UNIVERSITY OF YORK

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2017

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor D Smith
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students), Professor J Robinson
Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students), Professor T Lightfoot
Director of Information, Mrs H Fraser-Krauss
Dean (Social Sciences), Professor S Bell
Dean (Sciences), Professor B Fulton
Acting Dean (Arts & Humanities), Professor J Buchanan

Mr S Alzahrani (GSA student rep) Professor J McDermid
Dr R Aitken Professor N Mackay
Professor E Annandale Professor K Mumford
Professor K Atkin Professor M Nazarov
Ms M Beach (SU President) Dr F Polack
Professor L Black Dr G Richardson
Professor Y Birks Professor J Schofield
Professor D Brown Professor M Smith
Dr E Brown Professor L Stewart
Professor I D’Amico Mr C Stickels (student rep)
Ms C Duncan Professor Q Summerfield
Dr D Efird Professor J Swaffield
Professor N Ellison Dr B Szcepek Reed
Mr B Fitzpatrick Professor J Timmis
Professor I Graham Professor A Thomas
Professor M Goddard Professor S Thompson
Dr J Hardman Dr R Vann
Professor A Higson Professor S Velani
Professor M Hodson Mr G Wall
Dr G Hurst Dr R Waites
Dr R Ibrahim (GSA President) Professor M White
Dr O Lisagor Mr M Worrall (student rep)
In attendance: Acting University Secretary, Ms H Brian
University Governance Officer, Dr P Evans
Dean of Graduate Research School, Professor T Stoneham
SU Academic Officer, Ms T Laycock
Finance Director, Mr J Lindley
Acting HR Director, Mrs P Tunbridge (for M16-17/38)
Director of Global Engagement, Mrs H Layton (for M16-17/39)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor D Attwell, Dr K Attwood, Professor D Bruce, Mrs K Dodd, Professor A Field, Professor M Freeman, Professor U Macleod, Dr S O'Keefe and Ms B Wright (student rep).

16-17/33 Membership

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the newly elected student faculty representatives. Senate also noted that Hannah Brian (Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Officer) was currently Acting University Secretary until the next Registrar & Secretary (Jo Horsburgh, currently Strategy Director, University of Warwick) took up her post on 12 June 2017.

16-17/34 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2017 were approved, subject to confirmation from the Chair of the Special Cases Committee that the comment in its annual report regarding aggressive communications directed at staff handling appeals (replicated in M16-17/24) be struck out, as requested by the President of the GSA.

16-17/35 Online Learning

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

16-17/36 Statement by the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor reported the following matters, noting that henceforth his report would be provided in hardcopy for circulation with other agenda papers, as recommended by the Senate Effectiveness Review Group (M16-17/37 below refers).

- Following a period of intense political negotiations ahead of the election period, the Higher Education and Research Act had passed into law, with the following key features:
  - The new regulator, the Office for Students (OfS), would assume statutory responsibility for quality and standards, including awarding university title and degree-awarding powers to new sector entrants.
• The OfS would be tasked with arranging a detailed independent review of the new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in 2019 which would be reported to parliament.
• Tuition fees would be subject to inflationary increases until 2020, after which the cap was expected to be varied in accordance with Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) outcomes (subject to the aforementioned review in 2019).
• The OfS would appoint an independent body to implement its statutory duties in respect of quality and standards.
• The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) would be incorporated in the OfS, with the former requiring universities to publish information on their admission practices to ensure fairness.
• The OfS would monitor the financial sustainability and efficiency of institutions.
• Higher annual fees could now be charged for programmes taught over a shorter time period (“accelerated degrees”).
• UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) would act as the umbrella body, with a single accounting officer, for the seven research councils, Innovate UK and the research functions previously undertaken by HEFCE. Research England would be a new body responsible for quality-related (QR) research funding.

➢ UUK and the Russell Group (RG) were lobbying intensively ahead of the forthcoming general election (8 June 2017). UUK had identified the following priorities for the next government:

• securing an effective post-Brexit settlement for universities;
• supporting universities as anchors for growth in local economies;
• matching competitor countries’ funding for science, research and innovation;
• supporting world-leading teaching and the student experience;
• an effective immigration system (following the current government’s refusal to remove international students from their immigration targets).

➢ As a result of the election, TEF outcomes would now be published on 14 June 2017.

➢ In the context of Brexit, the University would join the European Universities Association in order to maintain and develop links with European institutions.

