

# NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

## SENATE

28 June 2023

- Present:** The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Dr Vanessa Armstrong, Professor Caroline Austin, Professor David Burn, Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Professor Richard Davies, Dr Marie Devlin, Dr Barbara Eberth, Professor Darren Evans, Professor Catherine Exley, Professor Stephanie Glendinning, Professor Matthew Grenby, Professor Nigel Harkness, Professor Andy Husband, Jenny Johnstone, Dr Darren Kelsey, Dr Anjam Khan, Dr Gareth Longstaff, Kate McGill, Professor Rhiannon Mason, Claire Morgan, Professor Graham Morgan, Professor Jane Robinson, Professor Alison Shaw, Dr Eimer Tuite and Professor Ruth Valentine.
- In attendance:** Dr Colin Campbell (Registrar), Nick Collins (Executive Director of Finance), Louella Houldsworth (Director of Communications), 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:** Dr Shoba Amarnath, Professor Bruce Baker, Professor Chris Baldwin, Professor Jens Hentschke, Professor Alex Hughes, Professor Anoop Nayak, Professor Annie Tindley and Professor Brian Walker.

## MINUTES

### 89. WELCOME

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

Dr Vanessa Armstrong  
Professor Bruce Baker  
Dr Barbara Eberth  
Jenny Johnstone  
Dr Eimer Tuite

The Chair thanked the following co-opted members who were appointed until 31 July 2023 at Senate's meeting in November 2021:

Professor Graham Morgan  
Professor Andy Husband  
Professor Annie Tindley

Noted:

The co-opting of Heads of Academic Unit at Senate meetings had proven to be effective in supporting the committee in its discussion of matters of academic strategy. It was agreed to extend their appointment.

***Resolved that Senate approve extending these appointments as non-voting members up to the standard maximum of three years (until 30 November 2024).***

### 90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### 91. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 3 May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed.

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

## 92. 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:

### 1. Industrial Action

The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education provided an update on the work of the Education Continuity Group, reporting that marks for a proportion of students would be affected by the Marking and Assessment Boycott, and that colleagues were using the no detriment guidance to minimise disruption as intended.

The Registrar reported that the University had submitted the Marking and Assessment Boycott as a Reportable Event to the Office for Students (OfS).

Colleagues would be provided with consistent messaging to share with parents and students who may have enquires regarding the Marking and Assessment Boycott. The health and wellbeing of students and colleagues would continue to be prioritised.

### 2. QS World Rankings 2023

The University has achieved a ranking of 110<sup>th</sup>, up 12 places from last year, which was also the highest ranking the University had ever achieved. Measurable successes in the areas of sustainability and global connectedness were central to this year's ranking.

### 3. Research Excellence Framework 2028

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation reported that the Research Excellence Framework (REF) for 2028 would take a new approach to determining research volume, moving fully away from assessment of individuals. Changes to the three assessment elements and their weighting (as detailed below) would allow REF 2028 to recognise and reward a broader range of research outputs and impacts.

People, culture and environment (25% weighting)  
Contribution to knowledge and understanding (50% weighting)  
Engagement and impact (25% weighting)

The sector would have the opportunity to input into further development of REF 2028 in the coming months.

4. Castle Leazes

The project team commenced work on RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design) in February 2023 and this was on track to complete at the end of July 2023. Further approval would be required by Council to proceed to Stages 3 and 4 (Spatial Coordination and Technical Design) with our design partners. Engagement with students and other stakeholders was continuing and an options appraisal of different financing arrangements was also underway.

5. Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation

Professor Matthew Grenby (School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics) had been appointed as the new permanent Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation with effect from 1 June 2023.

6. Dean of Research

Professor Alex Hughes had been appointed as Dean of Research in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for a period of three years from 1 August 2023.

7. Senate Appointments

In addition to the recommendations in the Vice-Chancellor's report, it had been proposed that Dr Carol Moxam (School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences) be appointed to the Appeals Panel for Promotions Review of Academic Staff.

***Resolved that Senate approve the appointment of Dr Carol Moxam as a member of the Appeals Panel for Promotions Review of Academic Staff for a period of three years from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2026.***

8. National Student Survey Results 2023

The Office for Students had announced that the National Student Survey 2023 results would be published on 10 August 2023.

9. Programme Withdrawal

A member of Senate presented a statement on behalf of academic colleagues from the School of Engineering regarding the process for the withdrawal of degree programmes. Discussions had taken place within the School, with members of the Board of Studies querying the rationale for the withdrawal of programmes in Geospatial Engineering. It was also queried whether the School management had followed the normal procedure and consultation process for the withdrawal of programmes.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the SAgE Faculty provided a summary of the academic rationale for reviewing programmes in Geospatial Engineering that had informed the proposed withdrawal. The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education reported that University Education Committee had not yet received a recommendation from the School of Engineering and would consider recommendations from the Board of Studies. It was noted that student consultation was on-going. The case for programme withdrawal would be therefore be subject to approval in line with the University's standard procedures.

