

UNIVERSITY OF YORK
Senate
STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

Matters for note arising from the meeting of Student Life Committee held on 16 June 2022

1. The Committee **endorsed** and **recommended to Senate** the approval of revisions to Regulation 7: Student Discipline, subject to any changes made necessary as a result of legal advice, to be endorsed by the co-Chair (Academic Registrar) after the meeting as needed. The Committee **noted** that the revisions acted to separate the regulation from underlying procedure, whilst the regulation had also been updated in a number of areas following consultation. The procedure for non-academic disciplinary matters would also be separated from that for academic misconduct: the former procedure was in development and would be approved by the Committee by circulation, following consultation with relevant stakeholders.
2. The Committee **approved**:
 - a. A revised procedure for appeals in relation to the Student Support Fund. This introduces a process whereby students can ask for a review of a decision on the basis that the assessment of their case had not been completed correctly in procedure or that important information had been missed. If an error is identified as a result, this would prompt a full review of the case.
 - b. Revisions to the Departmental Community Coordinators (DCC) project for 2022/23, following consideration of an evaluation report on the project during 2021/22. The revisions act to provide departments with one UG DCC and (if needed) one PGT DCC for 12 weeks to develop student-led induction activities, rather than having a DCC over the whole year. The Committee further **endorsed** the development of a student-staff partnership framework, to connect existing partnership projects and inspire new ones; and a proposal that departments would have the opportunity to bid for funding to support a paid student partner on learning and teaching enhancement projects, subject to funding for this aspect of the project and the endorsement of the PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students.
 - c. A Safeguarding and Welfare Procedure for Summer Schools and Short Courses in the Centre for Global Programmes, subject to minor updates. Further work would be done to ensure consistency between all such safeguarding procedures that operate under the University's main safeguarding policy.
3. The Committee **considered** annual reports in relation to:
 - a. Unity Health. The Committee welcomed a range of work by Unity Health to support students during 2021/22, and **observed** that the Link Practitioner and Social Prescriber roles had been particularly beneficial. It was **reported** that Unity Health's key challenge was around waiting times in the secondary care system. Unity Health was undertaking work to analyse accident and emergency attendance among patients aged 18-25 and would report back on this data to see if preventative measures could be put in place. Unity Health further **reported** on the ongoing need to address mental health problems among student patients, including the development of peer support and student resilience initiatives. The Committee **noted** that a move from a Clinical Commissioning Group model to an Integrated Care System model provided an opportunity to promote the student agenda in the city in relation to health.
 - b. Sport: The Committee commended a significant range of activities in relation to sport in 2021/22. It **noted** that membership of York Sport was significantly reduced compared to pre-COVID levels, partly attributable to COVID lockdowns acting as barriers to membership. York Sport planned to 're-launch' in August 2022 to increase participation. It was **reported** that UEB had approved the Sports Strategy. Work was underway to revise elements of the Strategy in light of post-COVID challenges and to create more specific targets. The Strategy would be officially launched in Autumn Term 2022, and an implementation plan presented to the Committee for monitoring. The Committee **observed** that work to establish KPIs for Sport should be aligned to broader work in this area under the Committee's oversight.
 - c. Annual Priorities: The Committee **considered** a report on its work against its annual priorities for 2021/22 (Student Mental Health and Wellbeing; Accommodation; Employability; Engagement with International students; Sexual Violence; Racial Harassment), and **noted** that good progress had been made in all these areas.

4. The Committee **considered** an action plan from Open Door and Disability in response to the report from YUSU on the experience of being a disabled student at the University, considered at the April 2022 meeting. Further work would be done to integrate the action plan with work undertaken by the YUSU Community and Wellbeing Officer and to ensure that it contained clear actions and responsibilities against each of the recommendations in the YUSU report and the Committee's comments at its April meeting. A revised plan would be presented to the November meeting. It was **reported** that YGRS was leading a piece of work on the experience of PGR students with disabilities and would liaise with Open Door and Disability on this.
5. The Committee **considered** a report on the results of the International Student Barometer survey for 2022. It **observed** that:
 - a. Scores around access to suitable accommodation were lower than benchmark for both domestic and international students. This result was likely to refer both to on- and off-campus accommodation. This issue was being addressed by the University's new Accommodation Strategy.
 - b. Results in relation to Counselling / Open Door were significantly below benchmark for domestic students but above benchmark for international students, who were however significantly less likely to use the service. Additional work would be undertaken to more deeply analyse the data in the survey in relation to student life and wellbeing and, as needed, generate additional data via other mechanisms.
 - c. Some international students, particularly Chinese students, had reported incidents of discriminatory behaviour or racial harassment via open comments. The comments suggested that these incidents largely occurred in the city or through antisocial behaviour of members of the local community on-campus: the University had responded to specific incidents by improving security and introducing specific measures to further support students. Further work would be done to better understand the experience of Chinese students on-campus, with reports to the Community Cohesion Steering Group.
6. The Committee **considered** a report on Student Pulse surveys for taught students. It **noted** that:
 - a. The Pulse surveys would continue, moving from weekly to fortnightly, with an increase in the number of questions per survey and analysis better supported through triangulation with other sources of data. Additional work would be done to promote changes resulting from the survey in order to highlight the value of participation.
 - b. The trial of free period products had been very well received by students. As a result, YUSU was exploring extending this via Access and Participation Steering Group funding.
 - c. The Communications team would liaise with YGRS to explore how the survey mechanism might be extended to PGR students.
7. The Committee **considered** progress reports in relation to implementation of the following:
 - a. The Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2021/25. The Committee **observed** that good progress had been made against the action plan for 2021/22. It was **reported** that there would be a further review of the membership of the Student Mental Health Forum. Work on a student suicide safer plan would be presented to the November meeting of the Committee. A revised action plan against the Strategy for 2022/23 would be developed. The Student Wellbeing Officer roles, embedded in Faculties, had been the subject of a recent away day: feedback from staff holding those roles would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.
 - b. The Sexual Violence Action Plan. The Committee **observed** that good progress had been made against the action plan for 2021/22, and that a significant number of the OfS Expectations in this area had now been addressed.

8. The Committee **considered** a report on data relating to Report and Support for Spring Term 2022. It was **reported** that the vast majority of students chose to report with contact details, which allowed support to be put in place. A significant number (c. 28%) of cases related to sexual violence and sexual harassment. There had been a higher than usual proportion of cases involving serious acts of physical violence: in response, the team planned to develop work around conflict resolution to implement preventative measures. The Report and Support tool was being used by the local community to report concerns around student neighbours: the University had received positive feedback from the neighbourhood forum around its response.
9. The Committee **received** the following further updates or reports:
 - a. A report from the Student Mental Health Forum held on 31 May 2022.
 - b. An update on ongoing work to develop KPIs for the non-academic aspects of the student experience.
 - c. Oral reports from the Co-Chairs, who reported that, following consultation with YUSU and the GSA, staff pay withheld due to the recent strike action would be wholly allocated to support student hardship via food vouchers and accommodation / fuel costs; access to broadband; and support for LFA and student experience projects. The co-Chairs further reported on the planned graduation ceremonies in July, identifying the need for a consistent student experience.
 - d. A report from the new Student Experience Operations Group from its May 2022 meeting.
 - e. Reports on recent activity from OPPA, DTEF, Equality & Diversity, the Open Door team, the YGRS and the IPC, YUSU and the GSA. Both YUSU and the GSA reported on advice and casework.

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