

# NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

## SENATE

17 January 2024

- Present:** The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor David Burn, Professor Stephanie Glendinning, Professor Matthew Grenby, Professor Nigel Harkness, Professor Ruth Valentine (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Shah Yaseen Ali (President, Students' Union), Dr Shoba Amarnath, Professor Chris Baldwin, Professor Mike Capaldi, Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Dr Marie Devlin, Professor Darren Evans, Professor Catherine Exley, Professor Jens Hentschke, Professor Alex Hughes, Professor Anya Hurlbert, Dr Darren Kelsey, Professor David Kennedy, Dr Anjam Khan, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Lucy Leeds (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students' Union), Dr Gareth Longstaff, Kate McGill, Claire Morgan, Professor Graham Morgan, Dr Charles Morisset, Dr Meiko O'Halloran, Professor Rachel Pain, Professor Judith Rankin, Professor Jo Robinson, Professor Candy Rowe, 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), Nick Collins (Executive Director of Finance), Lindsey Lockey (Chief Executive Officer, NUSU) attended for Minute 40, Dr Simon Meacher (Head of Executive and Governance Office), Melanie Reed (Head of Corporate Communications), Jackie Scott (Executive Director of People Services) and Heidi Shultz (Executive and Governance Team Manager)
- Apologies:** Professor Caroline Austin, Lulu Chen, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Andy Husband, Professor Rhiannon Mason, Professor Anoop Nayak, Professor Vee Pollock, Professor Jane Robinson, Professor Alison Shaw, and Professor Brian Walker.

## MINUTES

### WELCOME

The Vice-Chancellor and President welcomed Dr Emily Yarrow, Professor Rachel Pain, and Professor John Wildman to their first meeting of Senate.

### 34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### 35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 15 November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed.

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

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

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

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Reported:

a) Queen's Anniversary Prize

The University had won a prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in recognition of its long-standing excellence in water research. The prize reflected Newcastle's work in partnership with communities, industry, governments, and NGOs to deliver lasting real-world impact in a field that encompasses floods, droughts, water quality and public health. This was the fourth time that Newcastle University had been awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize.

b) Research Excellence Framework 2029

It had been announced on 7 December that the next REF exercise would be postponed for one year with submission to occur in Autumn 2028. In response to a consultation, several decisions about the format of the exercise had been reaffirmed in the recent announcement. These included the use of HESA data to determine the size of each Unit of Assessment; the principle of full 'decoupling' of outputs from individuals (breaking the link between staff members and Unit submissions, including removing minimum and maximum publications that can be submitted from specific individuals); and reaffirming that outputs would be submissible from anyone with a 'demonstrable and substantive link to the submitting institution within the REF period'. More detail on how these changes would work in practice would be forthcoming in Spring 2024.

c) Colleague and Student Success

Dr Charlotte Bentley (School of Arts and Cultures) had won an American Musicological Society Award for a monograph on New Orleans and the Creation of Transatlantic Opera, 1819–1859.

Professor Marwa Elnahass (Newcastle University Business School) had been recognized in the prestigious WOMANi power list for the third consecutive year.

Professor Hayley Fowler (School of Engineering) had received the prestigious Sergey Soloviev Medal from the European Geosciences Union (EGU).

Professor Rajiv Ranjan (School of Computing) had been elevated to Fellow status by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers for research impact and significance following an international peer review process.

Dr Christopher Stewart (Translational and Clinical Research Institute) had been named as this year's winner of the WH Pierce Prize for microbiology.

The Rank Prize for Nutrition had been awarded to Emeritus Professor Roy Taylor for his groundbreaking work on dietary approaches to type 2 diabetes remission, transforming the lives of thousands.

d) Newcastle University Medicine (NUMed) Malaysia

A formal constitution for NUMed, outlining organisational structure and operational procedures, was being drafted to meet Ministry of Higher Education requirements in Malaysia, subject to Council approval.

e) Chancellor

At its meeting on 4 November 2023, Convocation had approved the re-appointment of Imtiaz Dharker as Chancellor of the University for a further four years from 1 January 2024.

f) Faculty Dean Appointments

Professor Stuart Edwards (currently Interim Dean and CEO, NUIS) had been appointed Dean of Global & Education Development (SAGe Faculty) for a term of three years, effective from 1 January 2024.

Dr Sara Marsham (currently Acting Dean of Education) had been appointed Dean of Education (SAGe Faculty) for a term of three years, effective from 1 January 2024.

g) Head of School appointments

Dr Samantha Ryan had been appointed as Head of Newcastle Law School, effective from 1 January 2024.

