

University Of York

Senate

Matters for note by Council at its meeting on 10 November 2020 arising from the extraordinary meeting of the University Senate held on 10 September 2020

1. Senate received a verbal update from the Vice-Chancellor on the University's ongoing response to the Covid 19 (pandemic (*details now superseded by subsequent events/reporting*)).
2. Senate considered a report setting out six strategic aims stemming from the approved University Vision statement, noting that its consideration formed part of a wider institutional consultation process culminating in submission for approval to the University Council on 15 October 2020. Senate members observed that:
 - a. the section of the Vision statement that referenced providing a supportive environment in which staff could develop rewarding careers might be emphasised more strongly across the six aims;
 - b. reference to students "co-creating their degrees" might need to be further clarified in order to dispel misconceptions around the precise meaning of this aim;
 - c. [REDACTED];
 - d. the concept of academic freedom might usefully be referenced in the research and teaching sections to reinforce the importance of being able to question and contest perceived wisdom;
 - e. [REDACTED];
 - f. the stated aim of influencing policy-makers in order to bring positive change to society raised questions around the role of intellectuals in speaking truth to power;
 - g. comments on the approach to problem-solving and encouraging diversity of thought (in the section on agility) might emphasise more strongly the importance of critical thinking;
 - h. in terms of ownership of the strategic aims, there could be implications for aspects of the current academic governance and internal structures in departments and faculties;
 - i. while the lasting legacy aims represented a strong statement of intent, it nevertheless needed to be acknowledged that certain external developments would always remain beyond the University's control and influence;
 - j. it was notable that the concept of 'students as partners' was not directly referenced, although the comments on "co-creation" were noted as responding to this pedagogical approach; it was however also acknowledged that a strong element of the academic role was to design coherent programmes and shape the pathways available to students;
 - k. the reference to the importance of life-skills and extra- or co-curricular activities was welcomed in the context of 'self-authorship' and HE's role in providing a supportive framework in which students could help to shape each other's learning and personal development; further consideration might be given to the 'integrated student experience' and how it might best be designed to capture all aspects of the student experience at a campus-based, collegiate institution;
 - l. the reference in the Vision statement to more students studying partly or wholly online had become highly relevant in the context of universities' response to the C19 pandemic which had accelerated this development and also revealed some of its pitfalls;
 - m. given the pressure academic staff had been under over the last six months to move to online provision, re-design existing programmes and undertake assessment by new distanced methods, it would be important to ensure that all academic staff had the time

- and opportunity to engage in further strategic consultations, especially as these pertained to questions of possible organisational change in academic areas;
- n. a degree of cultural change would be required to accommodate fully the needs of part-time mature students whose personal life circumstances were very different to those of the 'traditional' student (with associated implications for academic policy development);
 - o. the University's tradition as an academic-led institution might usefully be re-stated as a distinctive feature of its profile;
 - p. from the student perspective a stronger emphasis on the importance of scholarships would be welcomed, especially in the context of widening participation and internationalisation.

In response to the comments and queries from Senate members, the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors observed that:

- a. the concept of "co-creation" of programmes with students was becoming more prevalent internationally and linked to the ambition to collaborate more effectively across disciplines;
- b. it was agreed that a wide range of different consultation methods was required to ensure the community embraced and owned the strategy, especially as it progressed towards the implementation stage;
- c. [REDACTED];
- d. [REDACTED];
- e. with an emphasis on using evidence to change perceptions, it was vital to ensure partnerships involved critical thinking and not simply collusion/cooperation;
- f. as strategy development to date had involved a high degree of consultation and collective work, further efforts would be made to dispel any misconception that it was largely being driven by senior leaders (or else this could be a blockage at the implementation stage);
- g. universities had shown considerable speed, agility and innovation in their response to the C19 emergency, which had in turn clearly demonstrated that it was possible to harness institutional energy to drive change, a characteristic that should be applied in other areas (e.g. race equality);
- h. partnership working with students was implied in different ways throughout the strategic aims (and had been amply demonstrated in the University's C19 response), but would be more overtly stated in future iterations;
- i. tying together the curriculum and co-curriculum was an interesting and challenging task but essential for personal and community growth;
- j. the reference to online learning in the Vision statement reflected its importance as one particular delivery mechanism for achieving objectives across a range of priorities (e.g. widening access, lifelong learning/re-skilling, sustainability, internationalisation etc);
- k. there was a separate consultation process regarding the organisational change programme being led by the Faculty Deans and this would continue with a variety of methods being employed to reach out to staff for their input;
- l. making 'non-traditional' students feel welcome and valued was a core element of widening participation and EDI and also needed to be reflected in the design of co-curriculum activities and academic policies generally;
- m. the concept of academic freedom had been more overtly stated in an earlier draft of the Vision statement and would be re-visited for possible inclusion across the strategic aims;
- n. the question of student scholarships was an important aspect of the University's interaction with external partners such overseas organisations, social enterprises and

businesses; there were also strong links between scholarships and diversifying the student base;

- o. to be effective global collaborations needed to be partnerships of equals and led by a two-way approach which acknowledged how much each partner could learn from the other; use of the word 'internationalism' attempted to convey this sense of an underlying value set and mutuality.
3. Senate considered proposals regarding the establishment of the Graduate Research School Board (GRSB) as a single Board of Studies (BoS) for interdisciplinary postgraduate research (PGR) programmes. Following a lengthy and detailed discussion about the consultation that had informed the proposal and certain aspects of the governance arrangements around the proposed BoS, Senate resolved to:
 - a. to ask the Graduate Research School Board to re-consider the matter in the light of Senate comments and to submit an updated proposal to the next meeting;
 - b. to delegate authority to the Vice-Chancellor to take Chair's Action on its behalf in the event that any delay in resolving the matter was likely to prevent the University securing high quality PhD funding.

