

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING
26 February 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, Katherine Fawcett [to BG23/66], Alison Fellows, Peter Judge, Hassan Kajee, Mark Larsen, Professor Andy Long, Professor James McLaughlin, Libby Orme, Nerius Shah, Jan Thompson, Helen Thorne, Ian Wilkin.

Apologies: Sophie Haagensen

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

In attendance: Professor Louise Bracken, Jane Embley, Professor Tom Lawson, Phil MacDonald, Dan Monnery, Simon Newitt, Clare Stogden, Peter Thomas [to Student Recruitment], Professor Graham Wynn.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1	<p><u>Introduction</u> <u>Chair's Introduction</u> The Chair welcomed new Governors Professor Dame Janet Beer, Alison Fellows and Jan Thompson and the Interim Chief Financial Officer Phil MacDonald to their first meeting of the Board. The Chair also extended the Board's thanks to the School of Design for the fascinating pre-Board visit.</p>
2	<p><u>Strategic Discussion Items</u> <u>Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning</u> [BG23/59] The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive presented on sector wide matters and the implications of these for the University. The University had undergone a ISO40001 Sustainability Management audit which noted a number of areas as best practice; the social impact report commissioned by the University showed that Northumbria had generated c.£1.6bn gross value added and supported 31.650 jobs. The Shadow Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson, had visited the University on 2 February and had posted very positive commentary on social media. The Board noted the update and welcomed the engagement with students and the success of the regional round table as part of the visit by Bridget Phillipson.</p> <p><u>Strategy Launch Update</u> [Presentation] The Board of Governors considered the launch of the University Strategy 2024-30 with over 800 attendees across all events in Newcastle and London and some external engagement with the launch on social media. The feedback received had been positive with colleagues stating they valued the clarity of the three Ambitions; Strategic Performance Committee would consider approaches and timelines for reporting on the new Strategy in April, with the first full report expected at Board in September. The Board welcomed the approach to governance and reporting which would ensure meaningful performance monitoring and assurance over delivery of the Strategy.</p> <p><u>Financial Position and Implications</u> [BG23/60] The Board of Governors considered the financial position and its implications for the University. The HE sector remained affected by significant challenges and volatility and a programme of action had been developed to achieve required savings while still enabling investment in the new University Strategy to reinforce long term sustainability. The Board commended the efforts and approach of University Executive and senior management to address the cost challenges.</p> <p><u>Student Recruitment</u> [Presentation] The Board noted an update on student recruitment.</p>

3 **Performance, Projects, Policy and Regulatory Matters**

Student Union President's Report [BG23/61]

The Board considered the report of the Students' Union Sabbatical Team. The preparations for the next Students' Union elections were underway with four of the existing Sabbatical team expected to stand for re-election. More than 1200 students had attended the refresher fair for societies and sports clubs and 650 students had engaged with the free sports programme. Members of the team had visited the London Campus to engage with students about the support available to them and would be visiting Amsterdam shortly, with 15 Amsterdam students visiting Newcastle in April. The support offered to students facing cost of living challenges, such as the food pantry and breakfast club would be extended to the London Campus. **The Board noted the report.**

Monthly Finance Report Period 6 2023/24 [BG23/62]

The Board of Governors noted the University's financial position and performance at Period 6 (31 January 2024).

Safeguarding Policy [BG23/63]

The Board considered the updated Safeguarding Policy following endorsement by Audit Committee on 12 February 2024. The Policy incorporated the University's approach to its obligations under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the Prevent Duty), which was becoming a sector standard approach, and had been updated to reflect changes to the external policy environment and clarify internal procedures. **The Board approved the revised Safeguarding Policy.**

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2022/23 [BG23/64]

The Board considered the Annual Statement on Research Integrity for 2022/23 which assured the Board of Governors that the University met the Concordat commitments through its leadership, training and policies, and would be published on the University's Research Ethics and Integrity webpages. Significant developments in 2022/23 included the appointment of a Research Policy Coordinator to support the administration of the new online research ethics review system, the review and implementation of ethics related policies, and the delivery of a significant amount of training and development opportunities following the implementation of the new ethics review system. **The Board noted that the annual statement focused on processes and compliance, bringing to a close the ethics review that had driven significant change over a two year period, and approved the Annual Statement on Research Integrity.**

