UNIVERSITY OF YORK

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2012

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Pro-Vice Chancellor, Ms E Heaps
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor J Robinson
Academic Co-ordinator Arts and Humanities, Professor M Ormrod

Professor J Bennett  Mr D Johnson (GSA)
Dr J Buchanan   Dr O Lisagor
Professor C Brown   Professor M Maynard
Professor S Carroll   Dr P Mitchell
Professor B Chambers   Professor P O’Higgins
Dr A Charlwood   Professor J Richards
Dr S Chong   Professor C Runciman
Dr J Clarbour   Professor J Schofield
Mr T Clarke   Professor P Sells
Professor E Corrigan   Professor D Smith
Ms K Diaconu (GSA)   Professor T Stoneham
Dr C Dytham   Professor Q Summerfield
Dr C Fewster   Professor R Taylor
Dr A Frisch   Professor S Thompson
Professor M Goddard   Mr H Toynton (SU)
Professor V Gould   Professor J Wainwright
Professor A Higson   Mr G Wall
Professor D Howard

In attendance: The Registrar and Secretary
University Governance Officer, Dr P Evans
Head of the Academic Support Office, Mr N Dandy (for M11-12/54)
Deputy Director of Corporate Planning, Mr J Busby (for M11-12/58)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor S Bell, Dr L Caves, Mr I Choto, Ms K Dodd, Professor M Festenstein, Professor B Fulton, Professor H Fulton, Professor H Graham, Professor J Hill, Dr R Jacobs, Mr H Kesvani, Professor J Local, Professor C

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Mellors, Professor J McDermid, Mr G Osborn, Mr K Taylor, Professor A Webster and Professor R Wooffitt.

11-12/52 Membership

On behalf of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor thanked those members who were attending their last meeting and also welcomed the new Head of the York Management School, Professor Jill Schofield.

11-12/53 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2012 were approved.

11-12/54 QAA Institutional Review

Further to M11-12/35, Senate received for information the final report of the QAA institutional review held in February 2012 and considered the resultant action plan as recommended by Teaching Committee (S.11-12/36).

It was noted that all the areas of recommended improvement identified by the QAA had already been subject to action by the University, which reflected the positive outcome of the review. The SU representative supported the action plan and emphasised the importance of continuing to ensure the provision of feedback to students within six weeks (action 15, affirmation of existing policy).

With regard to the action relating to approval of module modifications (action 14, implied action), it was suggested that this might lead to the drafting of module descriptors that were worded too generally to be useful. This risk would be factored into Teaching Committee’s review of the guidance documentation for departments.

On the matter of committee terms of reference (action 23), it was noted that this conflated two issues: occasional misunderstanding by Boards of Studies of the remit of central University committees, together with a need to clarify the terms of reference of some departmental committees. The Academic Support Office would proactively advise departments on these matters as they arose.

Subject to the above comments, Senate approved the action plan.

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Student Representation Policy

Further to M11-12/37, Senate considered a revised version of the Policy for Student Representation in Learning and Teaching Activities (S.11-12/37), noting that it had been re-drafted in response to comments from Senate and subsequently recommended for approval by Teaching Committee.

Presenting the policy as Chair of Teaching Committee, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning & Teaching (Professor John Robinson) highlighted in particular the recommendation that every department should have a Staff Student Forum (SSF) as a sub-committee of the largest Board of Studies in the department. It was noted that the policy retained a high degree of flexibility as to the practical organisation and implementation of such SSFs.

As regards the selection process for student representatives on the SSF, it was noted that there would continue to be elections (organised by the SU) for the Board of Studies representatives who sat on the SSF, but that Boards would have flexibility in the appointment method for other student representatives on the SSF. In the event that Boards decided to run elections for all the student representatives on the SSF, the SU would be willing to support this process. It was agreed that paragraphs 3(k) and 4(a) of the policy might usefully be amplified to clarify the flexibility that was available to departments in deciding the constituency and appointment method for student members of the SSF.

A member of the Department of Computer Science, which had previously replaced a single forum with three teaching committees (for undergraduate, postgraduate and part-time students), queried whether having a single body was the most effective means of being receptive to the student voice. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (L&T) confirmed that departments could continue to organise multiple groups, on condition that there was one senior group acting as a single forum collectively considering the department’s entire teaching provision. Meetings that were currently organised by some departments with student representatives before Board of Studies meetings could therefore legitimately be re-designated as the SSF for that Board of Studies.