University Of York

Senate

Matters for note by the University Council at its meeting on 10 November 2020 arising from the meeting of the University Senate held on 20 October 2020

1. As it was the first full meeting of the new academic session, Senate noted its membership and terms of reference as set out in its Statement of Primary Responsibilities and the University Charter and Statutes. It also resolved to approve the recommendation that the Director of Library and Archives assume the statutory *ex officio* membership position for the University Librarian (previously held by the Director of Corporate and Information Services).
2. Senate considered a verbal update from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the development of the University Strategy 2030, noting that since its last meeting the top-level strategic aims had been approved by the University Council (Council). Senate members observed that, as noted at the previous meeting, it was important in terms of their future sense of ownership and engagement to reassure members of the University community that their comments were being actively taken on board during the ongoing consultation process.
3. Following detailed discussion at its previous meeting, Senate resolved to approve revised proposals regarding the establishment of the Graduate Research School Board (GRSB) as a single Board of Studies (BoS) for interdisciplinary postgraduate research (PGR) programmes.
4. Senate received a detailed update from the Vice-Chancellor on the University's ongoing response to the Covid 19 pandemic and other matters. In response to questions and queries from Senate members, the Vice-Chancellor observed that:
 - a. self-reporting by students through the University's own reporting mechanisms was believed to have provided relatively accurate data on infection rates;
 - b. the University aimed to be supportive of staff and students across the full range of issues and problems that the pandemic was creating, including those not infected themselves but possibly supporting other household members;
 - c. almost all Library facilities would remain open unless the University moved to DfE Tier 4 (and even then access to collections would remain through postal loans);
 - d. a snap poll outcome showing 10% of student respondents would ideally prefer in-person teaching only probably represented a degree of dissatisfaction at the lack of in-person lectures during the current year;
 - e. while some international students had initially commenced their programmes online at home, others were continuing to arrive in York in person, including a number of Chinese students who had arrived via Hainan Airlines into Manchester Airport in an arrangement brokered by the Chinese consulate;
 - f. the University would review its budgetary position following the first fee payment deadline at the end of October and in the context of accommodation deposits being paid by those students due to start in January 2021; the Finance Director would continue to run all-staff webinars to update colleagues on the University's financial position as it became clearer.
5. Senate considered a report on the outcome of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2020. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. The outcome would be reflected in national league tables and, if it continued in its current format, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

██████████. It was however agreed that in any national-level discussions of the future of the NSS the University should continue to provide a rational critique of its value as an indicator of student views on their academic experience and criticism should also continue to be expressed in respect of the statistical validity of the Survey and the manner in which its outcomes fed into the TEF.

6. Senate considered a report on the first HESA Graduate Outcomes Survey. The Director of Employability and Careers reported that, now fully managed by HESA rather than individual institutions, the first survey had only received a 50% response rate (cf. approximately 80% for the Destination of Leavers survey it had replaced), which made it difficult to draw concrete conclusions at department/programme level; partial responses had also been included to achieve the 50% response rate, which rendered the data less robust than previously. The headline figure used as the main 'graduate prospect' metric in *The Times* league table was that 81.7% of York graduates had achieved a positive destination after 15 months (1.7% below the University's benchmark). On the postgraduate side, 84.3% of PGT and 92.6% of PGR students had achieved positive destinations. Senate members observed that the median salary data provided in the new survey was of limited use as a measure of 'success' in that it was influenced by choice of occupation and did not adequately acknowledge work that might be important for the public good but poorly remunerated (e.g. in the charity, NGO or entertainment sectors). Although some of the survey findings needed to be viewed with a degree of scepticism, especially given the low response rate, it nevertheless provided some utility as a means of testing current University employability strategies and practices.
7. Senate considered recommendations arising from the Teaching Organisation Change Programme in respect of programme approval, semesterisation and modularisation. During general discussion of the change programme, Senate members observed that:
 - a. the additional workload associated with implementing the proposals needed to be viewed in the context of other workload demands in the current academic year that were beyond the University's control, especially those arising from the academic response to the C19 pandemic;
 - b. the Task and Finish Group had run a full consultation with staff but had not run a similarly wide consultation with students (on the basis that it had been the summer vacation period);
 - c. the BoS in Mathematics had circulated to Senate members a document outlining its detailed objections to the proposals from the perspective of that Department, noting that this was the only response to the request sent to BoS;
 - d. as had been demonstrated during the previous modularisation exercise (2008/09), there would be considerable transaction costs associated with implementing the proposals, which raised questions about the proposed timescale;
 - e. consideration needed to be given to how modules and terms might be re-structured in a way that did not impact negatively on existing students midway through a programme (or returning from leave of absence or study abroad).
8. As regards the specific proposal regarding new programme approval, the Dean (Sciences) reported that the current process overseen by the Planning and Teaching Committees had been subject to a Rapid Improvement Event to better understand its deficiencies and generate improvements. The resulting proposed new process involved a reduction in approval requirements, some governance changes in respect of committee approvals and certain operational amendments for support staff involved in programme set-up. It was noted that the proposed new process could be completed within three months, with both staff workload and the required paperwork considerably reduced. Noting that at its meeting on 8 October 2020 UTC had approved the new process and associated policy changes in respect of the Policy on External Assessors and terms of reference for FLTGs and BoS, Senate resolved to adopt the new process.