➢ UEB had approved new campus signage, to be completed during Autumn Term 2017. The new signage would be based on zoning and flexible enough to respond to further development of the Campus Masterplan.
Following UEB approval of the University’s agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and a meeting with its Director (Les Ebdon), it was clear that the University would be required to sponsor an under-performing school in order to improve its attainment.

UEB was currently considering the medium-term budget ahead of its submission to the Finance & Policy Committee and University Council. The Vice-Chancellor thanked all academic and support departments for their positive engagement with the annual financial planning round under the new resource allocation model.

The newly appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships (Professor Jon Timmis, currently Head of Department of Electronic Engineering) would take up the post on 1 August 2017.

Senate congratulated the Vice-Chancellor on his appointment as Deputy Chair of the RG, noting that this was likely to involve increased interaction with government on behalf of English higher education (as the new incoming RG Chair was the head of a Scottish institution).

During discussion of the new OFFA requirement for school sponsorship, the Vice-Chancellor reported that the OFFA Director had suggested the University could propose an alternative to school sponsorship, but only on condition that it was able to provide solid evidence that such a proposal would be as effective as sponsorship, and this did not seem achievable in the current timeframe. Options for sponsorship were therefore being explored that would not detrimentally affect the local educational landscape. As the sponsorship arrangement would bring additional costs for the University, OFFA had also confirmed that other widening access resources might need to be diverted to this priority. In response to comments that various academic departments were already engaged in different ways with local schools, it was agreed that this should feed into the research work being led by a working group under the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS) to consider possible sponsorship arrangements. Other inputs to this process would come from synergies with educational charities (e.g. the Sutton Trust), other universities and local providers of secondary education, including independent schools that were subject to similar sponsorship requirements under charity law.

16-17/37 Senate Effectiveness Review

Further to M16-17/18 (Senate Effectiveness Review), Senate considered the final report of the review group (S.16-17/26).

Presenting the report as Chair of the group, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor reminded Senate that the review arose from the University Council’s effectiveness review in 2016 and sought to enhance Senate’s contribution to University-level academic governance.

Senate: 9 May 2017
The different sections of the report were separately considered as follows:

(a) Terms of Reference: Senate approved the recommendations regarding the redrafted Statute 12 (The Senate) and its Statement of Primary Responsibilities [R1 and R2].

(b) Constituency: Senate approved the recommendations regarding the electoral process for its elected members [R3 and R4], subject to ensuring that three of the elected members remained ART staff on fixed-term contracts. It was agreed that eligible staff could vote for candidates across the three faculties. Senate also approved the recommendation that its ex officio constituency be expanded to include the Director of the International Pathway College [R13].

(c) Sub-committees: Senate approved the organogram setting out its current subcommittee structure and a recommendation regarding the provision of ‘bespoke’ papers that acknowledged Senate’s top-level governance role [R5 and R6]. It was however acknowledged that papers drafted for other groups (e.g. UEB) might usefully form the basis for some items of business or be appended to updates: the intention was simply to avoid a string of separate papers and associated minutes by providing clear and succinct reports for Senate.

(d) Breadth of oversight: To enhance Senate’s role in providing assurance on academic quality and standards to the governing body (for onwards submission to HEFCE/OfS as required under new regulatory arrangements), it approved the recommendations in respect of the annual executive report to Council from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS) [R7 and R8]. Although there were no such formal assurance requirements in the research area, Senate decided that it should also receive the annual executive report to Council from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research.

(e) Agenda/papers: Senate approved the recommendations in respect of the Vice-Chancellor’s routine report, provision of minutes from the previous meeting and clearer identification of papers exempt from release under FOIA [R9-11]. It noted that the Vice-Chancellor would continue to report verbally on any matters for which formal written reporting might be inappropriate.

(f) Conduct of meetings: Senate approved the recommendation regarding an earlier start-time (2.15pm) for its meetings [R12], to be implemented from the next meeting if possible.

(g) Reporting relationship with Council: Senate noted that this matter had been considered in detail in the context of the new operating model for quality assessment (HEFCE 2016/03), which had also been partly addressed in Council’s own recent effectiveness review. The matter was also covered by the recommendations in respect of reporting by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS) referenced above.

Senate: 9 May 2017
Following discussion of the report, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor thanked the members of the review group for their input and the University Governance Officer for supporting the group.

16-17/38 Academic Promotions Review

Senate considered a report from the Academic Promotions Review Group established by UEB (S.16-17/27).

