

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY**SENATE****15 November 2023**

Present: The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor Brian Walker (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor David Burn, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Ruth Valentine (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Shah Yaseen Ali (President, Students' Union), Dr Shoba Amarnath, Professor Caroline Austin, Professor Chris Baldwin, Professor Mike Capaldi, Lulu Chen (Education Officer, Students' Union), Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Dr Marie Devlin, Professor Darren Evans, Professor Catherine Exley, Professor Stephanie Glendinning, Professor Jens Hentschke, Professor Alex Hughes, Professor Anya Hurlbert, Professor Andy Husband, Professor David Kennedy, Chirag Kumar (Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union), Professor Rene Koglbauer, 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 Jo Robinson, Professor Alison Shaw, Dr Robert Shaw, Dr Laila Singh and Dr Laura Woodhouse

In attendance: Dr Colin Campbell (Registrar), Martin Cox (Director of Business Development and Enterprise, for Minute 22), Professor Justin Durham (Academic Director of the Health Innovation Neighbourhood, for Minute 24), Dr Simon Meacher (Head of Executive and Governance Office), Jackie Scott (Executive Director of People Services) and Heidi Shultz (Executive and Governance Team Manager)

Apologies: Nick Collins, Professor Matthew Grenby, Professor Nigel Harkness, Dr Darren Kelsey, Dr Anjam Khan, Professor Anoop Nayak, Professor Vee Pollock, Professor Judith Rankin, Professor Jane Robinson, Professor Candy Rowe

MINUTES**18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

19. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 20 September 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed.

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

20. 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) Industrial Action Results

The Vice-Chancellor reported that recent ballots for industrial action staged by UNITE and the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) had not reached the turnout threshold and industrial action would therefore not take place.

b) QS World Rankings: Europe 2024

Newcastle University had been named as one of the top universities in Europe, according to the first ever edition of the QS World University Rankings: Europe 2024 published on 20 September. Overall, Newcastle University was placed 34th in Europe and 17th in the United Kingdom. The University's work on sustainability was ranked 5th in Europe and 3rd in the UK, while for Employer Reputation, Newcastle was ranked 27th and for International Research Network 29th. Senate noted the importance of the QS World Rankings within the Asian and Middle Eastern markets.

c) The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024

Newcastle University's performance in the rankings had been published on 27 September 2023. The University had dropped to 168th in the world, down from 139th last year, and was ranked 20th in the UK, unchanged from last year. A change to the weightings was likely to have had a small negative impact on the University's ranking.

d) Open Letter from the Secretary of State

The Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) had responded on the 30 October to an open letter from Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, Michelle Donelan, regarding appointments made to Research England's EDI Advisory Group. Action had been taken by UKRI to suspend the work of the EDI Advisory Group, investigate the specific comments made by the minister and continue the ongoing review of UKRI's advisory structures.

e) Honorary Bachelor of Education Degree Awards

Newcastle University had awarded Honorary Bachelor of Education degrees to 193 teaching alumni in a special ceremony on 9 October 2023 in King's Hall.

f) Events in the Middle East

The Vice-Chancellor reported the University was offering support and advice for any students and colleagues who may be directly or indirectly impacted by the escalating conflict in the Middle East.

g) Colleague and Student Successes

Professor Richard Dawson, Professor of Earth Systems Engineering, Director of Research & Innovation had been named a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering.

Dr Meg Kobza, a Leverhulme early career researcher in the School of History, Classics, and Archaeology, was one of 14 researchers to receive funding via the British Academy's [new](#) SHAPE Involve and Engage Awards.

Professor Chris Oates, Chair in Statistics in Newcastle University's School of Mathematics, Statistics and Physics, had been announced as one of the 2023 Philip Leverhulme Prize winners.

Professor Neil Rajan, Professor of Dermatogenetics and Honorary Consultant Dermatologist, had been accepted onto the Wellcome-funded Advance HE Success on the Board programme.

Professor Jenny Read, Professor of Vision Science, had been announced as one of the founding Programme Directors of the Advanced Research and Invention Agency, ARIA.

Professor Peter Stone, UNESCO Chair in Cultural Protection and Peace, had been awarded the coveted Cultural Protection Ambassador Award from the International Arts & Antiquities Security Forum (IAASF).