9. As regards the specific proposal regarding semesterisation, the Dean (Sciences) reported that it sought to align teaching and assessment across the whole institution and thereby to achieve a more balanced workload for staff and students across the year. The underlying principle was that all modules should be taught and assessed within a single block. It was also noted that an earlier end to the academic year would provide enhanced opportunities for students in terms of employment and summer activity and that semesterisation would improve structural alignment with other universities, especially overseas institutions, as regards co-production and delivery of teaching and research.

[REDACTED]. In a lengthy and detailed discussion Senate members observed that:

- a. while some of the benefits to staff and students were manifest, especially as regards having appropriate breaks in a family-friendly calendar, the proposed timescale for implementation seemed somewhat rapid;
- b. the key issue as regards staff and students with school-age children related to the timetabling arrangements around public and school holidays, especially at Easter;
- c. consideration might usefully be given to the introduction of reading/writing weeks to coincide with school half-term holidays;
- d. it was not certain from the report how formative assessments, for which there was a sound pedagogical justification in the humanities and social science disciplines, might be factored into the proposed new semester structures;
- e. the proposal seemed largely structured around the needs of full-time, campus-based students, but it was important also to consider the potential impact on other types of student (part-time, mature, distance-learners etc);
- f. evidence from other HEIs suggested that, depending on how it was organised, semesterisation was not always compatible with family-friendly holiday periods or the need for prolonged continuity in teaching in certain subject areas;
- g. as there would be much good practice across the sector on the effective organisation of semesterisation, it might be possible to agree the headline proposal in principle, with more precise operational details to be submitted to Senate in May 2021;
- h. the outline structure diagram in the report lacked sufficient detail on holiday periods to give Senate members a sense of how semesterisation would function in practice and thereby to make an informed decision on the proposal;
- i. sufficient opportunity was required in certain programmes for in-year reflection on student progress and effective intervention to prevent academic failure; consideration also needed to be given to the time available for undergraduate dissertations (year-long modules) and protection for staff sabbaticals;

j. [REDACTED]

Following lengthy discussion Senate resolved to adjourn the meeting and consider revised proposals in respect of semesterisation and modularisation at a reconvened meeting during the current Autumn Term.

10. Senate considered a Degree Outcomes Statement drafted by a working group of the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA) and recently approved by the University Teaching Committee (UTC). It was noted that, although not a regulatory requirement, the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) had strongly encouraged universities to develop such a statement to help ensure they met the expectations of the Quality Code for Higher Education that relate to protecting the value of qualifications. For universities in England, the Statement also supported compliance with the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration on academic standards (B4 and B5). Noting in particular the BAME attainment gap referenced in the

Statement and the planned SCA policy focus during the current year to seek to address this matter, Senate resolved to recommend the Statement to the University Council for institutional approval (as requested by UKSCQA).

11. As part of the development of a suite of new online Masters programmes agreed by the University Executive Board, Senate resolved to approve the associated recommendation from UTC that the award of Master of Business Administration (MBA) be added to the schedule of agreed University qualifications.
12. Senate noted summary reports from the following sub-committee meetings: International Committee (25 June 2020), HYMS Joint Senate Committee (30 June 2020), Planning Committee (1 July 2020) and Teaching Committee (12 August and 8 October 2020).
13. Under reserved business, Senate noted new academic appointments since its last meeting and resolved to approve recommendations for senior academic and honorary appointments.

