

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

29 April 2024 in room 209, Sutherland 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), Dr Birju Bartoli, Professor Dame Janet Beer, Liv Bird, Dr Laura Brown, Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Alison Fellows, Sophie Haagensen, Peter Judge, Hassan Kajee, Mark Larsen, Professor Andy Long, Professor James McLaughlin, Nerius Shah, Jan Thompson, Helen Thorne.

Apologies: Katherine Fawcett, Libby Orme, Ian Wilkin

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

In attendance: Professor Louise Bracken, Dr Guy Brown [item: London Campus Board], Jane Embley, Professor Tom Lawson, Phil MacDonald, Dan Monnery, Simon Newitt [to item BG23/88], Clare Stogden, Peter Thomas [item: Student Recruitment], Professor Graham Wynn.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1	<p><u>Introduction</u> <u>Chair's Opening Remarks</u> The Chair had chaired the first CUC Northern Group, which had been held at Liverpool University and had been addressed by Professor Chris Millward, Professor of Education Practice and Henri Murison, Chief Executive of the Northern Powerhouse. The main discussion item had been working together as a group to shape a northern growth agenda. The Chair extended the Board's thanks to Simon Newitt for his work supporting the Board and its Committees and as the University's Chief Financial Officer and wished him well in his new role, and, also thanked Peter Thomas, Helen Bower and their team for the enjoyable and informative pre-Board session.</p>
2	<p><u>Strategic Discussion Items</u> <u>Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning</u> [BG23/82] The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive presented on sector wide matters and the implications of these for the University. The University had been able to confirm that there would be no compulsory redundancies as part of the cost management exercise and that transparent communications relating to the challenges and the University's response were continuing. An informal partnership agreement between the five North East universities focusing on strategic priorities had been concluded and would be launched after the upcoming mayoral election; positive engagement with senior politicians from both main parties continued. The mayoral hustings hosted by the Students' Union had been well received with five of the six mayoral candidates answering questions from students from across the region. The University had been shortlisted for a range of awards, including for University of the Year in the WhatUni Student Choice Awards which were voted on by students and the London Campus had been nominated for the London Higher Awards. The Board noted the update.</p> <p><u>University Strategy 2024-30 Approach to Reporting and Assurance on Implementation</u> [BG23/83] The Board considered the proposed approach to implementing the University Strategy covering strategy adoption, implementation, performance monitoring, assurance and governance which included four key principles: simplicity and avoiding duplication; transparency and visibility of strategic plans and progress against them; consistent and continuing engagement and communications; and clear accountability and ownership of initiatives and projects. These principles would ensure that the strategy implementation was integrated and embedded in planning and operations rather than as an added extra and was designed to enable the effective alignment of colleagues, resources and systems to support the strategic ambitions and provide oversight. Effective assurance would be further strengthened by the use of three "deep dives" by Strategic Performance Committee into each Strategic Ambition each year, along with an annual summary of performance that would be reported on to Board. The Board noted the update and that</p>

Strategic Performance Committee had welcomed the more focused approach to monitoring supported by deep dives, noting that this would develop in an iterative process.

Student Recruitment [Presentation]

The Board noted an update on student recruitment.

Cost Management Update [Presentation]

The Board noted an update on the University's Cost Management actions and commended the speed of implementation of the cost management plan, thanked the CPO and DVC for their leadership of the process and the VC for his overall leadership throughout the challenges.

Research Excellence Framework 2029 [BG23/84]

The Board noted an update on REF2029. Northumbria's ambition and strategy for REF 2029 focused on quality at volume and sought to achieve a top-30 ranking for quality as measured by GPA, while increasing the size of the submission and improving the Research Power ranking. **The Board noted the update and commended the level of the University's ambition, noting that it represented a significant step change from the already excellent 2021 result, that there would be a greater emphasis on People, Culture and Environment (PCE) and impact case studies in the 2029 REF, and a continuing focus on REF would further embed a culture of research excellence.**

3 Performance, Projects, Policy and Regulatory Matters

Student Union President's Report [BG23/61]

The Board considered the report of the Student's Union Sabbatical Team. The Student Union elections had concluded with 3245 votes received across all campuses; Anushi Sinha, current VP Welfare, had been elected President and three of the current Sabbatical Team had been re-elected. The Activities Awards had received 330 nominations, the event had been attended by 250 students, and the Annual Awards had received over 200 nominations. 13 students had visited from the Amsterdam Campus and had attended the Activities Awards as well as visiting the local area, the feedback from the students had been positive. The NSU Pantry and Soup offer project to help students with the cost of living had been well received and would be extended to the next academic year. **The Board noted the report and commended the Students' Union on the success of the mayoral hustings**

Monthly Finance Report Period 8 2023/24 [BG23/86]

The Board of Governors noted the University's financial position and performance at Period 8 (31 March 2024) and the Quarter 2 (31 July 2024) forecast.

