

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

26 June 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 Jane Robinson, Professor Ruth Valentine (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor Caroline Austin, Professor Chris Baldwin, Professor Catherine Exley, Dr Marie Devlin, Professor Darren Evans, Professor Jens Hentschke, Professor Alex Hughes, Dr Darren Kelsey, Professor David Kennedy, Dr Anjam Khan, Kate McGill, Claire Morgan, Professor Graham Morgan, Professor Anoop Nayak, Dr Meiko O'Halloran, Professor Vee Pollock, Dr Robert Shaw, Dr Laura Woodhouse, and Dr Emily Yarrow.

In attendance: Darren Beattie (Careers Consultant (Curriculum)) for Minute 83, Dr Colin Campbell (Registrar), Helen Challis (Director of the International Office) attended for Minute 83, Nick Collins (Executive Director of Finance), Dr Simon Meacher (Head of Executive and Governance Office), Kelly Oliver (Risk Manager) for Minute 82, Jackie Scott (Executive Director of People Services) and Heidi Shultz (Executive and Governance Team Manager)

Apologies: Professor Mike Capaldi, Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Professor Anya Hurlbert, Professor Andy Husband, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Dr Gareth Longstaff, Professor Rhiannon Mason, Dr Charles Morisset, Professor Rachel Pain, Professor Judith Rankin, Professor Jo Robinson, Professor Candy Rowe, Professor Alison Shaw, Dr Laila Singh, and Professor John Wildman

MINUTES

75. WELCOME

The Chair thanked the following colleagues for their service to Senate and noted this was their final meeting:

Professor Caroline Austin
Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers
Professor Darren Evans
Professor Jens Hentschke
Professor Alexandra Hughes
Dr Shoba Amarnath *(retired effective 21 March 2024)
Dr Anjam Khan
Dr Gareth Longstaff
Dr Charles Morrisset
Kate McGill

The Chair noted this was Professor Brian Walker's final meeting as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and thanked him for his service.

The Chair noted Dr Laila Singh had resigned from Senate and an election for a new member would be held with details forthcoming.

The Registrar provided the results of the recent Senate elections which closed on Monday 24 June 2024.

Professorial Constituency

Prof Claire Lomax
Prof Murray Pollock
Prof Ruth McAreavey
Prof Simon Tate
Prof Stuart Edwards

Non-Professorial Constituency

Dr Grega Smrkolj
Dr Jemima Repo
Dr Joanna Elson

Professional Services Constituency

Muriel Snowdon

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

77. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 1 May 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed.

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

78. 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) Graduate Visa Route

The Migration Advisory Committee published its report on the review of the Graduate Visa on Tuesday 14 May 2024. The Committee had concluded that the Graduate route had broadly achieved the objectives set by the government and therefore recommended that the route remain in place in its current form. In response, on Thursday 23 May, the government announced a new package of measures, including the establishment of a new mandatory registration scheme for agents, and a requirement for universities to publish information on the extent to which they use international agents and the number of international students recruited. Considering the announcement of a general election it is unclear if this package would be adopted as policy, although it was understood that the Labour Party was likely to be broadly supportive of the action on agents.

The recent [Science, Innovation, and Technology – General Election Hustings 2024](#), organised by CaSE and hosted at The Royal Society, had provided insight into party debates and policy direction, in relation to the Higher Education sector.

b) Office for Students Financial Sustainability

The Office for Students (OfS) had recently issued their latest annual Financial Sustainability Report which set out the OfS view of the financial condition of the sector and its resilience to financial challenge. The sector was predicting financial improvement from 2026-27 onwards, but this was based on significantly optimistic student recruitment

forecasts. These growth forecasts contrasted starkly with recent data on student entrants (especially international, which is volatile), and the sector's financial outlook may therefore be much more challenging and uncertain than forecasts suggest.