University Of York

Senate

Matters for note by the University Council at its meeting on 3 March 2021 arising from the meeting of the University Senate held on 2 February 2021

1. It was reported that ten new members had recently been elected for a three-year term from 1 February 2021. The new members were welcomed to their first meeting.
2. Senate noted Chair's Action Records in respect of assessment principles, progression for integrated Masters students, criteria for merit/distinction in York online programmes and sub-committee appointments.
3. Senate considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor focused primarily on the University's ongoing response to the Covid-19 (C19) pandemic, including in respect of vaccination/testing, staff wellbeing and University finances. Reference was also made to the wide range of HE policies, policy amendments and consultations recently launched by the government. In response to a query in respect of the planned development of three new Schools, Senate noted that, after endorsement of the academic rationale for the new Schools by the Planning Committee in December 2020, work was currently in train to explore in greater detail their relationship with existing academic departments. Noting that Professor Neil Audsley was leaving the University, Senate approved the Vice-Chancellor's recommendation that Professor Kieran Gibson (Head of the Department of Physics) assume Professor Audsley's position as an academic member of Council with immediate effect until 31 January 2024.
4. Senate considered a progress report on the strategy development process, noting that the five strategic aims would now be developed into thematic strategies of the same name and basis in an integrated and cross-cutting manner involving the whole University community and other relevant stakeholders. Senate observed that it would be important to foster a strong sense of genuine and active co-ownership among all participating stakeholders, which would also have the advantage of identifying any potential implementation problems or difficulties at an early stage. It would also be important to involve frontline staff in the working groups and critical friend panels (i.e. colleagues who were not 'role holders' in the sense of being managers or directors). It was noted that the previous work on engagement would be stepped up to ensure effective two-way communication that also fed signals and messages back to the broader University community; consideration was also being given to how, in the context of the current lockdown, the Vice-Chancellor's in-person engagement with all University departments in Autumn 2019 might best be replicated in order to gain useful insights and sustain staff enthusiasm. Following discussion Senate resolved to endorse the approach to the next phase of strategy development.
5. Senate considered a verbal report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the final preparations for the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) ahead of the national deadline on 31 March 2021. It was noted that departmental submissions would be subject to detailed technical checking during February before final internal sign-off by the REF Strategy Group. All staff involved in conducting research and preparing the REF documents over several years were congratulated for delivering a strong submission that effectively captured the University's strengths and achievements.
6. Senate considered the annual report on the University's current league table rankings, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. It was also reported that, whilst league table performance should not be an end in itself or dictate strategic priorities, it was nevertheless a factor taken into account by prospective students, their parents and funders; consistently poor performance had a negative impact on, *inter alia*, home applicant quality, international student recruitment and partnership opportunities. Senate members observed that more central support for improved data optimisation in the area of research citations was to be welcomed as there was some doubt around the completeness of some of the proprietary databases used by the league tables. It was also agreed that while it might not be possible to influence the methodologies used by different newspapers, there were nevertheless important input factors which the University could control (e.g. entry tariff, weighted 15% in the *Guardian* table). [REDACTED]

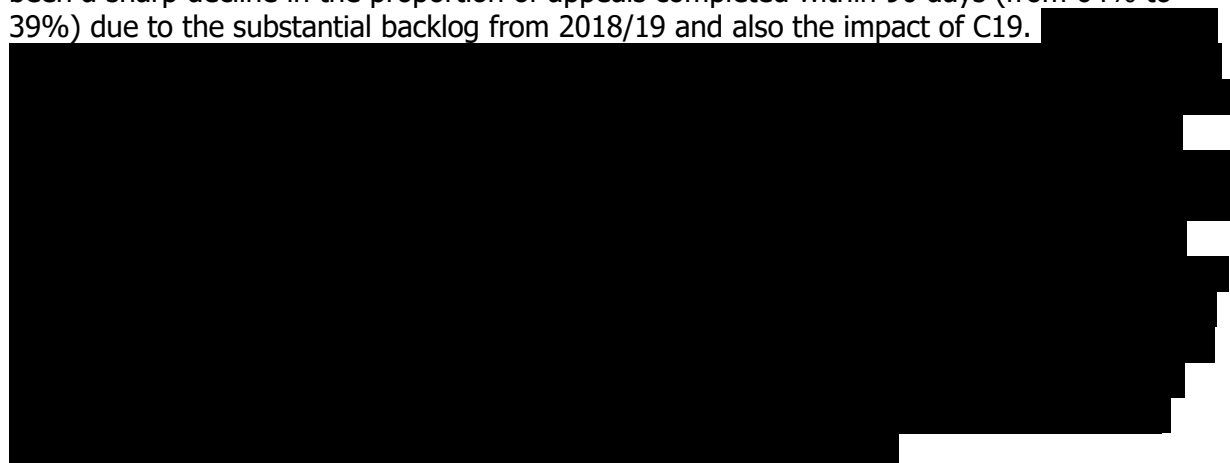
[REDACTED]

7. Senate considered a progress report on the work currently being undertaken to prepare proposals in respect of the new semesterised attendance pattern and a common credit value for PGT modules. It was noted that the support model for departments was based on several components including support with administrative tasks and technology-based solutions in some areas (e.g. Assessment/Feedback tool and Programme Module Catalogue), and that a detailed engagement plan had been developed to help stakeholders gain a better understanding of the agreed changes and to provide input on elements of detail. Senate members observed that:
 - a. in developing its PGT credit proposal the change team should actively engage with the colleagues responsible for delivering comparably unorthodox part-time programmes or those structured around gradual credit accumulation;
 - b. in seeking technology-based solutions it would be useful if an IT system could be developed that assisted with progression/award calculations, especially for structurally complex programmes;
 - c. for the planned further consultation and engagement to be as effective as possible, participants needed to be reassured that their input would be actively considered, with appropriate feedback loops;
 - d. provision of detailed evidence supporting the rationale for the proposed operational changes would also encourage proactive participation among relevant stakeholders; this was particularly true as it pertained to enhancing the student academic and intellectual experience;
 - e. if one model for the new shape of the academic year was going to be presented to the next meeting for consideration, the recommendation should reference how and why other potential models had been considered and rejected during engagement;
 - f. it remained unclear to some Senate members why a firm decision/approval was required from Senate in May 2021 when the new structures would not be introduced until 2023/24;
 - g. for transparency and clarity student representatives and organisations should be provided with sufficient and timely information that allowed them to engage pro-actively with development of the next phase of proposals.

