

# UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## COURT

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2018

The meeting was attended by 54 members and 45 apologies for absence were received.

### 17-18/7 York Festival of Ideas 2018

The Court **received** a presentation from Joan Concannon (Director of External Relations) on the programme for the annual York Festival of Ideas (5-17 June 2018, <http://yorkfestivalofideas.com/2018/>).

The Director thanked Court members who had sponsored or otherwise contributed to the organisation of specific events.

### 17-18/8 Report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor

The Court **received** an update on general developments from Professor Saul Tendler (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), with particular reference to the following:

- the current political and regulatory climate for higher education;
- the role of the new Office for Students (OfS);
- development of the campus masterplan;
- current major research projects;
- developments in teaching (including submission to the Teaching Excellence Framework);
- financial investment in strategic projects, appointment of research leaders and international initiatives.

During discussion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's report, the following points were **noted**:

- (a) One of the successful bids to the University's Strategic Investment Fund had been in the area of enhanced marketing to support academic departments in their student recruitment activities, in accordance with the Fund's aim of promoting income-generating initiatives that would become financially self-supporting.
- (b) Some concern had been expressed in the sector about the potential risks associated with the government's decision to separate oversight of teaching and research into two different new agencies, the Office for Students (OfS) and United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI). It was noted that UKRI brought together the seven former Research Councils into a unified body to direct funding and increase cross-disciplinary research. The importance of maintaining strong links between the core functions of teaching and research was acknowledged and would be actively pursued by the University and the wider sector.

- (c) In response to a query on the University's current league table position, it was noted that such matters were monitored by the University Executive Board in the context of the frequently changing metrics and methodologies employed by the various different league table compilers (e.g. *The Guardian* university guide did not include assessment of research). It was noted that in some areas shifts in the metrics were an inevitable consequence of expansion in student numbers.
- (d) With roughly 17,000 students and turnover of £350m (£60m+ in research income), the University had achieved a more stable and sustainable financial profile. The current challenge was ensuring adequate resources to support the University's teaching and research aspirations while also funding the redevelopment of Campus West. It was noted that enhancing the campus and associated infrastructure remained central to delivering high quality teaching, research and student experience.
- (e) As a people-based organisation it was generally agreed that identification and recruitment of top quality academics from around the world was central to sustaining and enhancing the intellectual life and reputation of the University.
- (f) The current status of the USS pension dispute, which had led to industrial action by UCU members during the Spring Term, was that agreement had been reached by both sides to establish a Joint Expert Panel (JEP) to consider the methodology and assumptions used in the valuation of the scheme. The JEP was currently in the process of being established and it was hoped that its work and engagement with the Trustee and the Pensions Regulator would result in a solution acceptable to all parties.

**17-18/9 Presentations**

The Court **received** the following presentations:

- Professor Judith Buchanan (Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities) on collaborations regarding the works of Shakespeare, with particular reference to *Shakespeare's Rose Theatre* (Europe's first 'pop up' Shakespearean theatre that would be located in York 25 June – 2 September 2018);
- Professor Martin Smith (Head of the Department of Politics) on influencing policing policy through co-production of mental health research;
- Mary Haworth (Director of the Office of Philanthropic Partnerships and Alumni) and Alex Urquhart (SU President) on the development of a student-based philanthropic culture.

**17-18/10 Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 23 November 2018.