

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

1 March 2021 – in Domain, Students Union Building, City Campus West

CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES

Contact Georgina Bailes, georgina.bailes@northumbria.ac.uk, Secretary to the Board of Governors, with any queries about these Summary Minutes.

Present: Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods (Chair), Craig Apsey, James Bromiley, Emma Collier, Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Katherine Fawcett, Sophie Haagensen, Libby Orme, Sally Pelham, Amy Rice-Thomson [absent BG21/67 – BG21/73], John Taylor, Helen Thorne, Professor Andrew Wathey, Simon Yellowley.

Observer: Lorraine Brown.

Apologies: Peter Judge, Nick Pope, Ava Sjoberg.

Secretary: Georgina Bailes, Richard Elliott (Assistant Secretary).

In attendance: Professor Louise Bracken, Adam Dunlop, Jane Embley, Professor Steven Kyffin, Professor Tom Lawson, Professor George Marston, Daniel Monnery, Simon Newitt, Professor Jon Reast, Lucy Winkell, Professor Graham Wynn.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

Introduction [Oral Report]

The Chair welcomed Katherine Fawcett to her first Board meeting as elected Professional Support Staff Governor and Emma Collier to her first meeting as Student Governor.

Vice-Chancellor's Report [BG21/65]

The Board of Governors considered an update on international, national, regional and local sector and policy developments and their implications for Northumbria. Government and UUK guidance on the crisis in Ukraine was being monitored and implemented and all affected staff and students were being supported. Recent Government policy announcements in response to the review of post-18 education and funding included a freeze on headline tuition fees until at least 2024/25, changes to the student loan system and confirmation that a move to post-qualification applications/offers was not being considered. Consultations on other reforms had been launched and would run until 6 May. **The Board noted the report and that OfS was also consulting on student representation in the regulatory framework, and that this approach was mirrored by the new Education Strategy which sought to broaden student representation in academic governance structures.**

International Strategy - Complementing Education and Research Strategies [Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered how the University's International Strategy was aligned to the Education and Research Strategies. The needs and outcomes of on-campus international students, distance learning and TNE students and students at Amsterdam were integrated into the Education Strategy; international partnerships were supporting the internationalisation of MDRTs and strengthening REF performance where international impact drives higher scores. **The Board noted the update.**

London Campus Business Plan Update [BG21/66]

The Board considered an update on the Business Plan for London Campus; targets were being exceeded with distinctive programmes focused on industry and employability, with flexible delivery models, contributing to this success. Strategic discussions with QAHE designed to increase revenue share and create wider growth opportunities for 2022-2030 within a new contractual framework were continuing. **The Board emphasised the importance of continuing to scrutinise the financial returns from future developments of the partnership with QA.**

Amsterdam Campus Update [BG21/67]

The Board considered an update on Amsterdam Campus, where student numbers and programmes had continued to grow and healthy annual increases for programme fees had been achieved and the partnership with Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences continued to bear fruit. **The Board noted that there was**

confidence that recruitment projections were now more realistic given the four years' experience of operating in the Netherlands and the developing relationship with both AUAS and the Dutch regulator.

Update on Energising our Knowledge Exchange Strategy [BG21/68]

The Board of Governors considered an update on the Knowledge Exchange Strategy and the arrangements put in place to support the knowledge exchange (KE) and business to business (B2B) action plans. Academic structures were in place to support the continued growth of a research-intensive culture and help drive the contribution of KE to REF impact. **The Board noted that successful development of KE would help embed Northumbria in the world's thinking.**

Approach to Risk Management [BG21/69]

The Board considered the University's proposed approach to Risk Management including the Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement, following input from Audit Committee. The policy emphasised that Risk Management was an enabler which should be embedded into both the University Strategy and everyday activities, and the Risk Appetite statement reflected the current University position to taking risk across key risk categories, with a focus on being as open as possible while protecting the University's reputation and meeting regulatory requirements. **The Board approved the approach to Risk Management including the Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement.**

Student Recruitment 2021/22 and 2022/23 [BG21/70 and Presentation]

The Board noted the position on student recruitment for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Students' Union Report [BG21/71]

The Board of Governors considered the Students' Union Report; the Union was working with the University, Newcastle University and its SU and Newcastle Council on the Shape of the City event which aimed to gather input from students of both universities and Newcastle College on potential changes to the city over the medium term and citywide work on safety in the night-time economy was also continuing. **The Board of Governors noted the report.**

Monthly Finance Report Period 6 2021/22 [BG21/72]

The Board of Governors considered the University's financial position and performance at Period 6 (31 January 2022). **The Board noted the report and that the position for 2021/22 was favourable to budget.**

Annual Quality and Standards Report [BG21/73]

The Board of Governors considered the annual report on Quality and Standards, which summarised key measures within the University that addressed OfS's 'B' conditions of registration relating to quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students. It also set out an analysis of student complaints and appeals, university approval panels and Professional and Statutory Body (PSRB) accreditation activity. **The Board noted the report.**

Staff Survey 2021/22 [Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered the outcomes of the recent staff survey, which had been discussed by Employment and Finance Committee on 17 January. Results were less positive than for the 2020 survey, which was carried out relatively early in the pandemic, but were in general more positive than in 2018, with the least positive responses relating to the recent return to on-campus working. **The Board noted the presentation and that work was required to re-build a sense of on-campus community post-pandemic, particularly for those staff who joined the University during the period of restrictions.**

Opening up UCRSS [BG21/74]

The Board of Governors considered a proposal to make the University's Defined Contribution Pension Scheme (the Universities and Colleges Retirement Savings Scheme (UCRSS)) available on a voluntary basis to all colleagues pending development and implementation of the new Pension Strategy. **The Board approved the proposal.**

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report Q1 2021/22 [BG21/75]

The Board of Governors noted the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report August – October 2021, which had already been considered by Employment and Finance Committee and Audit Committee. All buildings continued to be Covid secure – restrictions had been lifted in respect of face coverings in line with Government guidance however all staff and students were strongly encouraged to wear them. **The Board noted the report.**

Chair's Report - Academic Board: 27 January 2022 [BG21/76]

The Board noted that at its 27 January meeting, Academic Board had considered the approach to the NSS 2022, considered the annual External Examiners' reports, which had endorsed quality and standards and provided positive feedback, and considered Subject Step Change reviews of Education and Social Work.

Chair's Report - Employment and Finance Committee: 17 January 2022 [BG21/77]

The Board noted that at its 17 January 2022 meeting, Employment and Finance Committee had considered the five year financial forecast required to be submitted to OfS in January 2022 and endorsed it for submission to Board of Governors for approval by Written Resolution.

Chair's Report - Audit Committee: 7 February 2022 [BG21/78]

The Board noted that at its 7 February 2022 meeting, Audit Committee had considered the lessons from some issues that had arisen during the audit of London Campus, and the response of QAHE.

Georgina Bailes
Secretary to the Board of Governors
April 2021