It was noted that the proposed timescale of finalising proposals for Senate's consideration at its next meeting in May 2021 sought to give clarity to academic departments while also allowing time for planning and executing the subsequent implementation phase; the requirement for new underlying IT systems also necessitated timely decision-making to facilitate system development work; the Task and Finish Group was aiming to circulate

concrete proposals to departments after its next meeting on 19 February 2021 (including a week-by-week plan for the re-structured academic year).

8. Senate received for information a summary report on the package of measures relating to assessment principles approved by the Vice-Chancellor under Chair's Action, noting that it had been introduced to safeguard student achievements from the impact of C19 and to preserve the quality/integrity of their degrees.
9. Senate considered the annual report from the Special Cases Committee in respect of the 2019/20 academic year. It was reported that the data reported for previous years had shown a considerable and continuing increase in the volume of appeals submitted annually, but the impact of C19 and accompanying University measures had altered this pattern in 2019/20. There had been significant decreases in the number of appeals, extensions and leave of absence requests from students on taught programmes, while there had been a 32% increase in the number of PGR progress cases (all of which had been the result of the C19 pandemic). This decrease in 2019/20 arose from the combined effect of policy changes (e.g. greater devolution of authority to Boards of Studies in some areas) and the suspension of the Committee's involvement in approving extensions under C19 special measures. There had also been a sharp decline in the proportion of appeals completed within 90 days (from 64% to 39%) due to the substantial backlog from 2018/19 and also the impact of C19.



10. Senate considered a report on its membership, noting that the recent election process had highlighted a number of inconsistencies in the current membership structure of Senate, including in respect of academic staff not based in Faculties and whether School Directors and some members of Professional Support staff should hold *ex officio* status. The University Secretary proposed that, as there had not been a review of Senate effectiveness since 2017, such a review should be undertaken during 2021/22, with consideration of membership issues forming part of this wider review. Senate endorsed this proposal, noting that the proposed review would take place after a Council effectiveness review to be undertaken during the current academic year and would include reflection on Senate's role in the assessment/monitoring of academic risks (in the context of the University's wider arrangements for risk management and assurance) and in the development of institutional strategy. The review would also include a qualitative element to capture the views and experience of Senate members and would consider the ratios and balance between different membership categories and constituencies.
11. Senate noted synopsis reports from the following sub-committee meetings: Teaching Committee (12 November and 10 December 2020); Research Committee (1 October and 25 November 2020); Planning Committee (1 October and 9 December 2020); International Committee (8 October 2020); Student Life Committee (5 November 2020); Special Cases Committee (17 November 2020); and the HYMS Joint Senate Committee (4 November 2020).

12. Senate received the following documents for information (*Category II agenda*): Principles for protecting assessments, progression and awards; Policy on honorary degrees/fellowships.
13. Under reserved business Senate received reports in respect of the action taken to rectify an incorrect University award, senior appointments, honorary appointments and new academic appointments.

University Of York

Senate

Matters for note by the University Council at its meeting on 26 May 2021 arising from the meeting of the University Senate held on 11 May 2021

1. Senate welcomed three new members to their first meeting: Professor Paul Cairns (new Head of Department of Computer Science), Professor Patrick Doherty (new Head of Department of Health Sciences) and Sesha Nicholson-Lailey (newly elected student representative from the Faculty of Sciences).
2. Senate considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor focused primarily on the University's ongoing response to the Covid-19 (C19) pandemic, especially as regards the government roadmap and planning for the next academic year. It was noted that the DfE had issued new guidance confirming students could return to campus and face-to-face teaching from 17 May 2021, although ca. 80% of York students had already returned and the teaching cycle was largely complete by this date. Given ongoing uncertainties about the start of the next academic year in September (e.g. whether the government might request a staggered return or whether some elements of social distancing would be retained), the University was developing parallel plans for different scenarios. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. As regards the physical return to campus for staff and students in September and the associated psychological barriers some might experience, it was noted that the University would seek to provide support appropriate to individual circumstances and also to build confidence over the Summer in the context of the ongoing national vaccination programme. In response to a query on the impact of C19 on individual career progression, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the Promotions Committee would continue over the coming years to invite applicants to declare whether they had experienced any negative impact.
3. Senate considered an update on the strategy development process, with particular reference to the themed workshops conducted during March and April 2021. The Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Teaching, Learning & Students and Partnerships & Engagement reported that the workshops had produced a wealth of information and a rich narrative around the possible future of the University from a diverse range of colleagues. The process had also been engaging and valuable in surfacing a number of cross-cutting themes such as the importance of diversity/inclusion and fostering a sense of shared purpose to underpin creativity and innovation. By way of example, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS) illustrated how such themes might be captured in the strategy aim of Ethical and Empowering Education in terms of the diversity of the student population, addressing attainment gaps and better talent management processes to remove progression barriers for staff. Senate also noted that there would be wider engagement with staff and students in June 2021 to inform the drafting of specific objectives. Examples were given of how the consultation to date had clearly influenced the emerging thinking in a number of areas (e.g. in respect of assessment practices and degree outcomes). It was generally agreed that the key aspect of the next stage would be to translate the aspiration and ambition evident in the workshops into concrete and realistic implementation plans and a clear roadmap towards achievement of the strategic aims. On the student side Senate noted that this involved careful consideration of the entire student journey from pre-university attainment (and barriers to it) through to the strategic aim of Lasting Legacies which includes alumni relations. As regards ensuring that a full diversity of voices were heard in the ongoing strategic discussions, reference was made to the Student Expert Panel comprising a group of students from diverse backgrounds that had functioned as

