

University of York

Senate

Executive summary of the meeting held 9 July 2024

Vice-Chancellor and President's report

1. Senate **considered** an overview report from the Vice-Chancellor. This set out the significant financial and other challenges faced by the sector, and noted that while there were a number of potentially positive developments and opportunities arising from the recent change of government it was clear that the sector could not expect imminent government action to mitigate UK higher education's current, significant financial issues.
2. The Vice-Chancellor's report also updated Senate on the ongoing discussions between the University and representatives of the encampment relating to the Israel/Gaza conflict, and of the steps being taken by the University to address the implications of a recent High Court judgment for the ways in which the University supported its disabled students.

Financial Context

3. Senate **considered** a presentation from the Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the developments in this area since the previous meeting of Senate, and the progress of the steps being taken by the University to address these financial issues while ensuring that the University remained focused on delivering its core commitment to academic excellence and its mission as a University for the Public Good.
4. Senate **noted**: that while current funding levels for undergraduate home students did not meet the costs of this provision, this area of activity remained of fundamental importance to the University's mission; the work that was underway to develop a range of additional approaches over and above direct recruitment to provide international students with opportunities to access and benefit from a University of York education; the development of a new University Global Strategy that addressed new approaches to international recruitment, as well as considering the international student experience more broadly; and the outline of the process that would be followed should the outcomes of the voluntary severance scheme mean it was necessary for the University to consider moving to a targeted redundancy scheme.

Changing the Work

5. The PVC Teaching, Learning and Students, PVC Research and Interim Academic Registrar **reported** on progress with the Changing the Work programme, noting the progress being made across teaching and learning; research; and professional services.
6. Senate **noted** the steps that were being taken to engage with City of York Council to keep them informed of developments at the University, and that the Changing the Work programme was being used as an opportunity to reconsider approaches to areas of activity in order to identify ways of doing things differently so that while staffing levels would be lower from 2024-25 onwards levels of support and service were maintained.

Code of Practice on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech

7. Senate **endorsed** the proposed new joint University/Students' Union Code of Practice on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech, for consideration for approval by Council. Senate **noted** the significant consultation that had taken place on a draft of this Code; the positive feedback to the

draft Code; and that prior to its submission to Senate the draft Code had been revised in light of the feedback received.

Annual Assurance Report: Student Life Committee

8. Senate **received** the Annual Assurance Report, **noting** the progress that Student Life Committee had made in addressing its identified priorities for 2023-24 and **agreeing** that the report provided assurance that Student Life Committee was undertaking its responsibilities effectively.

Annual Report on Special Cases, Academic Appeals and Complaints

9. Senate **received** the annual report covering student progress cases, academic appeals and complaints for 2022-23. It **noted** the fall in the number of academic appeals compared to 2021-22, and that while there had been increases in the number of student progress cases and complaints this reflected wider sector trends. Senate also **noted** the steps that were being taken to increase the timeliness and efficiency of these processes, and that the effectiveness of these developments was being kept under review by University Teaching Committee.

Proposed Revisions to Regulation 7: Student Discipline

10. Senate **approved** a small number of revisions to Regulation 7, made in order to take account of developments in the external context relating to duty of care, and freedom of speech legislation.

Updates to Academic Promotions Terms of Reference

11. Senate **approved** revisions to the Terms of Reference of Academic Promotions Committee, and Faculty Promotions Panels, consequential on changes agreed by Senate earlier in 2023-24 to the academic promotions process.

Sub-committee Minutes, Summaries and Other Reports

12. Senate **noted** reports from the following sub-committee meetings: University Teaching Committee (16 May 2024); Student Life Committee (11 Apr. and 13 June 2024); University Research Committee (1 May and 19 June. 2024); Partnership, Enterprise and Engagement Committee (17 June 2024); HYMS Joint Senate (17 Apr. 2024); and Academic Promotions Committee.