

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

COURT

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2014

The meeting was attended by 73 members and 32 apologies for absence were received. [*Note: as the Chancellor was unavailable, the meeting was chaired by Sir Christopher O'Donnell, Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor.*]

13-14/9 **Report from the Vice-Chancellor**

The Court **received** a verbal update on general developments from the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor, Professor Koen Lamberts, with particular reference to the following:

- understanding the profile, ethos and character of the University;
- factors contributing to the University's success over its fifty-year history, with particular emphasis on quality and excellence;
- recent major developments in the funding and focus of higher education, and the specific implications for York;
- proactive response to the challenging external environment through development of a new University strategy;
- consultation on the draft strategy to clarify a blueprint for future development, with identification of key objectives and a clear timeline for approval and then implementation.

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

- (a) In terms of improving organisational effectiveness, work was ongoing to delineate those areas where diversity of practice across departments was desirable and those where a higher degree of more directive centralisation was appropriate. Resolution of such issues was linked to efficiency in resource allocation.
- (b) The University's wide portfolio of academic disciplines was a major asset in developing inter-disciplinary responses to key research themes and working collaboratively with external partners.
- (c) As regards the balance of growth against consolidation, it was noted that the University's main income source to support its ambitions (eg in respect of estates renewal) was student fees, which in turn had implications for planned student numbers. Likewise in the research area, funding awards from research councils were increasingly concentrated in the larger centres as identified by analysis of capability and capacity, and

this too had important implications for the future of the institution. In all of this, the rate and locus of growth would arise in a 'bottom up' manner from the plans developed by individual academic departments, with a strong focus on ensuring that the key institutional characteristic of excellence was sustained.

13-14/10 Research Presentations

The Court **received** presentations from Dr Stephen Smith (Royal Academy of Engineering Enterprise Fellow, Department of Electronics) and Professor Jenny Southgate (Director of the Jack Birch Unit of Molecular Carcinogenesis, Department of Biology) on their applied research in the health area (with particular reference to Parkinson's disease and bladder cancer).

13-14/11 The York Channel

The Court **received** a presentation from Matt Freckelton (Executive Director, The York Channel) and Carole Dove (Commercial Manager, Department of Theatre, Film and Television) on the launch of a new local television channel that would begin broadcasting in York from April 2015.

13-14/12 Festival of Ideas 2014

The Court **received** a presentation from Joan Concannon (Director of External Relations) on the programme for the Festival of Ideas to be held in York in June 2014 (<http://yorkfestivalofideas.com/2014/>)

13-14/13 History of Heslington Hall

The Court **received** a presentation from Chris Webb (Keeper of the Archives, Borthwick Institute), Hugo Laffey (student volunteer) and Martha Cattell (student volunteer) on a project to research the history of Heslington Hall.

13-14/14 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 28 November 2014.

NOTE: After the formal meeting, the following events were held:

- viewing of exhibition panels and works of art relating to the history of Heslington Hall project (M13-14/13 above refers);
- award of Morrell Fellowships to University benefactors, Tom Swan and John Murrell.