

# NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

## SENATE

1 May 2024

**Present:** The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor Brian Walker (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor David Burn, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Stephanie Glendinning, Professor Matthew Grenby, Professor Nigel Harkness, Professor Ruth Valentine (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Shah Yaseen Ali (President, Students' Union), Professor Caroline Austin, Professor Chris Baldwin, Lulu Chen (Education Officer, Students' Union) Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Dr Marie Devlin, Professor Darren Evans, Professor Jens Hentschke, Professor Alex Hughes, Professor Anya Hurlbert, Professor Andy Husband, Dr Darren Kelsey, Professor David Kennedy, Dr Anjam Khan, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Chirag Kumar (Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union), Lucy Leeds (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students' Union), Dr Gareth Longstaff, Professor Rhiannon Mason, Kate McGill, Claire Morgan, Professor Graham Morgan, Dr Charles Morisset, Dr Meiko O'Halloran, Professor Alison Shaw, Dr Robert Shaw, Dr Laila Singh, Professor John Wildman, Dr Laura Woodhouse and Dr Emily Yarrow.

**In attendance:** Dr Colin Campbell (Registrar), Justin Cole (Executive Director of External Relations), Rachel Dearlove (Head of Educational Governance & QA) for Minute 67, Neil Gardner (Director of Strategic Planning and Change) for Minute 66, Dr Simon Meacher (Head of Executive and Governance Office), Naomi Oosman-Watts (Director of Student Success) for Minute 65, and Heidi Shultz (Executive and Governance Team Manager)

**Apologies:** Professor Mike Capaldi, Nick Collins, Professor Catherine Exley, Professor Anoop Nayak, Professor Vee Pollock, Professor Judith Rankin, Professor Rachel Pain, Professor Jane Robinson, Professor Jo Robinson, Professor Candy Rowe, Jackie Scott

## MINUTES

### 61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### 62. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 28 February 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document A. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

### 63. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor and President's report. Highlights of this report are discussed below.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Reported:

a) Free Speech and the Conflict in the Middle East

The Vice-Chancellor reported that he continues to meet with sabbatical officers, student societies and members of the chaplaincy team to receive updates on the impact of the

ongoing crisis in the Middle East on students and colleagues. Work on protecting the University community from hate was being led by the Changing the Culture Group and further updates would be provided from the University of Sanctuary Steering Group and would be published on University channels including NU Connections and NUConnect. New legislation had been passed in May 2023 which imposed new free speech duties on universities and colleges, their constituent institutions and some students' unions. Those new duties are expected to come into force on 1 August 2024.

The Department for Education had briefly paused work on definitions of discrimination but the Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion would continue to provide a point of contact for that work as it progresses.

b) Newcastle University Students' Union Sustainability Week

The Students' Union held its Sustainability Week from Monday 19 to Friday 23 February. A full programme of events was provided across the week and included updates regarding sustainability at the Students' Union and the University. Students were encouraged to make their voices heard regarding sustainable change at both organisations.

c) Colleague and Student Successes

Gustavo Abdiel Aguilar-Maranda had won Best New Initiative at Honours for Diversity and Inclusion in Maritime 2024 for his I Exist too project which aimed to improve the visibility and rights of LGBTIQ+ people in the maritime industry.

Professor Clare Bamba (Population Health Sciences Institute) had been awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Board of the Faculty of Public Health.

Professor Janice Ellis (School of Dental Sciences) had been named Principal Fellow of HEA for meeting criteria in the Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in Higher Education.

Dr Sarah Graham (School of Medical Education) had been named Principal Fellow of HEA for meeting criteria in the Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in Higher Education.

Professor Peter Hopkins (School of Geography, Politics, and Sociology) had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) for the excellence of his work and his contributions to policy in Scotland.

Professor Eileen Kaner (Population Health Sciences Institute) had been reappointed as a National Institute for Health and Care Research Senior Investigator.

Professor Vijay Kunadian (Translational and Clinical Research Institute) had been appointed as Cardiovascular National Specialty Group Lead within the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Research Delivery Network.

Professor Ruth McAreavey (School of Geography, Politics, and Sociology) had been made a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in recognition of her substantial contribution to social science.

Professor Christopher Price (Population Health Sciences Institute) had been reappointed as National Specialty Lead through an open national competition. He would be National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Stroke Lead for the next three years as part of the Research Delivery Network.

Dr Kenneth Rankin (Translational and Clinical Research Institute) had been named as Researcher of the Year in The Bone Idols Awards, set up by the Bone Cancer Research Trust in 2021 to celebrate those who show exceptional dedication to improving the lives of bone cancer patients.