Three ambitious start-ups by recent graduates were to receive up to £20,000 as winners of Newcastle University's [START UP Founderships](#). The winners were John Harrison, Lewis Herdman, Connor Tipping and Jack O'Donnell and their three companies, Appre, Guester and Solidarity Farm CIC, were selected after pitching to a panel of experienced entrepreneurs.

Newcastle University had won a prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education in recognition of its long-standing excellence in water research.

h) Dean of Social Justice

Professor Rachel Pain had been appointed to the role of Dean of Social Justice from 1 January 2024.

i) Professor Saleemul Huq OBE – In Remembrance

University colleagues were deeply saddened by the news of Professor Saleemul Huq's passing on Saturday 28th October 2023 in Dhaka. Saleem was a much-valued friend of our University. Earlier this year he had received an honorary degree in recognition of his contributions to climate science and locally led adaptation, his international leadership on Loss and Damage, and his inspirational approach to the future not dominated by national rivalry but by solidarity.

j) Late News

Professor Quentin Anstee, Chair of Experimental Hepatology had been appointed as Dean of Research and Innovation in the Faculty of Medical Sciences.

The recent Senate elections closed for voting on Friday 10 November 2023. Professor John Wildman (Peter and Norah Lomas Chair in Economics), and Dr Emily Yarrow (Senior Lecturer in Management and Organisations) were the successful candidates for the professorial and non-professorial positions respectively.

21. SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 2 OCTOBER 2023

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 2 October 2023.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

22. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE FRAMEWORK

Received a paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Place and the Director of Business Development and Enterprise.

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

Noted that:

- a) The aim of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), which was run annually, was to highlight the broad scope of universities' engagement with society. The results of each KEF exercise allowed individual universities to evaluate their performance on a range of measures against the sector as a whole and a defined comparator cluster.
- b) The results of the third KEF exercise had been published on 27 September 2023 and each university had been given a quintile ranking in each perspective. Newcastle University was in Cluster V, which was defined as 'very large, very high research intensive and broad-discipline universities'.
- c) The University had been ranked:
 - Above the Cluster average in three perspectives: Working with the public and third sector, and Public and Community Engagement, and Working with Business (5th quintile in all three)
 - Level with the Cluster in three perspectives: Intellectual Property and Commercialisation (5th quintile), Research Partnerships (4th quintile) and Local growth and regeneration (3rd quintile)
 - Below the Cluster average in one perspective: Continuing Professional Development and Graduate Start-ups (2nd quintile)
- d) Senate noted the University's strong KEF performance for 2023 and noted the improvements on KEF 1 and KEF 2. Further work was ongoing to identify trends at Faculty level within the University, to ensure continuous improvement.

23. STUDENT SURVEYS

Received a paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.

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

Noted that:

- a) Senate considered the results of the University's performance in the 2023 iterations of the National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.
- b) After a period of consultation, the Office for Students (OfS) had made substantial changes to the National Student Survey (NSS) for 2023. These changes meant that results from 2023 were not comparable with previous years.

Changes to the NSS 2023 survey included a new direct question style with a four-point item specific response scale, removing the 'neither agree nor disagree' option. Rather than the previous compound measure of overall 'agreement', results were summarised using a 'positivity measure'.

- c) Based on average positivity across all questions, as calculated by the Times Higher Education, the University had placed 91st out of 114 institutions (with over 1,000 respondents). This compared to 109th in 2022, 97th in 2021, 67th in 2020 and 34th in 2019.
- d) Newcastle's positivity measure put the University towards the bottom of the distribution of full-service providers in the following themes: teaching on my course, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, student voice and freedom of expression.

- e) The University's performance relative to the sector remained below benchmark, however relative to the Russell Group the position looked more positive. Results varied substantially between Faculties and between Schools showing that students perceived their experience quite differently depending on what subject they were studying.
- f) Overall, the University performed well in the 2023 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) with improving trends across most questions. Within the Russell Group, the University was in the top quartile for all question areas.
- g) The new Education Strategy which would be launched in early 2024 would directly engage with student satisfaction across the University.
- h) Senate reflected on the timing of student surveys across the academic year, along with suggestions on how survey completion could be incentivised for students. The value of mid-module feedback was discussed, both in gathering information from the students and evidence that could be used to meet promotions criteria.
- i) Student focus groups including students from all year groups would be run across the 2023-24 academic year to gather further insights from students.
- j) Consideration was needed for students who may be experiencing mental health challenges and who may need additional support and time when filling in surveys and providing feedback. It was noted that students from diverse cultural backgrounds may have different understandings of how to fill in a survey and in some instances may feel compelled to give more positive answers regardless of their experience.