a highly useful sounding board for emerging strategic thinking and could provide a model for a similar staff reference group. In this context Senate agreed that the workshop outputs had clearly highlighted the importance of organisational structure as a focus for the successful delivery of the Strategy and that an ability to assess the impact of the Strategy should be a key consideration extending beyond the language and quantitative measures of KPIs. Senate would receive a more developed set of strategic objectives for consideration at its July 2021 meeting.

4. Following discussions held earlier in the year, Senate considered proposals in respect of: the implementation year for the new modular and semesterised arrangements previously approved; the specific attendance pattern for the semesterised year; and a common credit value for PGT modules which matched that of the UG credit value framework previously agreed by Senate. Introducing the proposals, the Dean of the Faculty of Sciences reminded Senate of the underlying rationale for the changes to teaching organisation, especially as this pertained to removing the excessive complexity in teaching, assessment and timetabling arising from the current modular pattern. Attention was also drawn to the requirements and parameters for the proposals established by previous Senate discussions and the subsequent consultation process undertaken with staff and students (including surveys and departmental visits). Areas of specific focus during this engagement exercise had included the length of the Christmas and Easter vacations and consideration of the mental health/wellbeing aspects of different attendance patterns (in the context of staff/student workload and avoidance of 'burnout'). The PGT credit value proposal had generated less feedback than the other two recommendations. Senate considered the three individual proposals as follows:
5. As regards the default start date/year, Senate had previously requested that this be moved back from 2022/23 to 2023/24, subject to review and confirmation at this meeting in the context of the current status of the C19 pandemic in the UK. It was agreed that the need for all programmes to be re-designed/approved by Autumn Term 2022 did not raise issues around the production schedule for the hardcopy prospectus as this was likely to be discontinued as an outmoded recruitment tool of reduced relevance to applicants and other audiences. As regards the need for a supporting digital curriculum management process (previously known as the programme module catalogue), identification of a suitable off-the-shelf software solution would be facilitated by the University having a common institutional credit framework. It was reported in this context that a number of departments involved in the formation of new inter-disciplinary schools were already designing new programmes under the proposed framework for launch before the proposed 2023 start date. In response to the report from a student representative that one department was struggling to achieve the necessary modifications to programmes, it was noted that support from the central project team was available to provide assistance and could be deployed swiftly on request. The Head of the Department in question also confirmed that, despite the challenges, it supported the proposed changes. It was also noted that a decision on start date was required now from an admissions perspective so that the new-style degree programmes could be appropriately explained to prospective students. In response to a specific query, it was confirmed that 10 module credits equated to 100 hours of student activity (which included self-learning, revision, exams etc). Several Heads of Departments commented that following initial work to adapt existing programmes and develop new ones, they were now keen from a planning perspective to press ahead with the proposed start date as it seemed a pragmatic solution that balanced legitimate workload considerations against the strategic imperative to launch new programmes. Following discussion and acknowledging the workload concerns expressed by those departments where greater effort would be required to adapt to the new model, **Senate approved the proposal that 2023/24 be the academic year in which semesters and common credit values would be introduced.** It also noted that early clarity would be provided to departments on the nature and timing of central support where this was required for implementation.

