his major contribution as YUSU President for 2020-21 and 2021-22, and wished him the best of luck for his future career;
  - Pierrick Roger was welcomed to the Council meeting to observe as YUSU President Elect for 2022-23;
  - Viviane Yuxin Cao had re-stood as a candidate for GSA President for 2022-23. The election outcomes would be released on 27 May 2022, at which point we would know if Viviane would continue as a Council member for a second one-year term.

### **Declaration of Interests in Items on the Agenda (Oral Report)**

- 21-22/088 Council **noted** several members' interests as participants in the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). The scheme was referred to in the Vice-Chancellor and President's Report and financial update items on the agenda for this meeting.

### **Council Minutes: 2 March 2022(C.21-22/47), Summary Action Tracking and Matters Arising (C.21-22/48)**

- 21-22/089 Council **confirmed** the Minutes of the meeting on 02 March 2022 as an accurate record, and noted the Summary Action Tracking grid. There were no Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

### **Constitution and Nominations Committee Matters**

#### **New Independent Council Member and Chancellor Appointment (Oral Report) - Confidential**

- 21-22/090 The Chair **reported** that:
- a. as Council members would be aware, by written resolution it had recently approved the appointment of Abisola Barber as an independent Council member. The University Secretary would confirm a three-year term for Abisola, with effect from 01 June 2022. Abisola would join Council at its July 2022 meeting;  
**Action: AD**
  - b. she had chaired several recent meetings of the Chancellor Search Committee (CSC), convened under the auspices of Constitution and Nominations Committee (CNC), to oversee longlisting to shortlisting for the successor Chancellor to Professor Sir Malcolm Grant CBE FAcSS;
  - c. just over 30 nominations had been put forward for consideration since the December 2021 nominations launch, and enhanced due diligence had been undertaken on those shortlisted. Approaches had been made to candidates, or via known connections or third-party representative, in order of preference. It was anticipated that a final candidate would be confirmed in the near future, to make a recommendation to Council and for Court approval by the end of July 2022, which coincides with the end of the current Chancellor's term of office.

#### **Action: AD**

## **Section 2: Strategic Development, Planning, Performance Monitoring and Resourcing items for consideration and/or decision**

### **Vice-Chancellor and President's Report (C.21-22/49)**

- 21-22/091 Council **considered** the Vice-Chancellor and President's Report.
- 21-22/092 The Vice-Chancellor and President **reported** on:
- a. the University's outstanding performance in REF 2021 would be discussed later on the agenda for this meeting;
  - b. the 'catch up' May 2022 graduations involved over 6000 graduands;
  - c. the University's developing partnership with Kharkiv National University;
  - d. the removal of Covid-19 restrictions;
  - e. the reopening of York Guildhall as the base for the University's business development activities at the interface of digital technologies and creative arts, York Accelerator and Enterprise Works
  - f. the absence of a mandate at York from the recent ballot for further UCU industrial action;
  - g. student funding issues, including a two-year freeze of tuition fees at £9520 and changes to repayment periods and thresholds for student loans;
  - h. the Feminism and Free Speech event held on campus on 04 May 2022, and

- i. the Staff Survey and work to be progressed by UEB and locally to respond to concerns arising from the feedback.

21-22/093 Council **observed** that:

- a. the University and the Kharkiv National University partnership was commendable, and range of activities were underway, sensitive and responsive to the needs of Kharkiv and what their colleagues were able to accommodate, given the military assault on the city and country. Targeted and gradual support included academic summer schools hosted by City College Thessaloniki (CCT); and extremely productive close links between the YUSU and Kharkiv Student Council President, with the latter role-holder joining an event for York Festival of Ideas. The YUSU President Elect reflected on whether the University's investment principles and portfolio was compatible with supporting a country subject to military assault, where it had not explicitly divested from indirect or direct or investment in arms;
- b. for REF 2021, 4 departments were ranked in the top 5, with a further 11 (rather than 8) ranked in the top 10, with the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD), Centre for Health Economics (CHE) and HYMS were part of the UoA2: Public Health Services and Primary Care;
- c. whilst the UK government had extended its Horizon Europe guarantee for current applications and it wished to remain linked to the scheme, Northern Ireland's recently announced strategy to remain in the scheme made this less likely, and a greater possibility of the government introducing replacement national funding schemes. The erosion of connectivity with European research partners represented a real risk, as well as accelerating the need for non-European partnership growth, such as productive conversations underway, including with the universities of Pretoria, Alberta and Rochester (which was interested in STEM-oriented Archaeology, which aligns to one of the many strengths of York's Department) at the recent World Universities Network (WUN) attended by the Vice-Chancellor and President and Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research;
- d. the risks around students travelling to and from China in 2022/23 was a key consideration, with the University developing plans for dual delivery, whilst recognising workload complexity and intensity for academic staff;
- e. it gave the Vice-Chancellor and President license to continue creative and constructive discussions both with the Russell Group where the chance of consensus was more likely, and the various sector interest groups ahead of the 2023 USS valuation, based on three strands he had previously posited as a basis for seeking solutions: (1) USS governance, (2) alternative designs and (3) lower cost entry options to reduce employee opt-outs. It was felt that the benefits of employer dialogue directly with the USS Trustee might on occasions be more effective than the employer representative model. It was important to continue work undertaken to ensure UoYPPF benefits structures aligned as much as possible with USS.

