

**UNIVERSITY OF YORK**  
**Senate**  
**STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE**

**Matters for note arising from the meeting of Student Life Committee held on 27 January 2022**

1. The Committee **approved**:
  - (a) An approach and timescales for developing student-related KPIs for core aspects of non-academic student life. The Committee **endorsed** the holistic approach rooted in the UUK Stepchange framework, and **noted** that initial KPIs would be brought to the Committee for approval in the autumn term 2022 with recommendations for oversight and reporting. It further **noted** that consideration should be given to developing KPIs relating to the pre-arrivals and arrival experience, and the experience of PGRs linking in with the University's research culture initiatives.
  - (b) A revised Protocol for the use of multi-faith space at the University of York, which had been updated to reflect the additional spaces now available at the University. The Committee **noted** the importance of ensuring that the whole University community was aware of the boundaries for use of these spaces, and that the latter were open and welcoming to staff and students of all faiths and beliefs, including those who did not adhere to a religious faith.
  
2. The Committee **considered** annual reports in relation to the following:
  - (a) Sustainable Transport. The Committee commended the range of activity undertaken during the pandemic, and **noted** the need to (i) capture the experience of disabled staff and students in the March 2022 transport survey, and (ii) look further at student representation on sustainability working groups and committees.
  - (b) The Campus Nursery. The Committee **observed** that it would be helpful to develop a formal communications plan to raise awareness of available places and plans for the new building, and thereby encourage student engagement.
  - (c) Student Scholarships (OPPA), including plans for a workshop in February to review the portfolio of donor-funded scholarships in the context of core funding and other scholarship allocation, towards identifying priorities and goals and developing approaches to measuring long term impact. The Committee **endorsed** the direction of travel to focus on support for students whilst they were engaged in their studies, building on existing investment in WP initiatives. It further **noted**:
    - i. The need for more data regarding the background of students applying for and benefiting from scholarships;
    - ii. The very positive experiences of students holding scholarships which included mentoring and organised interaction within the scholarship cohort;
    - iii. The need to look at support for students on LoA.
  
3. The Committee **considered** progress reports in relation to implementation of the following:
  - (a) The Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, focusing on priority actions identified for delivery in 2021/22. The Committee welcomed the progress made to date and **observed** that the Student Mental Health Forum also needed to look at increasing awareness-raising initiatives as a priority.
  - (b) The Sexual Violence Action Plan. The Committee **noted** that excellent progress had been made against the Plan. It further **noted** the spike in the number of reports of sexual violence during the autumn term 2021 and that this coincided with the awareness-raising campaigns run by the University and YUSU. It also **observed** that development of the Bystander Intervention training was key to preventative action, with scope for exploring a 'train the trainer' approach for sports teams in partnership with YUSU. The Committee welcomed the fact that the majority of students chose to report with contact details, indicating good levels of trust in the support available.
  
4. The Committee **considered** a report on data relating to Report and Support for the Autumn Term 2021. It **noted** that the a change to the protected characteristics questions to focus on the notion of targeting had flagged up sex as a significant factor: this would be followed up through the Sexual Violence Steering Group and initiatives relating to culture change. The Chair **reported** that the University had signed up to the national pledge not to use Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) in dealing with complaints of sexual misconduct, bullying, and other forms of harassment, reflecting the University's existing approach.

5. The Committee **noted** a report from Disability Services, welcoming the inclusion of quantitative data and acknowledging pressures on staff. It **observed** that it would be helpful to look more closely at the data by Faculty and by department in order to identify areas of need, and to consider an embedded model for additional provision, to be shared across departments, taking account of the PSS review and the hub and spoke model. It further **noted** that the Academic Registrar would be looking at how best to support the team going forward.
  
6. The Committee **considered** an interim evaluation of the Department Community Coordinators (DCC) project. It commended the project's success as an exemplar of partnership working with the Students' Union and further **noted**:
  - (a) The need for sustainable funding for the project, which would be considered by the Student & Academic Services DMT;
  - (b) Regarding informal staff/student interaction, the period of time between teaching sessions had valuable potential and should be structured into timetable planning.  
The Committee **approved** the report's recommendations
    - i) To streamline DCC recruitment, and to recruit UG DCCs earlier, subject to confirmation of funding;
    - ii) For a strategic focus on the development of staff and student communities, noting the need for care regarding the impact on staff workload;
    - iii) To develop a collaboration and co-construction framework for future projects, subject to the availability of funding.
  
7. Student surveys:
  - (a) The Committee **noted** a report on NSS 2021 outcomes relating to student life and professional services: findings would be shared with the key leads in the six areas where comments had been received, to take action as appropriate.
  - (b) The Committee **considered** a report on the results of Pulse surveys sent to taught students over the Autumn Term 2021. It **noted** that the Communications team were looking to improve engagement with the survey by targeting particular departments and year groups beyond first year undergraduates, and **observed** that it would be helpful to gather similar data from PGR students, although not necessarily on a weekly basis. A number of areas had been identified for further consideration by SLOCG, including the arrival experience of international students joining at non-standard times; the orientation experience of off-campus students; and ensuring academic supervisors had sufficient information in order to direct students towards further support. The issue of support for effective study routines had been referred to the Academic Contingency Group.
  
8. The Committee **received** updates in relation to the following:
  - (a) A report from the Student Life and Opportunities Contingency Group on activity between November 2021 and January 2022, including reports on Holiday Connect scheme, and from the Head of Security covering introduction of the night reception team and addressing anti-social behaviour at Wentworth College. Further reports on recent activity were received from OPPA, DTEF, Equality & Diversity, the Open Door team, the YGRS and the IPC.
  - (b) The co-Chairs reported on the current Covid situation, including support for self-isolating students; the move of students temporarily based in Hull to Anne Lister College; preparation of a York-wide Accommodation Strategy with CYC and YSJ University; the success of the recent Refreshers event; and preparations for student elections 2022, with a focus on ensuring a diverse range of candidates. The Committee further noted that the Academic Registrar in conjunction with the PVC LT&S, YUSU and GSA was overseeing allocation of withheld pay from the strike action in December to support students via Languages for All, the Student Project Fund, Digital Poverty and Student Hardship funding.
  - (c) Reports from YUSU and the GSA, including work on strategy development, and student engagement with societies, teams and groups, and with advice and welfare services. YUSU reported a reduction in students struggling with the transition to University life, attributed to the University's investment in departmental-level general advice and embedding student wellbeing leads in academic departments.

**Dr Wayne Campbell and Patrick O'Donnell, Co-Chairs of Student Life Committee  
February 2022**