

UNIVERSITY OF YORK
Council and Senate
STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

Matters for note arising from the meeting of Student Life Committee held on 4 November 2021

1. The Committee **considered** proposed changes to its membership and terms of reference, including the proposal that it should now report to Senate rather than Council and Senate, as proposed by the findings of the Halpin Review. It **resolved to recommend** the proposed changes to Senate for approval, subject to minor amendments regarding the listed membership.
2. The Committee **approved** annual priorities as follows: student mental health and wellbeing; accommodation; employability; engagement with international students; sexual violence; and racial harassment. It further **approved** its annual cycle of business, comprising Annual Reports from core areas of the student non-academic experience, progress reports against key strategic initiatives and reports on the outcomes of and responses to student surveys, noting that formal reporting on PRES and student safety should also be considered for inclusion.

The Committee **agreed** to set up two working groups:

 - (i) To support the strategic development of student-related Key Performance Indicators for core aspects of non-academic student life, for approval by SLC and to inform subsequent reporting to the Committee, in line with the latter's revised terms of reference.
 - (ii) To make recommendations regarding the capture of data relating to the experience of online postgraduate students, to inform the Committee's business.
3. The Committee **received** updates in relation to the following:
 - (a) A report from the Student Life and Opportunities Contingency Group on activity between June and October 2021, including planning for September 2021, under the following headings: financial support for students; welfare and wellbeing provision; building academic and student communities in departments and Colleges; the response to accommodation issues and support under preparation for students moving from Hull to Anne Lister College in the spring term; and community and volunteering. Further reports on recent activity were received from EDI, DTEF, OPPA and the IPC, including progress in relation to the new Student Centre. The Chair noted developments relating to the two UCU ballots for industrial action, which had potential implications for the student experience.
 - (b) Reports from YUSU and the GSA, including ongoing work relating to student safety at night in student venues on and off campus. Engagement in Welcome Week had been strong, with one third of all students registered for membership of a student club or society, and a significant increase in College Sport membership.
 - (c) Data relating to Open Door waiting times and referrals for Weeks 1-4 of the Autumn Term. Targets for the former were being met in all but 2-3% of cases. There had been a significant increase in both complex Open Door and Disability referrals in comparison to the same time period from the previous year, which would be further investigated. Data reporting on the team's capacity to offer appointments, based on number of referrals, indicated that capacity was still available at the current time.
 - (d) Summaries of recent business from Student Life Operations Group and the Student Mental Health Forum.
4. The Committee **received** annual reports in relation to the following:
 - (a) Student Employability, focusing on progress made against the Student Employability Strategy 2017-2022.
 - (b) Volunteering and Community Committee. The Committee endorsed the priorities and challenges proposed for the coming year, and further **agreed** that opportunities to capture information on student volunteering outside centrally organised activities should be explored, with the use of Pulse surveys.
 - (c) Conduct and Respect, including data on submissions made through Report and Support, and on referrals to the SVLOs and to Support to Study. The Committee **noted** that there had been a decrease in anonymous reporting via Report and Support, including a reduction in the more concerning reasons cited for wishing to

report anonymously. It further **noted** that it would be helpful to see trend data in this area over a longer period of time, once that information is available.

5. The Committee **received** a progress report on implementation of the Sexual Violence Action Plan, as considered by UEB in September, noting that progress had been reviewed with reference to the OfS's Statement of Expectations to prevent and address harassment and sexual misconduct. It was further **reported** that funding had been confirmed for the second SVLO to the end of July 2022. The Committee **noted** that excellent progress had been made, and **agreed** that it would be helpful for the Sexual Violence Steering Group, supported by the Conduct and Respect team, to go on to look at specific issues affecting particular student groups, including PGRs.
6. The Committee **considered** a report on the new landscape of equality issues post-Covid from the co-Chairs of INCLUDE, referred to the Committee for consideration and comment by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Committee welcomed the report and noted the importance of inclusive learning. It advised that specific proposals should be formulated to take this agenda forward, then referred to the University Teaching Committee for consideration.
7. The Committee **considered** an analysis from PwC of key issues in the sector relating to student mental health and wellbeing, referred to SLC by the Audit and Risk Committee for comment. The Committee **noted** the University's current approach: the refreshed Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and action plan, including mechanisms for implementation and reporting; external partnerships; use of the PCMIS system to record interactions with Open Door, and monitoring of key data by SLC; increased opportunities for student feedback; introduction of alternative modes of delivery for support; and promotion of welfare services in student accommodation, as well as online and via awareness campaigns. It **noted** that the University was in a good position, although there was work to be done to further the key aims of the new Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Committee further **noted** the following:

- (a) Work was under way to develop metrics to measure the impact of interventions on student outcomes across different student groups;
 - (b) There was a need to look at the pressures created by academic structures, rules and procedures, in order to identify adjustments which could be made to help both students and staff.
8. The Committee **considered** proposals to remove the appeals process from the Student Support Fund. It **agreed** that there was a need to consult further with the student community via YUSU and GSA, prior to bringing proposals back for further consideration.
 9. The Committee **received** a report on the Pulse Survey findings for the start of the Autumn Term 2021 regarding: student mood as term progressed; attitudes towards Covid 19 testing and mask wearing; and socialising. It further **noted** actions undertaken in response to the findings.
 10. The Committee **considered** a 'bite size' student guide proposed for potential publication on the University's webpages. It **agreed** that further input should be sought from the Communications team and a Student Expert panel to ensure inclusivity and alignment with information provided centrally.

Dr Wayne Campbell and Patrick O'Donnell, Co-Chairs of Student Life Committee
15 November 2021