6. During a lengthy discussion of the proposed attendance pattern in the new semesterised structure, it was observed that:
- a. it would be important to ensure that all frontline teaching staff in departments were engaged in the necessary modifications to programme and module structures, especially those with demonstrable expertise in pedagogic development;
 - b. the Easter break should not be used for consolidation activities in order to retain a clear distinction between work and vacation periods; there was also a similar need to preserve the integrity of research time;
 - c. there remained certain issues to address in some departments in respect of combined programmes, potential unevenness between the two semesters and the precise timing of the proposed consolidation/study weeks;
 - d. the proposed earlier start to the academic year needed to take account of marketing and accommodation issues for the short Summer courses offered by the University through its Centre for Global Programmes;
 - e. there were strong pedagogical arguments for the proposed pattern in terms of greater opportunity for interdisciplinary study and deeper learning (i.e. the proposals were not simply driven by organisational requirements);
 - f. the Task & Finish (T&F) Group had considered a range of options and following feedback had modified its proposals accordingly (e.g. in respect of the length of the Christmas vacation); in response to a variation to the proposed pattern verbally proposed by one member, it was acknowledged that in seeking to satisfy the majority of departments without severe detriment to others and to meet the parameters previously agreed by Senate, a degree of compromise had inevitably been necessary; any major changes to the pattern proposed at this stage would also require re-consultation across the University, further delaying decision-making and implementation;
 - g. central support was available to those departments facing greater challenges and would include the dissemination of best practice from other areas;
 - h. incorporation of consolidation/study time in Semester 2 would work against the intention of having an earlier end to the academic year; the three weeks scheduled for assessment at the end of that Semester would also allow that process to conclude before the Summer vacation;
 - i. guidance on combined programmes would be updated through Teaching Committee to clarify that these did not need to involve a 50/50 split (i.e. a major/minor model was possible); due consideration would be given to such complex joint honours programmes to ensure they functioned effectively from the student perspective;
 - j. there was flexibility within the three-week Common Assessment Period (CAP) to ensure students had sufficient revision time; the new model would also make it easier in exam timetabling to respond to specific scheduling requests from departments; similarly there was flexibility in how departments could use the 11 weeks assigned in the model to teaching, as long as this conformed to the agreed amount of student activity required for credit accumulation;
 - k. following three separate invitations to participate, the student response to the consultation survey had been relatively high by normal University standards;
 - l. the inclusion of research in the list of "other" staff activities included in the model might seem inappropriate in the context of a research-intensive university; it was however noted that proper implementation and use of semesters could facilitate longer periods of research study leave;
 - m. the suggestion by one member of adding a third week to the Easter vacation had been considered and rejected by the T&F Group in response to only 10% support for such a proposal; the total teaching time remained the same as currently (i.e. 22 weeks in total).
- Following discussion and acknowledging the wide range of perspectives and the reservations expressed by some individual Senate members, **Senate approved the proposed attendance pattern for implementation from 2023/24**. It also asked the Dean (Sciences) and the T&F Group to engage further with those members who had expressed

specific reservations and to report back to the next meeting on the outcome from those discussions.

7.

[REDACTED]

Support for the proposal was offered by academic colleagues involved in planning new interdisciplinary Schools for which common module sizes would be essential. It was also noted that commonality of module size across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes would help to facilitate more equitable work allocation among staff. Members from a few academic departments referred to the pedagogic benefit of modules of other sizes in their respective disciplines (e.g. 10 credit modules, 'long and thin' skills modules spread across the year, significant research projects with higher credit rating, relatively unorthodox part-time programmes offered to industry professionals etc). On the question of the development and launch of new PGT programmes, it was acknowledged that a common credit value would accelerate this process and allow for the re-use of modules from other programmes (including from Integrated Masters programmes). Following discussion and expressions of support from the majority of Senate members, **Senate approved the proposal that a common credit value of 20 credits be adopted for PGT modules from 2023/24.**

[REDACTED]

8. Senate noted synopsis reports from the following sub-committee meetings: Teaching Committee (11 February 2021); Research Committee (3 February and 17 March 2021); Planning Committee (10 February, 31 March and 16 April 2021); International Committee (4 February 2021); Student Life Committee (28 January and 15 April 2021); and the HYMS Joint Senate Committee (28 January and 14 April 2021).
9. Senate noted a paper setting out forthcoming sub-committee vacancies from 1 August 2021 and inviting nominations for the vacancies listed by 25 June 2021 (last day of Summer Term).
10. Under reserved business Senate received reports in respect senior appointments, honorary appointments and new academic appointments.

[REDACTED]

University Of York

Senate

Matters for note by the University Council at its meeting on 28 July 2021 arising from the meeting of the University Senate held on 6 July 2021