c) Fine Art Degree Centenary

Newcastle University was celebrating the centenary of its internationally renowned Fine Art degree. To mark this milestone in the history of Art Education, the Fine Art department was celebrating ***Fine Art 100***, a four-year celebration of the creation and awarding of the very first BA (Hons) of Fine Art in England.

d) Research Excellence Framework 2029

The University had been invited to submit to all the Units of Assessment in the People, Culture and Environment (PCE) pilot exercise. Work will be carried out on the 'mock' return to the pilot exercises from November 2024 for submission towards the end of February 2025. It was possible the final submission timeline would be moved to 2030.

e) Redevelopment of Castle Leazes

The redevelopment activity was continuing in line with the established Framework Agreement. Key design and planning contracts had novated to Unite, who were leading the activity as the development manager. The full planning application for the project was targeted to be submitted end of May or early June 2024.

f) Health Innovation Neighbourhood

A groundbreaking ceremony had marked the start of work on the £500 million Health Innovation Neighbourhood. Leading figures from Newcastle University, the North East Combined Authority, Newcastle City Council and Genr8 Kajima Regeneration Ltd, took part in the event to highlight their commitment to the project. The University, and the project's Academic Director, would continue to engage with academics and students to ensure internal expertise was employed in delivering the plan of sustainable urban development.

g) Voluntary Severance Scheme

The Voluntary Severance Scheme had run from 26 February to 22 March 2024 and it had provided a vehicle to achieve FTE savings that would not have otherwise materialised within the budget cycle.

h) Student Encampment

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the recent decision to serve a Notice to Quit to protesters currently occupying Union Lawn asking them to vacate the space within 48 hours. The decision to commence legal action in order for the site to be vacated had not been taken lightly and was accelerated in response to information that changed the risk profile of the encampment. It had become necessary and increasingly urgent to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those in the University community, including students at the encampment.

The Vice-Chancellor and other members of University Executive Board had met previously with student protesters, and information had been provided in response to the issues and [concerns they raised](#) and further details on University investments had been published on the University's external website.

University Executive Board welcomed the opportunity to enter into further constructive dialogue about some of the issues that had been raised during the protests and may consider engaging the services of a third-party mediator.

Senators noted concerns relating to alleged actions taken by Northumbria Police towards protestors and the role of University security. Senators also noted concerns for the safety

and wellbeing of University colleagues and students who may have been impacted by recent disruption, vandalism and building occupation. It was reiterated that any evidence of injury or harm to students should be reported through the existing Student Health and Wellbeing process which had been signposted to students. The Vice-Chancellor noted the right to protest remained in effect, while the security and safety of all involved was also a priority.

79. SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 10 JUNE 2024

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 10 June 2024.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

80. RESEARCH SUPERVISOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Received a paper from Professor Matthew Grenby, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation.

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

Noted that:

- a) The development and delivery of a PGR Supervisor Development Programme had been identified as a priority action in the PGR Strategic Delivery Plan (April 2022). The proposal for development of the programme and its supporting principles were approved by Senate in September 2023 and a Cross-University Working Group had been established to develop and socialise the programme.
- b) The Working Group had agreed the format and content of the PGR Supervisor Development Programme in February 2024 for implementation in September 2024, which had also been socialised and endorsed by each Faculty Executive Board throughout February and March 2024.
- c) It was expected that the content of the PGR Supervisor Development Programme would continue to evolve over time and would respond to developments in the internal and external environment.
- d) The Review Group would regularly review participant feedback and update material accordingly. PGR Supervisor Champions would be engaged to both promote engagement with the programme, as well as to support the delivery of workshops and development activities, helping to build capacity.
- e) Funding for external delivery providers and content development had been identified for the 2024/25 academic year through the PGR Strategic Delivery Plan budget, should it be required.

Resolved that Senate approve the content of the PGR Supervisor Development Programme for implementation in September 2024.

81. BUSINESS AND INNOVATION STRATEGIC PLAN

Received a paper from Professor Matthew Grenby, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation.