Presenting the report as Chair of the group, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor invited Senate members to comment on its various sections, as follows:

(a) **Two year rule:** Senate approved the recommendations regarding retention of the current two-year rule before unsuccessful candidates could re-apply [R1-3], noting that the Academic Promotions Committee (APC) would define the criteria by which a waiver to this rule might be granted.

(b) **Handling of promotion to grades 7/8 at faculty level:** Senate approved the recommendations regarding continuation of University-level consideration of grade 7/8 promotion applications [R4-7], noting that this was deemed the most effective means to ensure parity across faculties and departments, while also retaining the input from Faculty Advisory Panels. Although it was acknowledged that this might put some pressure on Heads of Department to direct colleagues towards the retention route to promotion in some cases, it was agreed that the current process for retention cases functioned effectively within a 2-3-week turnaround time.

In response to the suggestion that the University might run more than one application cycle per annum, it was generally agreed that this would be inappropriate in the context of the other demands of the academic year and might also increase the risk of a less rigorous process.

(c) **Assessment of promotion applications to Professor:** In response to the recommendation that only staff of professorial grade serve on the APC [R8], the following points were noted in discussion:

- It was suggested that it was good practice to involve staff on lower grades and that non-professorial colleagues had provided valuable and objective input in this area. The recommendation also had implications for the composition of related groups (e.g. Faculty Advisory Groups) and for decision-making in the area of teaching/scholarship.
- One proposed solution might be to split the APC into two separate groups for consideration of different grades in order to acknowledge that, while the input from non-professorial colleagues was valued, there were cases when greater experience and seniority were required.
• A query was raised as to whether there was any evidence for the current process being sufficiently defective to warrant the recommendation in question.
• The importance of input from all members of the APC was strongly emphasised (via correspondence if necessary) in order to reach the correct view on each application, regardless of faculty.
• It was noted that data on the equality characteristics of successful promotion applications by gender, ethnicity etc was routinely collected and published at the end of each cycle.
• Questions were raised about ensuring diversity of membership of the APC (not always easy to guarantee if elected by Senate) and the Faculty Advisory Groups, and whether there should be a requirement for all members to attend unconscious bias training. It was suggested that this might be approached by HR in the same manner as the establishment of recruitment panels.

Following the above discussion, Senate decided to ask the review group to consider this recommendation further in the light of the comments made.

(d) Titles: In considering this series of related recommendations [R9-14], including replacement of the titles Lecturer and Senior Lecturer with Assistant Professor and Associate Professor and discontinuation of the Reader title, the following points were noted in discussion:

• UEB had suggested that only full Professors could use the professorial title without qualification.
• The recommendations were intended to dispel confusion internationally as regards UK academic nomenclature, which might in turn enhance international recruitment.
• Even within the UK there were considerable differences between the pre- and post-92 sectors as regards the definition of Senior Lecturer.
• Direct comparisons with the US were problematic as there was no system of tenure under UK employment law.
• A number of RG universities had moved to the new nomenclature, most notably the London School of Economics.
• Lecturer/Senior Lecturer titles could not be applied to research-only staff.
• Cessation of the Reader title might suggest to those colleagues that their role and position was anomalous.
• The recommendation that the titles Research Fellow and Senior Research Fellow be likewise replaced by Assistant Professor and Associate Professor was intended to ensure parity of esteem for staff on such contracts. It was however acknowledged that the existing titles were held by a wide range of individuals in some departments, including those who were externally funded, and that there might also be a negative impact on the next REF submission.
The potential impact, both positive and negative, on student recruitment (especially overseas PGR candidates) might need to be considered.

The proposal in respect of the uniquely British grade of Reader \([R11]\) arose from a number of factors, including difficulty in precisely defining the role, its use as a ‘consolation prize’ for unsuccessful professorial applicants and close alignment to the SL pay grade (only two additional increment points higher). It was also noted that some roles were still advertised at Reader grade and that it might benefit academic recruitment to move, as other institutions had done, from a four- to a three-tier system.

It was suggested that a compromise solution might be possible that retained some features of the unique UK system while also signalling its equivalence to internationally recognised academic nomenclature.

Following the above discussion, Senate decided that the review group should undertake a wider consultation with the academic community and also provide evidence of other practices in the RG.

(e) Processes for urgent retention cases: Senate approved the recommendations regarding the process for urgent retention cases \([R15-16]\).