Dr Salman Razvi (Translational and Clinical Research Institute) had been appointed to a National Institute for Health and Care Research Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation Advanced Fellowship.

Professor Lynn Rochester (Translational and Clinical Research Institute) had been reappointed as a National Institute for Health and Care Research Senior Investigator.

Professor John Simpson (Medical School, Respiratory Medicine) had been reappointed as a National Institute for Health and Care Research Senior Investigator.

Professor Ruth Valentine (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education) had been named Principal Fellow of HEA for meeting criteria in the Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in Higher Education.

Dr Claire Wood had been appointed to a National Institute for Health and Care Research Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation Advanced Fellowship.

d) Appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor reported that Professor Brian Walker had decided to step down from his executive role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 31 August 2024. Having considered the portfolios of current Executive Board members and discussed this with the Chair of Council, the Vice-Chancellor proposed to Senate that the University would proceed to appoint a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Under the Statutes, Council might, after consultation with Senate, appoint a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. To do this, Council would form a committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor with an equal number of representatives of Council and Senate, to make the recommendation on whom to appoint. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor would be appointed for a period fixed by Council (typically five years).

The Chair of Council would seek nominations from Council and would provide an update at the meeting of Council on 10 June 2024. The Vice-Chancellor invited members of Senate to make nominations of individuals to serve on the appointment committee by sending nominations to the Governance Office at [governanceoffice@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:governanceoffice@ncl.ac.uk), by 10 May 2024.

The Vice-Chancellor advised it would be appropriate for the final committee to have a good gender and ethnicity balance and a spread of faculty and lay members. It would also be useful if a Sabbatical Officer could serve.

e) Late News – Health Innovation Neighborhood

The Vice-Chancellor reported that planning permission had been granted for the Health Innovation Neighbourhood (HIN) site. The Academic Director of HIN would continue to consult with academic colleagues throughout the development of the site and would provide continuing updates to Senate.

f) Late News – Disability Confident

The University had successfully been awarded Disability Confident Level 2 'Employer' status. This had involved conducting a self-assessment which covered two themes: 'Getting the right people for your business' and 'Keeping and Developing your People'.

The self-assessment demonstrated alignment in many areas including recruitment, providing adjustments, and consulting with disabled people.

**64. SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 18 MARCH 2024**

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 18 March 2024.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**65. ENHANCING STUDENT INCLUSION AND BELONGING**

Received a presentation from Chirag Kumar, Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union, and Naomi Oosman-Watts, Director of Student Services.

Noted that:

- a) Promoting a sense of student inclusion could take many different forms, including recognising that international students were an internally diverse group of individuals rather than a single category.
- b) Complicated language, unconscious bias, and the idiosyncrasies of assessment procedures and other aspects of academic culture had been identified as potential barriers to belonging and inclusion.
- c) Active listening, friendly banter and collective recognition were mentioned as impactful ways to help ensure student belonging.
- d) Fostering a sense of belonging for international students required time and effort. The removal of biases and labels, underpinned by a positive culture and commitment to closing the feedback loop, were felt to be crucial for belonging.
- e) International student feedback had included a range of positive comments noting the welcoming and engaging processes and services offered by the University, while also including areas of potential improvement around language barriers, long wait times for responses to queries and a lack of 'one-stop' resources.
- f) Recent improvements to student systems had included digital mapping of the student journey and the development of a new registration portal for implementation in September 2024.
- g) Notable improvements to the student journey had included the consolidation of online resources, the launch of a pilot English language support programme and the development of a 'Plain English' initiative supported by student content creators.
- h) Campus and culture improvements included expanded job search assistance, enhanced support for late-arriving students and a modernised, student-oriented helpdesk to be installed as part of the on-going King's Gate redevelopment project.
- i) Lulu Chen, Education Officer, Students' Union, had undertaken extensive research to gather feedback and better understand the student experience from the Helix-site perspective, with the intent of enabling a 'one-campus', inclusive experience for all students.
- j) Further work was needed to ensure that Student Health and Wellbeing Services could provide diversified, agile responses with language barriers mitigated or removed where possible.

- k) Attention would be given to the provision of academic language and skills support to ensure it was offered in line with student needs rather than at fixed intervals. The 'Student First' approach had been employed in decision making processes and University colleagues continued to request student feedback to test and challenge existing and new processes.
- l) The training provided to King's Gate helpdesk colleagues could be rolled out to colleagues working in reception spaces throughout the Faculties to ensure best practice and a joined-up approach.