1. Senate received an update from the Dean (Sciences) on the implementation of agreed changes to Teaching Organisation, including the further engagement with Senate members who had raised specific comments and queries at the previous meeting. In particular it was noted that guidance to accommodate the introduction of semesters and common module currencies had recently been considered by University Teaching Committee (UTC) before its roll-out to academic departments.
2. The University Secretary provided a verbal report on: plans to modify the honorary academic titles framework to accommodate the new City College Thessaloniki partnership; the planned establishment during 2021/22 of a group (including Senate members) to identify and recommend for appointment a new University Chancellor in succession to Professor Sir Malcolm Grant; and progress to consider the alleged PGR academic misconduct case reported at the previous meeting.
3. With regard to the current election of new members to Senate from the three Faculties, it was reported that no nominations had been received from Arts & Humanities for the one forthcoming vacancy from 1 August 2021. Following presentation of several options by the University Secretary, Senate decided that rather than carrying the vacancy until the next election the call for nominations should be re-issued to members of the Arts & Humanities Faculty in an effort to fill the vacancy as expeditiously as possible.
4. Senate considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor focused primarily on the University's ongoing response to the Covid-19 (C19) pandemic, especially as regards a recent and significant surge in student cases and consequential self-isolations. In addition to C19 matters, the Vice-Chancellor also updated Senate on: USS pension scheme consultations, the ongoing change programme, new league table rankings, introduction of the Real Living Wage and the extended global reach of the recent online Festival of Ideas (with thanks to the academic colleagues who had contributed).
5. Senate received a presentation on developments in freedom of speech (FoS) and academic freedom (AF) from the YUSU President, YUSU CEO and University Secretary, in the context of the government's Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill 2021. During discussion Senate members commented on: the unclear linkage between FoS and other government policies (e.g. the Prevent Duty, the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Bill etc); the occasional tensions between FoS and supporting staff/student wellbeing and protecting the University's reputation; the importance of joining up FoS and AF with other University activities in areas such as decolonising the curriculum, inclusive learning and race equality. **Senate endorsed in principle the development of an academically-led and values-driven University Statement on FoS and AF linked to the University Strategy.**
6. Senate considered a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the draft objectives of the University Strategy and also the further evolution of the strategic aims which had arisen from a number of workshops held earlier in the year. Attention was also drawn to the principles and enablers associated with the Strategy as well as to the structures/processes, legacies and KPIs that were being developed for each of the individual aims. Thanks were offered to all the staff and students who had participated in the various engagement exercises

to shape the Strategy. During discussion it was suggested that the aspects relating to ethical and empowering education, interdisciplinary teaching and the implications of true “lifelong learning” seemed to have been somewhat diluted since previous iterations, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) was asked to consider this when developing the final iteration for University Council approval on 28 July 2021. It was acknowledged that further details around these specific aspects of the Strategy were difficult to capture in top-level statements but would emerge more clearly during the implementation phase. **Senate endorsed the strategic objectives and noted the timeline and mechanism for implementation.**

7. Senate considered the annual statistical report on undergraduate and postgraduate taught degree outcomes, noting the minor fluctuations in the data since the previous year and the comparisons with the wider HE sector and the Russell Group. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students) reported comments on the data from UTC, including its recommendation that the data be considered more closely at departmental and faculty level and that the timing and format of the report be re-modelled in future years, e.g. by splitting out full-time and part-time students in the context of the continuing growth in part-time online programmes. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS) also commented on the associated strategic intention to eliminate attainment gaps between different student groups and how this was informed by detailed student feedback/surveys on the impact of different assessment methods. [REDACTED]
8. Senate considered a report setting out the proposed scope for a cyclical review of its effectiveness to be undertaken during 2021/22 following the current review of Council effectiveness. During discussion Senate members made a number of suggestions regarding the membership of the review Steering Group (including increasing the number of elected members from two to three to ensure all three Faculties were represented), the inclusion of the quality/timeliness of reporting to Senate within the scope and how the views of experienced outgoing members and the wider University community might best be captured. Senate endorsed the outline timescale in the context of workload management for governance support staff who were also involved in the other review activities and their consequential implementation during 2021/22. It also formally delegated authority to the review Steering Group (chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor) to determine the final review scope within the parameters set out in the report.
9. Senate considered the Annual Statement on Research Integrity which was required as a condition of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* and included a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that occurred during the last year. Presenting the Statement, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) noted that the two “misconduct” cases during 2021/22 had on investigation actually been related to competency issues rather than wilful misconduct; for completeness the current live/unresolved PGR case of alleged misconduct (para [c] above refers) would be added in to the report. **Senate endorsed the Statement for submission to the next meeting of the University Council for formal approval.**
10. Senate considered proposed amendments to University Regulation 7 (Student Discipline) noting that they arose from feedback on the practical operation of the new Regulation over the last year and from consideration of the student-run *The Last Taboo* project. Presenting the amendments, the Academic Registrar reported that they had recently been endorsed by the Student Life Committee and in some cases sought simply to capture revised nomenclature following management re-organisation (e.g. discontinuation of the Registrar & Secretary role). It was also noted that the Regulation would be subject to more detailed reshaping in 2021/22

in order to reduce it down to overarching disciplinary principles, supported by two separate and more accessible procedures (one for academic misconduct and one for non-academic misconduct). Senate welcomed the planned distinction between academic and non-academic misconduct and suggested that the fuller review the following year might also usefully consider how the Regulation applied to distance learners and PGR students. Subject to some further minor presentational amendments and inclusion of relevant links, **Senate approved the revised Regulation.**

11. Senate noted synopsis reports from the following sub-committee meetings: Teaching Committee (20 May and 24 June 2021); Research Committee (5 May and 23 June 2021); Planning Committee (12 May 2021); International Committee (23 June 2021); and Student Life Committee (17 June 2021).
12. With regard to the Category II agenda, Senate noted/approved the following: background materials in respect of FoS; the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy; nominations for committee membership; minor changes to the University Ordinances & Regulations for the 2021/22 edition; amendments to the Policy on Research Degrees; and the OIA Annual Statement for 2020.
13. Under reserved business Senate noted/approved reports in respect of academic promotions, honorary appointments and new academic appointments.