In terms of the benefits to be gained from having a single SSF with primacy of reporting into the Board of Studies, these were noted as follows:

- to maintain oversight/coverage in one forum of the department’s entire teaching provision;
to ensure coherency, consistency and equity of response to student concerns;

- to deal with business more systematically and simplify the reporting line to the Board of Studies.

Following the above discussion, Senate members voted on the question of whether departments should have a single SSF, as follows:

- in favour: 39
- against: 2

In accordance with the above vote, and noting the points recorded above, Senate **approved** the proposed policy.

**Appointments to Committees**

Further to M11-12/42, Senate **approved** the following appointments to committees (S.11-12/38):

- **Council**
  - Professor Peter Sells (Head of Department, Language & Linguistic Science)

- **Planning Committee**
  - Professor Maria Goddard (Centre for Health Economics)

- **Special Cases Committee**
  - Dr Jeremy Goldberg (History) [re-appointment]
  - Mr Geoffrey Wall (English)

- **Teaching Committee**
  - Dr Ian Abrahams (Education)
  - Dr Amber Carpenter (Philosophy)
  - Dr Katherine Selby (Environment)
  - Mr Tim Clarke (Electronics)
  - Dr Ann Kaloski-Naylor (Centre for Women’s Studies)

  [All appointments for a period of **three** years from 1 August 2012 until 31 July 2015 unless otherwise stated.]

It was also **noted** that vacancies remained on the following committees:
- **Council** (one member of Senate from Social Sciences, appointment co-terminous with membership of Senate)
- **Court** (four members of the Senate, appointment co-terminous with membership of Senate)
- **Academic Promotions Committee** (one Reader or Senior Lecturer from Sciences)
- **Finance Committee** (two academic members, one Social Sciences and one Sciences)
- **Health Safety and Welfare Committee** (one academic member)
- **HYMS Joint Senate Committee** (two academic members)

Senate decided to delegate authority to the Vice-Chancellor to make appointments to the remaining vacancies and the Vice-Chancellor asked members to notify the University Governance Officer (philip.evans@york.ac.uk) of any nominations as soon as possible.

**Statement by the Vice-Chancellor**

The Vice-Chancellor reported the following matters:

**Events/Developments**

The University had been ranked 8th in the world and 1st in the UK in a new *Times Higher Education* ranking of universities less than 50 years old. In a similar ranking produced by *QS*, the University appeared 6th in the world and 2nd in the UK.

The University’s Mother and Infant Research Unit was to lead a major international research project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to improve the quality of midwifery care and reduce maternal, newborn and infant mortality.

A drop-in event for residents and visitors in York city centre had enabled them to learn more about the University’s role in exploring the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases and disorders that affected people of all ages.

Together with the Ambassador Theatre Group, the University had launched a scheme to give York students the opportunity to access exclusive graduate internships.

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The University’s transport initiatives had resulted in a reduction of vehicle traffic in the last year with more people walking and cycling to get to and from campus, according to the annual transport survey.

People

Lesley Booth (Director of Community Relations and Lifelong Learning) had received an MBE for services to Higher Education.

Professor Mary Luckhurst (Theatre, Film and Television) had received a new international scholarship from the Higher Education Academy to research innovations in overseas practice and scholarship.

A documentary featuring the mummification of taxi driver Alan Billis, using research by Dr Stephen Buckley and Dr Joann Fletcher (Archaeology), had won a Royal Television Society Award.

Dr Rowena Jacobs (Centre for Health Economics) had been appointed to the Council of Governors for York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

A new sculpture by alumnus Keith Mellard called “Eunoia” (“beautiful thought” in Greek) had been unveiled at Alcuin College during the University’s Alumni Weekend.

Student Recruitment

In response to a query from the student representative on the current status of student recruitment for entry in October 2012, Senate noted that the situation had not changed considerably since the detailed report received at its last meeting (M11-12/36 refers). It was noted that as usual a number of actions would take place during the confirmation period in order to convert applications and acceptances into actual enrolments.

11-12/58 Postgraduate Research Submission Rates

Senate considered a statistical report on postgraduate research (PGR) submission rates, noting that it assessed the timeliness of submission over periods of four and seven years (S.11-12/39).

Attending the meeting to present the report, the Deputy Director of Corporate Planning (John Busby) highlighted the main points, including:

- re-formatting of the report to be more informative and user-friendly;
➢ 66% institutional submission rate (for 2007/8 entrants);
➢ variability across departments and subject areas.

