

SENATE ELECTION SUMMER 2024

Candidate Statements: Faculty of SCIENCES

Eslam ELBAALY (Health Sciences)

As a Senior Lecturer in Humanitarian Studies at the University of York and an active member of Athena SWAN I understand the balance between academic excellence, student success, and promoting an inclusive learning environment. I have a diverse background spanning academic teaching and research, clinical medicine, public health, and humanitarian aid which puts me in an excellent position to contribute to the Senate's role to oversee academic policy and regulatory matters.

As a Senior Lecturer in the Masters in International Humanitarian Affairs I am teaching and supervising students with diverse backgrounds studying and working in challenging environments which helps me to understand the varied issues they face to complete their studies.

In my time as a Lecturer at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and as a Senior Public Health Manager with Doctors Without Borders (MSF) I also gained insights into navigating academic policies, regulations, and quality assurance processes while being committed to student-centered learning approaches.

My clinical background as a medical doctor with a MSc in Public Health and Development from LSHTM and ongoing doctoral studies at LSHTM, provide me with unique perspectives as a lecturer and student. I have experience in curriculum development, program evaluation, and strategic planning. I have consistently supported student-centric initiatives and my active involvement in academic committees and task forces has given me the ability to understand complex governance structures effectively.

This holistic understanding from my current and past work would enable me to contribute meaningfully to the Senate's role in strategic development, performance monitoring, and resource allocation decisions that impact teaching, learning and research.

Masoumeh (Massi) JAHANI (Physics, Engineering and Technology)

I am Masoumeh (Massi) Jahani, an experienced academic in Engineering Management at the University of York, eagerly seeking to contribute to the Senate. Since my appointment in April 2022, I have been actively engaged in academic and administrative roles, demonstrating my dedication to enhancing our university's academic policies and governance.

My educational background includes a PhD in Medical Engineering and an MBA, supplemented by rich experiences across various universities. These experiences have equipped me with a broad perspective on effective educational practices. As an advocate for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), I have championed progressive EDI policies and actively supported initiatives to empower women in STEM fields.

In my current role as the Chair of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee, and previously as Year 4 Leader, I have gained a deep understanding of the academic implications crucial to the Senate's responsibilities. My involvement in managing academic standards and enhancing student experiences aligns closely with the Senate's strategic goals.

Additionally, I co-founded two non-profit community organizations focused on promoting social mobility and sustainability thinking within society. This work underscores my commitment to community engagement and enhances the societal impact of our academic community.

My extensive participation in Boards of Study, Exam Committees, and various teaching and research committees provides me with valuable insights into the challenges faced by lecturers and students at all levels—from Foundation to PhD. This comprehensive perspective strengthens my advocacy for policies that support academic integrity and student success.

I am committed to using my expertise to support underrepresented groups at the university. By developing inclusive policies and employing data-driven strategies, I aim to create a fairer academic environment that addresses disparities and promotes equity.

With a proven track record of impactful leadership and a strong commitment to academic excellence, I am prepared to serve on the Senate to help ensure that our academic community not only thrives but also leads in fostering an inclusive and sustainable future.

Oleg LISAGOR (Computer Science)

I am a Lecturer (T&S) in the Computer Science department where I teach on an MSc programme aimed largely at professional engineers in full-time employment. I also coordinate the department's portfolio of industrial training courses in system safety. I have previously acted as Programme Lead and have been a Chair of the Board of Examiners for our online programmes. Between 2012 and 2019 I have been the head of one of the Colleges of the University with significant responsibility for students' welfare, discipline and extra-curricular development.

I have a particular interest in the experience of our part-time students (both online and in-York). With the growth of programmes that are designed specifically for part-time studies, our governance frameworks and academic procedures are somewhat lagging behind. The experience and needs of part-time students, who undertake their degrees alongside demanding careers and significant additional responsibilities and challenges, sometimes remain an afterthought in the design of academic policies, procedures and support systems. If elected, I intend to build on my experiences to provide an authentic voice for part-time programmes, their staff and students in the Senate.

As a former Head of College, I am also interested in the relationship between students' academic success and their wider on-campus experience and activities. I believe that there are underexplored opportunities for a purposeful (co-)design of the wider student experience in a way that supports and reinforces more formal learning and, ultimately, success by our students.

Overall, as a York graduate and someone who has worked in this University for over 20 years, I am passionate about the unique character and collegiate culture of this University. I feel that it is important that the features that make this university feel small and collegiate are retained as we change the way that we work and as we respond to the current challenges.