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

Noted that:

- a) The previous Business and Innovation Strategic Plan had been published in 2019, and the updated Strategic Plan for 2025 - 2030 took into account changes in the wider

business ecosystem and aimed to situate place-based innovation more centrally in the University's operations.

- b) Development had been informed by an extensive review conducted with colleagues across the University as well as external critical friends and representatives of partner organisations, and a review of other universities' business and innovation strategies and activities.
- c) The Strategic Plan included three interconnected principles: creating a culture of enterprise, building and maintaining sustainable relationships, and pursuing and capitalising on opportunities. The new Director of Business Development and Enterprise and the new Dean of Business and Innovation would develop and oversee an implementation plan.

Resolved that Senate approve the Business and Innovation Strategic Plan for submission to Council.

82. FREEDOM OF SPEECH CODE OF PRACTICE

Received a paper from Dr Colin Campbell, Registrar.

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

Noted that:

- a) The updated Code of Practice had been co-authored by the University and Newcastle University Students' Union (NUSU) in response to The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act which received royal assent on 11 May 2023. The new legislation introduced a statutory requirement to "promote the importance of" both freedom of speech within the law, and academic freedom for academic colleagues.
- b) The Office for Students (OfS) had been consulting with providers regarding their role in monitoring compliance and the introduction of a new complaints scheme. Though these consultations were complete, the outcomes would be delayed until after the general election on 4 July 2024.
- c) In addition to the Code of Practice there were a number of existing University policies that would require an update to reflect the new act. In case of any conflict, the Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech will take precedence over the relevant policy.
- d) The Freedom of Speech Task and Finish Group would continue to meet into the 2024-25 academic year, and training sessions for Principal Organisers would be provided at the start of the academic year.

Resolved that Senate approve the Code of Practice for submission to Council and the Newcastle University Students' Union Board of Trustees.

83. GLOBAL STRATEGY

Received an update from Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global and Sustainability.

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

Noted that:

- a) The University's global vision and key strategic areas as described in the 2017 Global Strategy remained relevant and appropriate for 2024, but it had been recognised that

the current articulation of the strategy was not catalysing activity and so the need for a refresh had been identified.

- b) The Global Strategy Refresh embodied the concepts of Place+ and aligned closely with the work of NUShape. Collaboration, internal and external, was key to the ambition and methodology of the refreshed approach.
- c) The UK Higher Education sector was facing a critical challenge to deliver growth and achieve financial sustainability. A successful strategy refresh would facilitate sustainable, positive impact in key areas, including student recruitment, belonging and experience, supported by whole-system and cultural change within the University.
- d) Based on extensive internal and external consultation, the refreshed Global Strategy contained four key aims which provided the underpinning purpose of the University's global ambition and empowered the University community to achieve it. The aims were: Educational Experience, Research and Collaboration, Culture and Storytelling.
- e) The four Global aims would be achieved via three interconnected sets of objectives which were directly aligned with the University's core strategies and business. A systems thinking approach had been employed to ensure an understanding of how decisions and actions taken in one part of the system might impact behaviour and outputs in another.
- f) The UK Higher Education sector was a leader in Transnational Education (TNE), with more than half a million students enrolled on UK degree programmes overseas, but research-intensive UK institutions had been historically under-represented in TNE provision and significant opportunities remained for expansion.
- g) Due diligence processes were in place to ensure ongoing oversight and review for areas which might be flagged as caution locations. Partnerships with institutions in these locations would be subject to regular review.

84. **WHITE SPACE**

Noted that:

- a) The Vice-Chancellor invited Professor Darren Evans to introduce a discussion on 'places of encounter' and asked Senators to highlight examples of best practice.
- b) It was discussed that it had become increasingly challenging to find time and physical space where meaningful interactions between colleagues could take place on campus.
- c) Eating together was highlighted as a way of promoting collegiality, the sharing of ideas and helping to alleviate loneliness. It was noted that both students' and colleagues' health and wellbeing could often be positively impacted by simply sharing time and a meal together.
- d) Blended working and a noticeable increase in time commitments had impacted the ability to find time and space for meaningful exchange. The benefits of 'coffee culture' and standing lunch 'dates' were discussed.
- e) Newer buildings on campus had been designed to include collaborative spaces, and utilising those available spaces was key. The wider estate was being managed in a way that was more consistent across campus within the newly established Strategic Framework for the Estate.