Professor Paul Paes had been appointed as Head of the School of Medicine, effective from 1 April 2024.

h) Wellcome Trust Centre for Mitochondrial Research

The Vice-Chancellor reported that on 12 December 2022, the Wellcome Trust had advised the University that it was taking a strategic approach to Centres and the current format would end on 30 April 2024. In 2023, the University's bid for renewal of the Centre was unfortunately unsuccessful and so current funding for the centre would cease on 30 April 2024. There were currently 19 research and professional service colleagues affected by the closure. At its meeting on 16 January, in accordance with Delegation of Authority Regulations, Executive Board had considered a case for redundancy and agreed to proceed to finalise a collective and individual consultation process by 26 January 2024 and to issue formal redundancy notices as appropriate.

**37. SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 11 DECEMBER 2023**

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 11 December 2023.

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

**38. DEFINITIONS OF DISCRIMINATION**

Received a paper from the Vice-Chancellor and President, on behalf of Executive Board on definitions of discrimination.

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

Noted that:

- a) At its meeting on 4 March 2020, Senate had resolved to endorse the use of two definitions relating to antisemitism and Islamophobia to inform understanding of discriminatory behaviours by all parts of the University community.
  - The 2016 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism;
  - The 2017 All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia.
- b) The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 and the ongoing conflict in the Middle East had made it increasingly challenging for universities to navigate difficult issues at a time when reported incidents of discriminatory behaviour had increased.

- c) Within the University community, colleagues had highlighted the difficulty with the illustrative examples that accompanied the IHRA definition in being able to facilitate discussions that may include criticisms of Israel for its policies and actions, and colleagues in the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology had written a letter to this effect for circulation to Senate. Additionally, the NUSU Jewish Society had written a letter highlighting the importance of the continued use of the IHRA definition by the University.
- d) Following detailed discussion, during which Senate reaffirmed its commitment to the non-proscriptive use of the IHRA definition, it was agreed that reassurance should be provided to colleagues on lawful debate in the context of Middle East conflict.
- e) Senate also discussed the recommendations of the 2023 Parliamentary Taskforce report 'Understanding Jewish Experience in Higher Education', which included an example of good practice at Newcastle University.
- f) The Vice-Chancellor would explore opportunities to influence sector guidance prior to commissioning further internal work on the issue.

### 39. ASSURANCE OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS

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

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

Noted that:

- a) The report provided a summary of the operation of the University's framework for the management of academic quality and standards, in order to demonstrate that the University was meeting national regulatory requirements in this area.
- b) The Office for Students (OFS) published a revised regulatory framework in March 2022 with implementation from May 2022, and the organisation of the report had been updated to reflect the revised conditions. The framework covered all higher education courses, at any level (including PGR), any volume of study and included face to face or distance learning or a combination.
- c) Senate was assured that the University was fulfilling the general conditions of registration with the Office for Students relating to quality and standards (conditions B1-5). The University had also fulfilled its requirement under condition B6 to take part in the Teaching Excellence Framework in 2023.

***Resolved that Senate approve the report for onward submission to Council.***

### 40. NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION IMPACT REPORT

Received a report from the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Students' Union.

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Noted that:

- a) The year 2022-23 had seen the launch and beginning of a new Strategic Plan, enabling a renewed focus based upon student feedback. Annual survey results had been positive with overall satisfaction with Newcastle University Students' Union (NUSU) at 97%, and 89% of students agreeing that NUSU had had a positive impact on their university experience.

- b) Analysis of participation levels suggested that the Students' Union had engaged with 55% of students, and increased participation would be sought going forward. This would be achieved through more outreach, increased presence in schools and building up online engagement where possible.
- c) The role of the Students' Union had changed in recent years and now included increased practical support around the cost-of-living crisis and wellbeing support. NUSU leadership believed the Students' Union still needed to focus on engagement, fun activities and friendship-building to help ensure that some wellbeing needs were met proactively.

#### 41. WHITE SPACE

Noted that:

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

#### 42. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – HONORARY DEGREES (STATUTE 29(4))

Received a report from the meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee which took place on 14 December 2023.

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

#### 43. 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 Tony Clare, with effect from 1 March 2024***  
***Professor Steve Jones, with effect from 1 April 2024***

#### 44. RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Received the University's Annual Report on Research Integrity

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

#### 45. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE

Received a report from the meeting of:

- a) University Education Committee: 13 December 2023  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
- b) University Global Committee: 21 September 2023  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
- c) University Research and Innovation Committee: 24 October and 12 December 2023  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book]

**46. UNIVERSITY CLOSURE DATES**

Received the University Closure Dates for the 2024-25 Christmas and New Year period.

**47. 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.

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