

## March Review

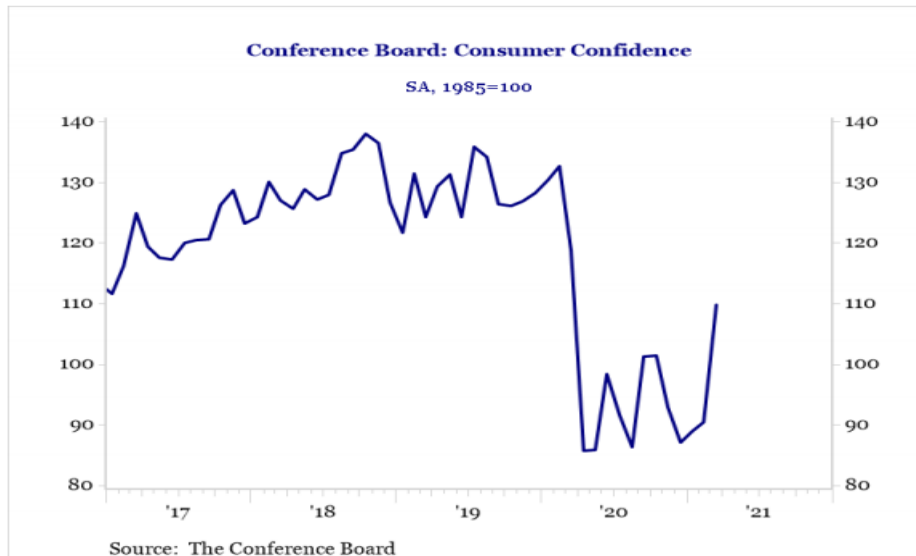
The Fund's F Acc share class returned -3.38% in March, compared to the S&P 500 ETF return of +4.77% in sterling terms. Despite this, the fund still sits in the top decile of the IA North America sector, having returned 13.06% vs the S&P 500 ETF return of 5.54% year to date.

Although the S&P 500 index itself was positive for the month, things were much more volatile at the sector level with weakness in Technology, Energy and Materials and in any part of the market that had performed well thus far in 2021. The best performing sectors in the S&P 500 index were Utilities and Staples, which enjoyed a counter trend bounce in March, and these are two sectors where we don't have much exposure. The correction in growth stocks was mainly felt in our Tech and Communications Services sector weightings, Twilio -13.3% and Snap -20.4%, but also some of our higher growth Discretionary names also sold off, with Chewy the online petfood retailer, -16.6%, one of the largest detractors to performance. Energy and Materials were also weak, but I believe the action this month has been a normal correction and is a dip to take advantage of rather than one to be concerned about.

There are two powerful forces in the immediate future that we, as investors, need to be positioned for. The first is the re-opening of the economy and the second is the wave of inflation that is coming alongside it. As we anniversary the Covid shutdown period of Q2 2020 we are due for a very big bounce in both GDP and inflation in Q2 2021; in part because some of the base effects are the lowest ever seen by any living investor, and as we lap these comparisons the economy is re-opening at the same time. This could mean that we see GDP growth in Q2 21 north of 10% which would mark it out as the second strongest quarterly expansion since World War 2. This is why we continue to be positioned in the cyclical areas of the market and have been increasing our weightings to Energy, Financials, Industrials and Materials over the last few weeks.

## Market Outlook

We have also increased our Consumer Discretionary weighting as American consumers have emerged from the Covid recession better off than when they went into it, thanks to the huge Government response to the pandemic. We estimate that consumers have an extra \$1tr at their disposal that is likely to be spent, invested, or used to pay down debt. Consumers are certainly feeling confident, as this week's consumer confidence data for March showed, with a reading of 109 vs 90.4 in February.



With further stimulus to come and an announced multi-trillion dollar fiscal and infrastructure plan there is a lot to look forward to in US equities and we believe an active and differentiated portfolio like ours is the best way to get exposure to the exciting markets ahead.

**Felix Wintle, Fund Manager, VT Tyndall North American Fund, 31 March 2021**

Data source: Strategas Research Partners March 2021

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