#### **Professional Services Delivery (PSD) Review and Modularisation and Semesterisation (Presentation)**

21-22/094 Council **noted** an update on the PSD Review and Modularisation and Semesterisation 'Teaching Organisation' project.

21-22/095 The Chief Operating Officer **reported** that:

- a. PSD was a culture change project as well as an organisational restructuring initiative, focussing on five key projects: (1) Departmental Managers (DMs) to Deputy Heads of Faculty Operations (DHFOs); (2) Shared administrative services; (3) Marketing/Recruitment hub and spoke models; (4) End-to-end research hub and spoke and (5) Flexible roles and progression;
- b. an initial approach of cost savings of ██████████ by the PSD Review through reducing PS staff budgets had been replaced by an efficiency model based on proportionally reducing future growth of PS resource through more efficient ways of working. However, savings of



- c. the University may receive a major credit write-back due to the material deficit reduction arising from the USS 2020 valuation measures. However, the University's pension provision would need to be increased to [REDACTED];
- d. the FYF process was operating to plan for Council approval at its July 2022 meeting.

21-22/100 Council **observed** that:

- a. the relationship between, and clarifying of forecast expenditure for, a range of capital and digital projects, would be brought together in the Integrated Infrastructure Plan (IIP), the headlines of which would be reported to Council at its July 2022 meeting;
- b. measures were in place to shield the University from the impact of inflation and its associated impact on staff expenditure. [REDACTED]

#### **Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021-Outcome (C.21-22/51)**

21-22/101 Council **considered** a presentation on the REF 2021 Outcome for the University.

21-22/102 The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Director of Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange and the Head of Policy, Integrity and Performance **reported** that:

- a. the outstanding REF 2021 result, placing the University in the top 10 for research quality based on Grade Point Average (GPA) as the focus of the Times Higher Education rankings, as well as major advances on the research impact and environment measures, with 17/24 units having 100% 3\* and 4\* research impact;
- b. the result was a testament to the entire University community creating a positive and inclusive research environment, including a pivotal role played by technicians. How this sense of community and commitment can be further exploited to deliver a future research strategy would be key;
- c. communication of the University's success, tailored to a wider community of stakeholders, including the public, funders and policy-makers would be a key objective, following further analysis of the results and what they were indicating.

21-22/103 Council **observed** that:

- a. its congratulations should be extended to all colleagues entered into and/or supporting the REF 2021, confirming York's position as one of the country's premier research-intensive universities;
- b. Professor Dame Vicki Bruce had been a member of the Stern Review into the REF (2016) and received positive reflection that the Review's intention had been realised at York, with REF2021 being a different submission climate from REF2014, where colleagues could work more constructively together through the removal of gaming submissions through selectivity tactics. What REF2021 had demonstrated was the widespread nature of research excellence at York;
- c. it anticipated that further analysis of the research performance of UoAs including York departments which had been ranked amongst the very highest in REF2021 but which had been regarded as less successful in their performance on other measures, including student numbers and satisfaction;
- d. the next stages of research strategy and preparing for the next exercise, would be underway, and the Emerging Talent transformational initiative would be instrumental in developing the next pipeline of diverse research staff.

**BioYorkshire (Presentation)**

- 21-22/104 Council **noted** a presentation on the BioYorkshire programme in which the University is a lead partner.
- 21-22/105 The Director of BioYorkshire (Professor Ian Graham FRS) **reported** that:
- a. the creation of a world-leading bioeconomy cluster was the objective of the programme working with a range of partners, including FERA and Askham Bryan College, and a network of public and private supporters;
  - b. [REDACTED]

- 21-22/106 [REDACTED]

**Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions/Recruitment and Student Accommodation Update (C.21-22/52)**

- 21-22/107 Council **noted** the student recruitment update report.
- 21-22/108 The Director of Planning and Risk and Director of Marketing, Recruitment, Admissions and Outreach (MRAO) **reported** that:
- a. [REDACTED]
- 21-22/109 Council **observed** that:
- a. the outgoing YUSU President commended the work undertaken to help address student accommodation supply issues, including the UniPol report in conjunction with York St John University;
  - b. it supported a flexible strategy to calibrate overall quality and volume targets [REDACTED]. The demographic uplift would also likely improve the University's positioning in terms of quality of entrants which would positively impact league tables in relation to entry tariff as captured for UGH students;

- c. [REDACTED]