10. Senate Elections 2023

Voting for Senate Elections in the Non-Professorial constituency was currently open and the deadline had been extended to 7 July 2023. The Registrar would write to members of Senate to advise of the successful candidates once the elections were closed.

The Registrar reported that, following an online election, Professor Rhiannon Mason had been elected as Senate's representative on Council in the Professorial constituency.

*[Secretary's note: As reported to Senate previously, Dr Shoba Amarnath had been elected as Senate's representative on Council in the Non-Professorial constituency.]*

93. **SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 5 JUNE 2023**

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 5 June 2023.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

94. **ACADEMIC PUBLISHING MODELS**

Received a paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation.

Noted that:

1. In light of evolving requirements by funding bodies, UK Research and Innovation were now revising the Open Access policy to include long-form publications, such as monographs and edited collections. A revised policy would take effect at the end of this calendar year. Research articles funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) had been required to be Open Access since 1 April 2022, with 95.9% compliance reported.
2. Transformative Agreements (TAs), whereby libraries cover Open Access costs as part of their financial deal with publishers, were increasingly viewed with some concern, as Higher Education Institutions were still paying significant amounts of money to publishers.
3. The Research Publications and Copyright Policy, also known as Rights Retention, allowed compliance with funders at no cost, and was applicable for research articles authored or co-authored by University colleagues. Rights Retention would become crucial to Open Access compliance when funders withdrew TA funding.
4. The University was setting up a Working Group to develop guidelines regarding Open Access for long-form publications.

95. **EDUCATION STRATEGY**

Received an update from the Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.

Noted that:

1. The current Education Strategy had been developed in 2016 and launched in 2018. In the meantime, the education landscape both within the University and in the wider sector had gone through significant changes, prompting the need for a refreshed vision and strategy.
2. The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education would lead on the preparatory work which would include consultation with colleagues and students across all three campuses (including the new Students' Union sabbatical officer team), which would take place

through September and October 2023. Feedback from these sessions would contribute to decisions on high-level objections and actions.

3. Upon appointment, the permanent Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education would continue the work by first confirming priorities and action-planning throughout October and November 2023, and then by ensuring the strategy was socialised for launch in February 2024.
4. The Education Strategy would align with key University projects and imperatives such as the Access and Participation Plan, the Teaching and Excellence Framework (TEF) submission and NUShape.
5. Initial assumptions in the developing work covered the balance between undergraduate, taught and research postgraduate student numbers; how the University's place-based identity would inform key decisions; a focus on international students; apprenticeships; and a commitment to more flexible and online provision.
6. The overarching aim of the revised Strategy would largely unchanged, with a focus on ensuring that the University remained a global future-facing provider, offering all students with an education for life that supported them to fulfil their potential.
7. The strategy would have three provisional objectives: equity, fit for future and research embedded, through which the student experience would be threaded.

#### 96. **FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

Received a paper from the Registrar.

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

Noted that:

1. The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill was first introduced to the House of Commons in May 2021, after two years of review and amendment it received royal assent on 11 May 2023.
2. The Office for Students (OfS) would have a more enhanced role with the introduction of a new complaints scheme; oversight of students' unions; new registration conditions for higher education providers; new monitoring of overseas funding and a new Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.
3. The Registrar provided a summary of the key implications of the new duty and also introduced a University statement on free speech and academic freedom, which was an abridged version of the existing Code of Practice and would be promoted to colleagues and students in the new academic year.
4. Members of Senate reported on their experience of challenges in the classroom environment pertaining to issues of religion, sexuality, gender identity and the national policy of overseas countries.
5. A small group would update relevant policies and develop clear guidelines on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech to support colleagues involved with public events and smaller-scale interactions in the classroom and learning environment.

#### 97. **WHITE SPACE**

Noted that:

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

**98. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – HONORARY DEGREES (STATUTE 29(4))**

Received a report from the meeting of Honorary Degrees Committee that took place on 15 June 2023.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. 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 award of honorary degrees to the individuals recommended by the Committee.***

**99. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 29(4))**

Received a report from the Vice-Chancellor and President.

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

***Resolved that Senate approve the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus on:***

***Professor Jane Pollard with effect from 1 September 2023***

***Professor Mark Shucksmith with effect from 1 September 2023***

***Professor Francis Jones with effect from 1 October 2023***

***Professor Beate Müller with effect from 1 October 2023***

***Professor Sarah Rees with effect from 1 October 2023***

**100. ANNUAL REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY PROMOTIONS COMMITTEES**

Received a report.

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

**101. ANNUAL REPORT FROM STUDENT FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Received a report.

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

**102. ANNUAL REPORT FROM RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Received a report.

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

**103. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE**

Received a report from the meetings of:

- a) University Education Committee: 15 February, 19 April and 23 May 2023  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
- b) University Global Committee: 23 March 2023  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**104. 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.]