During discussion the following points were noted:

(a) The report attempted to assess submissions against a standard pattern and timescale. Caution therefore needed to be exercised in conflating students with different statuses (e.g. in respect of the difference between a suspension and an extension of the study period).

(b) In order to explore the variability across departments and subject areas more deeply, it would be necessary to examine a range of other data, including funding sources, reasons for withdrawal and other information relating to outcomes (e.g. referrals, major/minor corrections etc).

(c) The University was scrutinised by funding bodies for its overall efficiency as regards submission rates (i.e. research councils did not only evaluate the submission rates of the students they funded).

Senate welcomed the improved format of the report, noting that it would be an annual report and further enhanced in 2012/13 by inclusion of data in respect of postgraduate taught (PGT) outcomes.

11-12/59 Postgraduate Fees

Senate considered a minute in respect of strategy for postgraduate fees from the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9 May 2012 (S.11-12/4), noting that it had been brought forward for discussion at the request of the GSA President.

As Chair of the Committee, the Vice-Chancellor reported that it had considered a paper from the Director of Corporate Planning and the Academic Coordinators which set out a typology of full-time PGT programmes and the possible implications of this for future postgraduate fees. It was noted that Heads of Department were currently being consulted on a possible increase to these fees, in the context of a range of factors, including changes to pricing structures already introduced at a number of competitor institutions. The President of the GSA (Karin Diaconu) expressed concern at the possible effects on current PGT provision and related issues such as the integration of overseas students with the home student population.

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During discussion the following comments were noted:

(a) Further information on current provision was currently being obtained from Heads of Department in order to supplement the information already provided to the Planning Committee. Given that discussion papers related to fee setting were commercially sensitive, it was noted that they would only be shared with student representatives in confidence.

(b) One factor for Planning Committee to consider would be the effect of any change to fee levels on those integrated Masters programmes that shared modules with other programmes.

(c) Departments were being asked to consider their portfolios in order to gain clarity about the function of the PGT programmes currently offered so that they could be appropriately supported, i.e. the basis of the discussion was not the fee level but the character and rationale of the University’s postgraduate academic provision.

As the setting of postgraduate fees was normally considered by Planning Committee in November, it was noted that there would be the opportunity for Senate to consider this matter further at its next meeting in October.

11-12/60 Business from Committees

Senate noted and approved business from the following committee meetings (S.11-12/45):

- Teaching Committee: 21 May and 25 June 2012
- Research Committee: 6 June 2012
- Planning Committee: 9 May and 13 June 2012
- Special Cases Committee: 14 May 2012
- HYMS Joint Senate Committee: 7 June 2012

11-12/61 Student Experience Committee

Senate received for information a paper reporting that the Student Services Committee was broadening its constituency of members and changing its name to the Student Experience Committee (S.11-12/42).
Periodic Review Reports

Senate received for information a periodic review report in respect of the Department of History of Art (S.11-12/43).

Calendar of Meetings 2012/13

Senate received for information the Calendar of Meetings for 2012/13 (S.11-11/44).

Dates of Meetings in 2012/13

The dates of Senate meetings in 2012/13 were noted as follows:

- Tuesday 30 October 2012 (Eynns Room, H/G21, Heslington Hall)
- Tuesday 29 January 2013 (Eynns Room, H/G21, Heslington Hall)
- Tuesday 14 May 2013 (LMB002, Law/Management, Heslington East)
- Tuesday 9 July 2013 (Eynns Room, H/G21, Heslington Hall)

Recruitment of next Vice-Chancellor

Note: The Vice-Chancellor left the meeting for discussion of this item of business and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor assumed the Chair.

Further to M11-12/44, Senate considered a report from the group of its members who had volunteered to identify academic members of the Joint Committee of Senate and Council for appointment of the next Vice-Chancellor. Senate approved the group’s recommendations that the following be appointed:

- Dr Jane Grenville, Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Professor Colin Mellors, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Business & Community)
- Professor Mark Ormrod, Academic Co-ordinator, Arts & Humanities
- Professor Deborah Smith, Head of Department of Biology
- Professor Kiran Fernandes, School of Management

It was noted that all the Council appointees to the Joint Committee were lay members to ensure appropriate balance and that Council had endorsed the appointment by Senate of five (rather than the originally proposed four) academic members.
The Registrar further **reported** that the recruitment consultants employed to support the process (*Odgers*) would be holding a number of open meetings with the wider University community to discuss the person specification and job description for the role, with the intention of advertising the position in October.