(f) Support/administration of academic promotions: Senate approved the recommendations regarding automation of promotions administration and its transfer from the Registrar and Secretary’s Office to Human Resources \([R17-18]\).

(g) Routine pay reviews for professorial staff/increment levels for senior staff: Senate approved the recommendations that these matters be further considered by the Remuneration Sub-Group \([R19-20]\).

(h) Criteria for academic citizenship: Senate approved the recommendation that the APC review the transparency of the criteria for academic citizenship \([R21]\).

Following the above discussion, and in response to a comment on the time taken to report outcomes from the current process, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor observed that it was a complex process involving collation of many international references and input from faculties. It was however expected that greater automation would help to streamline current processes.

16-17/39 International Strategy

Senate considered a draft of the new International Strategy \((S.16-17/28)\).

Attending the meeting to present the strategy, the Director of Global Engagement (Hilary Layton) drew Senate’s attention to the following features:

- modelled on the structure of the University Strategy;
- three-year timespan to 2020;
• complex and changeable geo-political landscape (e.g. uncertainty around future access to the European Research Area);
• positive achievements to date in respect of inter-disciplinary research, focus on the Global South and international opportunities for students;
• further discussions to be held with departments in respect of the implementation plan.

Senate noted the following points in discussion:

(a) The University’s portfolio of international opportunities for students included both work and study options. There was however a general misconception that study abroad was expensive, when in fact it was usually cost neutral.

(b) Although the strategy included a clear commitment to align support services to the post-recruitment needs of international staff and students, it was suggested this might be more strongly emphasised. As regards feedback from students in this area, it was noted that the results from the International Student Barometer survey would be useful.

(c) It was suggested that some of the elements of the strategy which emphasised the nature of the University as place of cultural diversity that was welcoming to international staff and students (e.g. B3.1) might be more prominently featured in the opening ‘Vision’ statement.

(d) In response to the suggestion that several of the top-level priorities seemed to relate primarily to research funding and fee income, it was agreed that this was a drafting point that could be addressed by re-ordering of certain individual points.

(e) In terms of measurable and specific targets (e.g. for international recruitment), these would be incorporated in the implementation plan.

(f) As regards international league tables and the University’s current position within them, it was noted that due to a lack of comparable international datasets these tended to be based on subjective assessments of reputation and esteem, which inevitably favoured the larger, more long-standing science-led institutions. Work in this area would therefore be focused on name recognition, in part through collaborative working with high quality partners and enhancement of communications around University research. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed in this context that work was ongoing to analyse the input factors of the various international rankings, with a new league table strategy under development that would be shared with the wider University community in due course.

Following the above discussion and subject to the comments made, Senate approved the strategy for submission to the University Council.
16-17/40 Business from Committees

Senate noted and approved business from the following committee meetings (S.16-17/29):

- Teaching Committee: 9 February and 16 March 2017
- Research Committee: 1 February and 10 March 2017
- Planning Committee: 8 February, 6 and 29 March, 4 and 5 April 2017
- International Committee: 3 February 2017
- Special Cases Committee: 27 January 2017
- Student Life Committee: 21 April 2017
- HYMS Joint Senate Committee: 25 January 2017
- Arts and Humanities Faculty Board: 10 March 2017
- Social Sciences Faculty Board: 13 March 2017

16-17/41 Amendment to University Regulation 11

Senate approved proposed amendments to University Regulation 11 [Use of Computing Facilities] (S.16-17/30).

16-17/42 Forthcoming Committee Vacancies

Forthcoming vacancies for committee appointments to be made by Senate commencing 1 August 2017 were noted (S.16-17/31).

Members of Senate wishing to make nominations were invited to:

(a) check the current membership and terms of reference of the committee in question as listed online;
(b) submit nominations to Dr Philip Evans (Registrar’s and Planning Office, philip.evans@york.ac.uk) by Friday 22 June 2017 (last day of Summer Term) at the latest.

It was noted that the nominations received would be presented to Senate for approval at its meeting on 11 July 2017. Where more than one nomination was received for a single vacancy, a ballot paper would be circulated to Senate members after the July meeting.

16-17/43 Register of Validated Programmes

Senate received for information the current register of validated programmes and collaborative provision (S.16-17/32).

16-17/44 Election of Members

Senate received for information the result of the election of members to serve for three years from 1 August 2017 (S.16-17/33).

*Senate: 9 May 2017*
It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 11 July 2017 at 2.15pm (Note: earlier start-time in accordance with M16-17/37 above).