Annual Quality and Standards Report (2022/23) [BG23/87]

The Board considered the Annual Quality and Standards report for 2022/23 which focused on the key activities providing assurance over the OfS Quality and Standards (B) Conditions of Registration as part of the Board of Governors' role in ensuring the University's compliance with all Conditions of Registration. The University's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission had been rated silver overall with the outcome for Student Outcomes upgraded to Gold in December 2023 following appeal. A new access and participation plan reflecting new guidance issued by OfS had been approved by the OfS in October 2023. The Ofsted New Provider Monitoring visit in October 2022 had judged the University to be making 'reasonable progress' on apprenticeships and an External Quality Assurance End Point Assessment monitoring check for Police Constable and Advanced Clinical Practitioner standards had been rated as 'Good'. The Community for Innovation in Teaching and Learning forum was established which provides an engagement opportunity for staff and students and informs the learning and teaching enhancement/development programme. **The Board noted the report and welcomed the additional information on B conditions of registration particularly B3.**

Pay Gap Report [BG23/88]

The Board considered the Pay Gap Report for 2023 which included ethnicity and disability pay gap information in addition to the legally required gender element. The mean gender pay gap had increased slightly while those for ethnicity and disability had decreased; the information would be reviewed more frequently going forward with further investigation of cause and effect to understand the changes to the data. **The Board noted the report and that the pay gap data had been published following approval by Employment and Finance Committee on 27 March. A review of roles most affected by the gender pay gap to increase the number of full time positions for lower grades was in progress, improving diversity of senior positions was being addressed through recruitment practices, and that the academic staff median gender pay gap was zero and BAME was positive though overall the professional services workforce was less diverse than the population of the North East.**

	<p><u>Engagement Survey 2023 Outcomes</u> [BG23/89] The Board considered the outcomes of the Engagement Survey 2023, which had asked colleagues 65 questions about their experiences of working at the University, six of which comprised the University’s Engagement Index. The Engagement Index for 2024 had increased to 71.4% from 63.4% in 2021 and the overall response rate was 50% which was the same as the previous survey in 2021. The survey outcomes had been mostly positive though areas for improvement had been identified and on five questions professional colleagues were significantly more positive in their response than academics. The Board noted the report and that a smaller set of questions covering only the engagement index was planned for 2025 which may give some insight as to whether the size of the questionnaire contributed to the 50% response rate.</p>
4	<p><u>Chair’s Reports</u> <u>Employment and Finance Committee: 27 March 2024</u> [BG23/90] The Board noted that at its 27 March 2024 meeting Employment and Finance Committee had approved the publication of the Pay Gap Data 2023, revisions to the General Expenses Policy and the contract award to Logicalis as the University’s High Performance Compute and Data Storage provider for a period of 5 years.</p> <p><u>Strategic Performance Committee: 23 April 2024</u> [Oral Report] The Board noted that at its 23 April 2024 meeting Strategic Performance Committee had reflected on the best approach to the performance monitoring of the University Strategy reporting as noted above [BG23/83]</p> <p><u>London Campus Board of Directors: 25 April 2024</u> [Oral Report] The Board noted that at its 25 April 2024 meeting the London Campus Board had considered the Joint Venture finances and recruitment position noting that six new programmes would be launched from January 2025, that student satisfaction was high and that student outcomes were above University benchmarks. An opportunity for Governors to visit the London Campus was being arranged.</p>
5	<p><u>Constitutional Matters</u> <u>Amended Instrument of Government, Governance Regulations and Statement of Primary Responsibilities</u> [BG23/95] The Board approved the Amended Instrument of Government, Governance Regulations and Statement of Primary Responsibilities.</p> <p><u>Staff Governor Appointment Regulations</u> [BG23/96] The Board approved the proposed Staff Governor Appointment Regulations, the amended Election Regulations – Staff Governor Nominated by Academic Board and the proposed transitional approach to the appointment of the Professional Services Staff Governor.</p> <p><u>Review of Committees: Progress Report</u> [Oral Report] The Board noted an update on the Review of Committees and that a full report on the proposed changes would be brought to the 24 June 2024 meeting.</p> <p><u>Annual Evaluation of Board and Committee Effectiveness</u> [BG23/97] The Board noted that the Annual Evaluation of Board and Committee Effectiveness surveys would be circulated on Tuesday 30 April and that in order for results to be reported to the Audit Committee meeting on 22 May, the deadline for that survey would be Tuesday 7 May.</p>

Georgina Bailes
Secretary to the Board of Governors
May 2024