### **Corporate Risk Management and Register Update (C.21-22/53)**

- 21-22/110 Council **considered** the Corporate Risk Management and Register on the **endorsement** of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC).
- 21-22/111 The Director of Planning and Risk **reported** that a more sensitive approach to the assessment of progress against each Corporate Risk had been introduced through the Treat, Tolerate, Transfer and Terminate designation, which Risk Owners, Risk Review Group, UEB and ARC had found useful.
- 21-22/112 Council **observed** that:
- the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee endorsed the progress made in categorisation of the status of risk, and basis for scoring including the gaps between 'actual' and 'target' risks, which meant that Committee members could add greater value by seeking assurance on a clearer footing;
  - 'risk appetite' and the means by which it was assessed and set by Council, and on what basis, remained unclear;  
**Action: RD**
  - the capacity for the required capital and revenue expenditure to realise the University's ambitions remained a risk to manage;
  - the identification of gaps in risk relative to the HE sector was useful, but cross-referencing of risks across different sectors was also important, noting both PwC and KPMG provided cross-sectoral common risk themes such as cybersecurity threats, and this informed risk management.
- 21-22/113 **Resolved:**  
**To approve the Corporate Corporate Risk Register as an adequate reflection of the University's risk environment, noting that further changes would be recommended as part of ongoing risk reflection.**

## **Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters**

### **Health and Safety Annual Report 2021 KPIs (C.21-22/54)**

- 21-22/114 Council **considered** the Annual Health and Safety Report 2021.
- 21-22/115 The Interim Director of Health and Safety **reported** that:
- in her short time in post, there were many positive achievements in relation to the H&S performance at the University, particularly as focussed on University-level and local responses to Covid-19 and the appointment of a Lead Auditor to manage an institutional health and safety audit programme. The Faculty of Sciences was an area where further support, advice and training was required and a framework was being developed for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH);
  - some recent developments to improve health and safety internal controls included a new training package for Departmental Safety Advisors, as well as training for UEB and Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) completed for 95% of University buildings. In governance terms the migration of Health, Safety and Welfare Committee from Council to UEB would strengthen oversight, and Audit and Risk Committee seeking assurance on health and safety controls, including through consideration of this Report provided strengthened governance;

- c. one of her areas of focus to embed effective health and safety was on culture change and listening to colleagues about what their health and safety challenges were, rather than a compliance approach which did not foster local engagement and ownership.

21-22/116 Council **observed** that:

- a. [REDACTED]
- c. the accident reporting system (SOLAR) provided real-time data and it was assuring to hear that data were unduly high and low and that there was high awareness;
- d. the deep dive into health and safety risk had been undertaken but had flagged further follow-up work.

21-22/117 **Resolved:**

**To approve the Annual Health and Safety Report 2021.**

**Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2021 (C.21-22/55)**

21-22/118 Council **considered** the Gender and Ethnicity Pay gap report for 2021, which was published in March 2022.

21-22/119 Council **observed** that:

- a. if casual workers were excluded the University's mean pay gap is 17.0% and the median is 11.1% which represents a modest decrease on 2020. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) was committed to a gap being eliminated which required an institutional commitment;
- b. related developments which should reduce the gender pay gap going forward included an increase in the number of women in both the upper middle quartile of our salary structure and in Professorial Band 1, and the talent pipeline this created, and the University's accreditation as a Living Wage employer;
- c. the inclusion of ethnicity prior to the requirement to produce such a report was positive, and helped focus attention as part of the wider commitment to becoming an anti-racist University;
- d. it would be useful to identify what the impact of specific interventions would be to both the gender and ethnicity pay gaps on an annual basis.

#### **Charter, Statutes and Ordinances Review Update**

21-22/120 Council **considered** an update on the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances Review Project.

21-22/121 The University Secretary **reported** that the proposed amendments to the Charter and Statutes as approved at March 2022 Council were submitted to the Privy Council Office on 16 March 2022, and initial feedback was awaited, following which a final version would be presented to Council for formal, final approval ahead of a request that they are passed as at a future Privy Council meeting. This would determine the date for the new Charter and Statutes to be in force, as well as the Ordinances.

**Action: AD**

#### **Section 4: Sub-committee Summaries and Meeting-related information**

21-22/122 Council **noted** the executive summaries of key activities from:

- a. YUSU and GSA (C.21-22/56/56i);
- b. Senate: 10 May 2022 (C.21-22/57);
- c. Remuneration Committee: 11 May 2022 (C.21-22/58);
- d. Audit and Risk Committee: 12 May 2022 (C.21-22/59);



e. Constitution and Nominations Committee: 28 April 2022 (C.21-22/60).

**Constitution and Nominations Committee - 24 May 2022 (C.21-22/61)**

21-22/123 **Resolved:**

**To approve on the recommendation of Constitutions and Nominations Committee, honorary degrees of the University for:**

- a. **Professor Sir Malcolm Grant (outgoing University Chancellor)**
- b. **Dr Hugh Rayment Pickard and Dr Rachel Carr (co-founders of the charity *IntoUniversity*)**
- c. **Mr Julian Richer (entrepreneur/philanthropist/writer)**

**Council Schedule of Business 2021/22 (C.21-22/62)**

21-22/124 Council **noted** its schedule of business for the remainder of the 2021/22 academic year.

### **Section 5: Any Other Business**

21-22/125 *At 1315 hrs the Chair of Council will hold an informal session with the lay Council members until 1330hrs.*

**Dr Adam Dawkins  
Secretary to Council  
June 2022**