Researcher Development Concordat [BG23/65]

The Board considered the Annual Statement on the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and an updated version of the Concordat Action Plan. Presentation of an annual statement to the Board of Governors and subsequent publication demonstrated the University's commitment to the Concordat. The Statement covered the research environment, research culture, career development for researchers and any employment issues. **The Board approved the Annual Report and Annual Statement to support the Career Development of Researchers for publication.**

Degree Outcomes Statement 2022/23 [BG23/66]

The Board considered the Degree Outcomes Statement for 2022/23 following endorsement by Academic Board; it formed part of assurance relating to OfS's ongoing conditions of registration on quality and standards (B4 and B5). The 2022/23 statement had reverted to the original headings following the changes made to the 2021/22 statement to demonstrate that the sector had addressed the perceived issue of grade inflation in response to UUK guidance. The Statement showed that degree outcomes at Northumbria had been successfully managed back to align with pre-pandemic levels. The attainment gaps featured in the University's Access and Participation Plan had generally narrowed and the positive attainment gap for Foundation Year students confirmed the effectiveness of that route both for attainment and for retention. **The Board noted that the action plan was part of the published Access and Participation Plan and approved the Degree Outcomes Statement for 2022/23.**

London Campus Reporting and Assurance [BG23/67]

The Board considered a report on London Campus reporting and assurance. The London Campus Board of Directors had put in place enhancements to its reporting to the Board and its Committees to improve the visibility of and assurance over London issues and developments, with academic performance continuing to be reported to Strategic Performance Committee as part of the quarterly Student Experience and Learning Outcomes report. **The Board noted the report.**

Strategic Risk Report [BG23/68]

	<p>The Board considered the Strategic Risk Report following consideration by Audit Committee on 12 February 2024. One strategic risk score (Failure to maintain and enhance the University’s brand, reputation and market position) and RAG status had improved following the REF success and THE awards. The financial sustainability risk had been reviewed at UE which confirmed that the current scoring was appropriate; a new strategic risk register was being developed to support the new Strategy. The Board approved the Strategic Risk Report.</p> <p><u>Health and Safety Q2 Report 2023/24</u> [BG23/69] The Board considered the Health and Safety Quarterly Report October 2023 to January 2024, following consideration by Audit Committee on 12 February 2024. The Board noted the report and that near misses were investigated when reported.</p>
4	<p><u>Chair’s Reports</u> <u>Academic Board: 25 January 2024</u> [BG23/25] The Board noted that at its 25 January 2024 meeting the Academic Board had endorsed the 2022/23 Degree Outcomes Statement approved by Board at BG23/66 above.</p> <p><u>Employment and Finance Committee: 1 February 2024</u> [BG23/71] The Board noted that at its 1 February 2024 meeting the Committee had approved revised Financial Regulations to take effect from 19 February and had requested a management review and internal audit review of their impact and effectiveness at appropriate times.</p> <p><u>Audit Committee: 12 February 2024</u> [BG23/72] The Board noted that at its 12 February 2024 meeting the Committee had considered and endorsed many of the items on the agenda for this meeting.</p>
5	<p><u>Constitutional Matters</u> <u>Evaluation of the Pilot Applications based Appointment Process for Academic Staff Governor</u> [BG23/76] The Board considered the evaluation of the pilot applications-based process for the appointment of the academic staff governor following endorsement by Nominations Committee on 5 February 2024. The application-based approach had resulted in many more members of staff engaged with the process, with a much higher level of ethnic diversity. The evaluation had reinforced that there was a need to grow awareness of the role and activities of the Board among staff in general and more engagement opportunities between Board and staff would be arranged for future appointment rounds. The Board approved the replacement of the election-based appointment process with an application-based appointment process.</p>

Georgina Bailes
Secretary to the Board of Governors
March 2024