## 66. NU SHAPE

Received an update from Professor Brian Walker, Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Noted that:

- a) Each of the faculties had been reporting good progress against the top-priority cross-cutting strategies as agreed in 2021, and that the same focus was retained for the 2023-24 academic year to continue building on the progress already made.
- b) This decade had been notably volatile for the Higher Education sector, impacting institutions, students and colleagues. Key questions for consideration had included how to diversify income and be resilient to global instability, how to configure infrastructure to achieve NetZero and how give students what they need and employers what they demand.
- c) The University had been moving away from an annual short-term 'strategic planning' cycle in favour of five-year strategic delivery plans, developed through a programme called NUShape, or 'Shaping Newcastle to 2030'.
- d) A 'scene setting' exercise had been undertaken in 2023 with University and Faculty Executive Boards which helped to identify key options for the years ahead. During the Exploration Phase these options were shared with the leadership teams across University units, and those teams had shared their vision for their disciplines in 2030 and what steps they might take to get there. This process had been effective in joining the dots between what leadership was thinking from the 'bottom up' and 'top down'.
- e) Notably, one of the greatest attributes of the University was the ability to work in a place-based way as an anchor institution with partners while also achieving globally significant outcomes as a result, referred to as 'Place-Plus'.
- f) The University could effectively combine forces across disciplines as the institution was large enough to have all the disciplines, but also small and cohesive enough to combine them. University Executive Board was in discussion about creating an appropriate venue for conversations about which topics and programmes can best be applied in a multi-disciplinary way.
- g) NUShape was now moving into the Planning Phase which involved identifying the topics in which the University was aiming to grow, keep on track or sustain and asking each Faculty and academic unit to commit to a small number of the highest priority objectives against which progress can be monitored over five years, starting in September 2024.
- h) To ensure financial sustainability, a target had been set to recruit 1,000 additional international students. Numbers of home students continues to increase in pace with

wider recruitment targets, confirming that home students are not being replaced with international students.

- i) NUShape was an enabler of existing strategies such as the new Education Strategy, and implementation would occur using existing channels and within existing frameworks (i.e., Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies and equity analysis).

#### 67. ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

Received a presentation from Rachel Dearlove, Head of Educational Governance and Quality Assurance.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

- a) The submission of an Access and Participation Plan (APP) was a regulatory requirement of the conditions of registration set by the Office for Students (OfS), and there was substantial financial risk attached to the development of the plan if it did not meet OfS expectations.
- b) Producing a plan required institutions to work through a systematic set of steps drawing together quantitative and qualitative evidence to understand the underlying 'risks to equality of opportunity' that students face in their higher education journey.
- c) The development of the University's new APP had been undertaken through the APP Working Group. This had been chaired by the Academic Registrar with membership of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education, NUSU Sabbatical Officers, Recruitment and Admissions, Student Services, Inclusive Newcastle Knowledge Centre and Finance.
- d) Student engagement in the development of the APP was a key requirement of the OfS and a Student Collaborative Group (SCG) had been established to provide input and feedback on the draft APP as it was being developed. Newcastle University Students' Union intended to submit a Student Submission to the OfS as part of the APP process also drawing on the SCG.

***Resolved that Senate approve the Access and Participation Plan for submission to Council and the Office for Students, with approval of the final version to be provided by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.***

#### 68. WHITE SPACE

Noted that:

- a) The Vice-Chancellor invited members of Senate to submit suggestions for future agenda items.

#### 69. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 29(4))

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 29(4), Senate may accord the title of Professor Emeritus on professors retiring from the University.

Considered a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor and President following consultation with the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document E. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

***Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:  
Professor Carlo Barengi, with effect from 1 September 2024.***

***Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:  
Professor Patrick Briddon, with effect from 1 September 2024.***

***Resolved that the title of Professor Emerita be conferred on:  
Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, with effect from 1 June 2024.***

***Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:  
Professor Chris Kilsby, with effect from 1 May 2024.***

***Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:  
Professor Bob Lightowlers, with effect from 1 June 2024.***

***Resolved that the title of Professor Emerita be conferred on:  
Professor Karen Ross, with effect from 1 August 2024.***

#### **70. SENATE ELECTIONS**

Received details of the 2024 election for Senate membership.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

#### **71. SENATE MEETING DATES 2024-25**

Received details the Senate meeting dates for the 2024-25 academic year.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document G. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

#### **72. SEMESTER AND TERM DATES 2025-26**

Received a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

#### **73. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE**

Received a report from the meeting of:

- a) University Global Committee: 18 January 2024  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
- b) University Education Committee: 14 February and 18 April 2024  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
- c) University Research and Innovation Committee: 19 March 2024  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
- b) University Engagement and Place Committee: 29 January 2024  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

#### **74. REPORTED BUSINESS**

Received a report of action taken in accordance with agreed procedures, approved where necessary by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and/or the Chair of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairs.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]