Matt PROBERT (Physics, Engineering and Technology)

I joined the University of York as a lecturer over 20 years ago, and have been proud to call this institution my academic home. Over the years I have seen how York has expanded and changed. I have also gained some understanding of how the University operates, through membership / chairing various committees and networking. I also have regional experience, as Director of an N8-funded centre of excellence, and have worked extensively with other external bodies such as EPSRC and BEIS on major national projects. At the same time, I have also gained experience of other universities, both in the UK as an undergraduate External Examiner and abroad as a Visiting Professor. I have seen what York does well, and where it can improve. I am keen to bring my experience to Senate, and do what I can to strengthen the University and help to steer it towards a better future.

Chris WILKINSON (Hull York Medical School)

I was attracted to the University of York for its academic reputation, but mainly because it is a great place to work. It is collegiate, inclusive, outward looking - and aspires to do good in the world. Difficult times in the higher education sector make it more important than ever that we stay true to these values, which requires a strong academic voice in the senate.

Alongside my academic work, I am an NHS cardiologist. I have experience of trying to maintain high standards in a system that is under immense pressure, and the toll that this takes on staff. The parallels with the university sector are clear as we navigate challenges in student recruitment and compete for scarce research funding, compounded by fears about our job security.

To maintain our high standards of teaching and research we must prioritise recruiting and retaining the very best students and staff. As good people are leaving the NHS, everything is becoming worse - this must be avoided at the University. Staff should be supported to produce their best work, with protected time for professional development, and equitable access to academic promotion.

Many thanks for considering me to represent you on the senate. If selected, I will be a strong advocate for building upon the strengths of York, which are rooted in our values, and critically dependent on our staff.

Candidate Statements: Faculty of SOCIAL SCIENCES

Viktor MANAHOV (Business and Society)

I seek your support for the privilege of joining our University Senate. My current role as Reader in Finance comprises a wide range of teaching, research, and administrative duties, with additional responsibilities from various external activities. I joined the University of York in 2014 and have broad experience in teaching and research, with international research collaboration. I have the leadership experience, character, and vision to join the Senate as we collectively face recent financial challenges in the sector, persistent pay equity issues, uncertainty in work expectations, and multiple competing demands on our time.

My experience of the university's internal dynamics over the last decade gives me insight into the opportunities available as we develop globally and the difficulties associated with operating in very different environments, sometimes with conflicting priorities. I deeply understand university procedures, policies, and approval processes, which I gained through my experience and their implementation within the SBS. This varied experience positions me to play a valuable role in the Senate, advocating for University values across all campuses. My primary motivation for joining the Senate is to foster collegiality, promote academic and professional advancement for faculty, staff, and students, emphasise meaningful mentoring, champion equity, and safeguard the integrity of our esteemed academic community. I am also standing for election to the Senate because I am passionate about promoting the University's values of pursuing excellence, being outward-looking, and shaping the future. In the past decade, I have learned much about how the University works, how things get done (or not done), and how to work with diverse groups with competing interests.

My vision for the Senate is to foster a more inclusive environment where all voices are heard and your contributions are valued. I commit to doing my best to ensure that the university's mission and goals are met and that all University of York community members are represented and heard.

Dimitrios STAFYLAS (Business and Society)

As an Assistant Professor of Finance with extensive academic and industry experience, I can bring a unique blend of academic expertise and practical knowledge to the role of Senator. My multidisciplinary background (PhD Finance, MBA, and MSc Net-Centric Systems) provides me a comprehensive understanding of both theoretical and practical aspects of governance and finance, positioning me to contribute effectively to the Senate's responsibilities.

My research lies in empirical finance and corporate finance, areas that are critical for understanding and addressing the economic challenges we face today. I have published and presented my work in esteemed journals and prestigious conferences, demonstrating my commitment to advancing knowledge and underscoring my ability to analyse and communicate complex ideas and propose evidence-based solutions—skills that are essential for effective policy work. My industry experience in consulting and management, along with trustee experience in a charity organization, complements my academic background, providing me with practical insights into the sector's workings and the challenges organizations face. This dual perspective allows me to bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that my contributions to the Senate are grounded in real-world relevance. Additionally, I am dedicated to fostering transparency, accountability, and evidence-based policymaking. I believe in the importance of open communication and active engagement with constituents, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs addressed.

In conclusion, the combination of academic and practical experience, along with my commitment to fostering inclusive and equitable environments, makes me a suitable candidate for the Senate. I am eager to apply my skills and knowledge to serve our community effectively and to help shape policies that promote sustainable excellence, efficiency, and well-being for all. Thank you for considering my candidacy.