85. **SENIOR APPOINTMENTS**

Received a report.

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

Noted that:

- a) In accordance with Statute 11, a selection committee was convened to appoint a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor and interviews were held on Tuesday 4th June 2024. It was the unanimous decision of the panel to recommend the appointment of Professor Nigel Harkness.
- b) The appointment of Professor Harkness as Deputy Vice-Chancellor would create a vacancy in his current role of Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Vice-Chancellor noted the preference to invite internal expressions of interest to fill the role on an interim basis. An external search would commence in early autumn 2024 with a view to making an appointment in 2025.
- c) In the meeting of Senate on 28 February 2024 a case for a Dean of Culture and Inclusion had been considered by members. The feedback from Senators asked that further consideration was given to elevating the Dean role to one of Pro-Vice-Chancellor in recognition of the importance of the portfolio of work. After further consideration and a review of the portfolio of work, the Vice-Chancellor now proposed the role would be a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Culture and Inclusion.
- d) In accordance with Statute 12, Senate was invited to nominate members for two appointment panels: one for the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Humanities and Social Sciences role and one for the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Culture and Inclusion role.
- e) Professor Anya Hurlbert's tenure as Dean of Advancement was due to conclude on 31 December 2024, and the Vice-Chancellor proposed the extension of Professor Anya Hurlbert's tenure until 31 December 2027.

Resolved that Senate recommend to Council the appointment of a replacement Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Humanities and Social Science.

Resolved that Senate recommend to Council the establishment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Culture and Inclusion, to commence recruitment during academic year 2024/25.

Resolved that Senate endorse the re-appointment of Professor Hurlbert as Dean of Advancement until 31 December 2027, subject to final approval from Council.

86. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – HONORARY DEGREES (STATUTE 29(4))

Received a report from the meeting of Honorary Degrees Committee that took place on 13 June 2024.

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

Resolved that Senate approve the award of honorary degrees to the individuals recommended by the Committee.

87. 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 K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus or Emerita be conferred on:

Professor Margaret Bell with effect from 1 October 2024
Professor David Clarke with effect from 1 October 2024
Professor Bill Herbert with effect from 1 September 2024
Professor Helen Jarvis with effect from 1 September 2024
Professor Jeremy Lakey with effect from 1 August 2024
Professor Richard McQuade with effect from 1 September 2024
Professor Jacqui Rodgers with effect from 1 September 2024
Professor Mike Taggart with effect from 1 September 2024
Professor Steve Walsh with effect from 1 October 2024
Professor Jakob Wisse with effect from 1 September 2024

88. APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR PUBLIC ORATORS

Reported that, in accordance with Senate Standing Order 11, Senate shall appoint Senior Public Orators after considering a report of a Committee.

Received a proposal from the Registrar.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that Senate approve the reappointment of Jill Taylor-Roe as Senior Public Orator until 31 July 2025.

Resolved that Senate approve the appointment of Professor John Fitzgerald as Senior Public Orator until 31 July 2027.

89. SENATE-APPOINTED MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

Received details of opportunities for members of Senate to join University Committees.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

90. NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (NUMED) CONSTITUTION

Received a report.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

91. ANNUAL REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY PROMOTIONS COMMITTEES

Received a report.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document O. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

92. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Received a report.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

93. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE

Received a report from the meeting of:

- a) University Global Committee: 14 March 2024

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

b) University Research and Innovation Committee: 19 March 2024

[Circulated with the agenda as Document R. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
- c) University Research Ethics Committee: 24 April 2024

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

94. 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 T. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]