

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

**Matters for note arising from the meeting of Student Life Committee held on 17 June 2021**

1. The Committee welcomed Ms Theofano Kyriakou, Director of Student Services at CITY College, as a new member of Student Life Committee. It also welcomed new and returning representatives for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Conduct and Respect, and internal communications. The Committee thanked the departing Student Communications Manager and the YUSU and GSA officers for whom it was their last meeting. Tess Winther from the Halpin Partnership management consultancy also attended the meeting to observe as part of the University's Effectiveness Review of Council and its subcommittees.
2. The Committee **received** updates in relation to the following:
  - (a) A report from the Student Life and Opportunities Contingency Group (SLOCG) for the period April – June 2021, including information relating to financial support for students, welfare and wellbeing provision, building academic and student communities in departments, and community and volunteering. Further reports on recent activities were received from EDI, DTEF and the IPC, alongside an update from Careers on the recent York Strengths Development Day. Plans for the coming months were also noted, relating to continued support for students in self-isolation, a further round of the Emergency Student Support Fund, and alternative social distancing models for events from September.
  - (b) Details of online graduation, farewell events, week 10 celebrations and YUSU annual awards to celebrate the work of both staff and students.
  - (c) Updates on recent developments from YUSU and from the GSA.
  - (d) A report from the Interim Head of Conduct and Respect on Report and Support for the period 19 April – 28 May 2021. The Committee **noted** that a report on trend data, including in relation to protected characteristics, would be presented at the November 2021 meeting once a full set of data for 2020/21 was available, with termly reports thereafter relating to the previous term.
  - (e) Summaries of recent business from Student Life Operations Group and the Student Mental Health Forum.
3. The Committee **noted** details of the University's response to the recommendations of the report from The Last Taboo campaign group. These would be fed into the University's Sexual Violence Action Plan and taken forward by the Sexual Violence Steering Group, which had held a productive first meeting that week. In addition to the proposed changes to Regulation 7 (see below), key elements included more consistent and accessible communications and new education and training packages, and confirmation of the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer roles as permanent posts. It was further **noted** that a copy of the action plan would be sent to the project leaders of The Last Taboo to encourage ongoing communication.
4. The Committee **considered** the following annual reports:
  - (a) A review of progress against the Committee's annual priorities: the response to the Covid-19 pandemic in all areas of non-academic student life; and student wellbeing and mental health. The latter included a review of the Open Door team's service provision over Terms 2 and 3 (to date), focusing on key areas of data reporting around waiting times, as identified by internal audit.
  - (b) The Annual Report for 2020/21 from Unity Health. The Committee welcomed the report, noting the separation of students from the rest of the patient group data; the move from 10 to 15 minute standard appointment times; measures which were in place to address problems with the practice's phone systems; plans to address suggestions from the annual patient survey for further services; and support for international students to access Covid-19 vaccines. It was **agreed** that Students Union colleagues would work to encourage more students to complete the annual patient survey.
  - (c) The Annual Sport Report for 2020/21, consisting of an update on the delivery and impact of sport at the University over the period; a report on the development of a Strategy for Sport and Physical Wellbeing for consideration by UEB in June; and the Strategy for reopening York Sport Village. The Committee commended

the report and the collaborative working which underpinned it, and noted the emphasis on inclusivity in the Strategy for Sport and Physical Wellbeing.

5. The Committee **approved**:

- (a) A refreshed Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2021-25. It **noted** that the Strategy would be received by Senate and Council for information. It further **noted** that the associated Implementation Plan was a living document, and the following should also be considered for inclusion:
- Strengthening of the focus on wellbeing in the curriculum
  - Feed-in from the forthcoming CYC Health Needs Assessment
  - Links to the Sport Strategy and Implementation Plan once approved by UEB.
- (b) Minor changes to the Support to Study/Attend Policy, for implementation from 2021/22. The Committee further **received** for information changes to the supporting guidance to the Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy (relating to exams, exceptional circumstances, leave of absence, sources of information and shared parental leave), as approved by the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Input had been sought from Student Life Committee members as part of the consultation on the final draft.

6. The Committee **endorsed**:

- (a) Changes to Regulation 7 on student discipline, subject to further consideration of potential tensions between use of the term 'burden of proof', and references to 'the balance of probabilities'. The latter would be resolved via Chair's action.
- (b) Guidelines for supporting philanthropy in memory of a deceased student, member of staff, alumnus/na or friend of the University of York, and requests for physical memorials on campus, subject to further discussions with HR regarding the implications in relation to staff.

7. The Committee **received** the following presentations on student surveys:

- (a) An analysis and overview of the Student Pulse Survey outcomes for 20 April – 1 June 2021. It **endorsed** the recommendations of the analysis regarding:
- the importance of supporting students through the exam period, particularly years 2 and 3.
  - the need to raise awareness of initiatives designed to help students make friends, particularly amongst 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, and to have structures in place to maintain points of contact.
  - the need to ensure students living outside York feel part of the community.
- (b) Outcomes of the International Student Barometer Survey for 2021. The Committee **noted** the need to join up surveys so that all student communities were covered, and the need to scale up services as the volume of international students increased. It further **noted** that a full debrief on the ISB survey would take place in July, and that it would be helpful to look at the findings alongside the NSS data for 2020/21.

8. The Committee **received** a presentation on the University of York for Life project to provide lifelong learning experiences, network building and expanded opportunities for alumni, through a virtual alumni campus. The Committee **endorsed** the initiative, and identified opportunities to link relevant alumni with students from graduating cohorts, particularly overseas students and/or those from vulnerable or minority groups, for peer to peer support.

9. The Committee **noted** the OIA Annual Statement for the University of York 2020 and **endorsed** an internal analysis of the findings.

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

24 June 2021