24. HUB FOR DIGITALLY ENABLED CARE EVERYWHERE

Received a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Director of the Health Innovation Neighbourhood.

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

Noted that:

- a) The Academic Director of the Health Innovation Neighbourhood (HIN) shared plans for the first new building on the site, the Hub for Digitally Enabled Care Everywhere (DigECarE). Senate was invited to reflect on the academic opportunities, and the opportunity for this initiative to impact the University's core missions of Education and Research.
- b) The University's aim was that the Health Innovation Neighbourhood would be the first living test-bed for the evaluation of multidimensional, multidisciplinary innovations across public and commercial sectors, blending academic, residential, healthcare, commercial and public facilities within a neighbourhood setting.
- c) With its proposed position adjacent to the site's widest frontage onto the nearest major transport route (Westgate Road), DigECarE would act as the gateway building to the HIN. As such it would perform a core role, connecting local residents, healthcare service providers and commissioners, commercial partners, academics and researchers in the fields of data and artificial intelligence (AI), diagnostics and digital technology.
- d) DigECarE would build on the University's expertise and research strengths and provide the physical infrastructure to substantially increase UKRI, charitable and commercial research income. DigECarE's state-of-the-art facilities would bring together several very successful research groups - NIHR In-Vitro Diagnostics Cooperative, the Human

Movement Lab and NorthFutures - to deliver successful collaborative research aligned with the National Innovation Centres in Ageing and Data that are established at Helix.

- e) The University had identified the Research Partnership Investment Fund (RPIF), a UKRI funding call, as a route to part-fund the £45m DigECarE building. The full bid in response to the RPIF call had been submitted in July 2023 and the outcome was expected to be communicated in December 2023.
- f) The distance between the central city campus and the Helix site was discussed with some agreement that the perceived distances may be farther than the actual distances. Colleagues currently working on the HIN site had shared concerns about the lack of catering facilities and the security requirements relating to working on a semi-vacant site.
- g) Engagement with the HaSS Faculty and SHAPE disciplines as noted in the paper was very welcome and colleagues in HaSS would also welcome the possibility of being involved in the design process.
- h) Funding and development of the HIN site may need to be considered within the wider regional context as nearby neighbourhoods may not have similar strategic projects and funding initiatives available to them. Within the same perspective, the work done on the HIN site could positively influence funding for other areas within the region.
- i) Future and ongoing conversations with Newcastle City Council would help refine what types of housing would need to be built on the site. Considerations of appropriate housing for regional climate would be included in planning discussions.
- j) Educational provision for younger years would be included on site and colleagues with expertise in these areas were already involved in the site development discussions. Potential multi-function building design was included in the planning process and the Faculty Deans of Research and Innovation were included in ongoing discussions for early-stage contributions and ideas.

25. **WHITE SPACE**

Noted that:

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

26. **UNIVERSITY DEANS (STATUTE 12(2))**

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 12(2), Council may, after consultation with Senate, appoint one or more University deans in pursuit of strategic academic objectives.

Senate was asked to approve the proposals in the attached report from the Vice-Chancellor, for the re-appointment of University Deans. Final approval would be sought from Council at its meeting in December.

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

Resolved that Senate endorse the below re-appointments until 31 July 2025, subject to final approval from Council:

Professor Candy Rowe as Dean of Research Culture and Strategy
Professor Judith Rankin as Dean of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

27. 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 H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:

Professor David Brooks, with effect from 31 December 2023
Professor Elaine Campbell, with effect from 1 February 2024

28. SENATE EFFECTIVENESS

Received the report from the Senate Effectiveness Survey for 2022-23.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

- a) Seven out of 38 members of Senate had completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 18%. Themes in the comments included a desire for a more robust training and induction programme and more concise meeting documents where possible..

29. STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS REPORT

Received a paper from the Executive Director of External Relations.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

30. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE

Received reports from the meetings of:

- a) University Education Committee: 13 September 2023
 - b) University Engagement and Place Committee: 24 July 2023
- [Circulated with the agenda as Documents L and M. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

31. UNIVERSITY MUSEUM AND GALLERY BOARD

Received the committee's annual report.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

32. NORTHUMBRIAN UNIVERSITIES MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Received the committee's annual report.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document O. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

33. 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 P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]