

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING**  
24 June 2024 in room 209, Sutherland Building, City Campus West

**CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES**

**Contact Georgina Bailes, [georgina.bailes@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto: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 [absent BG23/105-BG23/108], Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Katherine Fawcett, Peter Judge, Hassan Kajee, Mark Larsen, Professor Andy Long, Professor James McLaughlin, Libby Orme, Nerius Shah, Jan Thompson, Helen Thorne, Ian Wilkin.

**Apologies:** Alison Fellows, Sophie Haagensen, Jane Embley.

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

**In attendance:** Helen Bower [to Student Recruitment], Professor Louise Bracken, Professor Tom Lawson, Phil MacDonald, Professor George Marston [BG23/114], Dan Monnery [from BG23/109], Alex Robinson [BG23/105], Arushi Sinha, Clare Stogden, Jack Taylor [BG23/112], Gary Tideswell [BG23/114], Professor Graham Wynn

**MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING**

**1 Strategic Discussion Items**

**Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning [BG23/104]**

The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive presented on sector wide matters and the implications of these for the University. The retention of the graduate visa route had been supported by the recently published Migration Advisory Committee report which had found no significant abuses of the current system. Northumbria's position in recently published league tables had improved with the University being ranked 96th in the world in the Times Higher Young University rankings, a rise of 37 places on the previous year, and 34th in the UK in the Complete University Guide, a rise of 2 places. There had also been significant improvement in the research quality rankings, and the University Shine awards had been a success. **The Board noted the update.**

**Student Recruitment [Presentation]**

**The Board of Governors noted an update on student recruitment for 2024/25.**

**Planning and Budget Proposals [BG23/105]**

**The Board of Governors considered the Planning and Budget Proposals for 2024/25, which had been endorsed by Employment and Finance Committee at its 10 June 2024 meeting, and approved the Budget for 2024/25.**

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

**Student Union President's Report [BG23/106]**

The Board considered the report of the Student's Union Sabbatical Team. The Sabbatical Team had achieved the six shared goals agreed for 2023/24 and the annual quality review had been submitted to the University with an agreed action plan. This year had seen the highest attendance at the Societies Fair and an increase in the number of societies with 45 new ones created this year including international societies across both Newcastle and London Campuses. A programme of mental health first aid training had been delivered. In response to feedback from students about the cost of graduating, a graduation support fund had been launched. The Sabbatical Officers thanked the Board for their support during their term of office. **The Board noted the report, welcomed the round-up of the year and requested consideration of the quality of teaching from the perspective of the students at Strategic Performance Committee.**

**Students' Union Returning Officer's Report** [BG23/107]

The Board noted the Students' Union Returning Officer's report as required by section 3.6 of the 2020 CUC HE Code of Practice. The report confirmed that the election was run in a fair and democratic manner which satisfied the stipulations laid out within the Education Act (1994).

**Monthly Finance Report Period 10 2023/24** [BG23/108]

The Board of Governors noted the University's financial position and performance at Period 10 (May 2024) and the Quarter 3 (31 July 2024) forecast.

**Durant Hall Project Update** [BG23/109]

The Board of Governors noted the value of Durant Hall's provision of large lecture and performance spaces, received assurance that the additional cost was included in the capital budget discussed under Planning and Budget Proposals for 2024/25 above, and approved the additional costs.

**Purchase of MEA House** [BG23/110]

The Board approved the legal completion of the leasehold purchase of MEA House.

**Student Protection Plan Annual Review** [BG23/111]

The Board of Governors considered the annual review of the Student Protection Plan as required by OfS. The Board approved the Student Protection Plan for 2024/25.

**Strategic Risk Register** [BG23/112]

The Board of Governors considered the refreshed Strategic Risk Register (SRR) following endorsement by Audit Committee on 6 June 2024. It had been refreshed to align with the Strategic Ambitions, Commitments and Measures of Success identified in the new Strategy, and reflected emerging risks in the sector. The scoring model used had been changed to the ISO industry standard risk scoring model of inherent, residual and target, with inherent more accurately reflecting the untreated risk, and a new proximity score had been introduced to all risk owners to identify the likelihood of a potential risk occurring imminently or in the longer term. **The Board welcomed the change in methodology and approved the refreshed Strategic Risk Register.**

**Internal Audit Contract** [BG23/113]

The Board of Governors approved the re-appointment of PWC as the University's internal auditors for two years with effect from 1 August 2024.

**Health and Safety Report Q3 2023/24** [BG23/114]

The Board of Governors considered the Health and Safety Q3 2023/24 report which showed that there had been a continuing improvement in mandatory training completion and three consecutive months of greater than 98% statutory compliance. There had been two external fire-related incidents at separate external accommodation providers housing Northumbria students; both buildings had been safely evacuated with no injuries reported. The overall number of reported incidents had decreased from the previous year however there had been a significant increase in near miss reports and sports incidents. For the second consecutive year the University had won the RoSPA award for Education and Training Services and had been awarded a Gold Leisure Services Award. **The Board noted the report, welcomed Gary Tideswell as the new Director of Health and Safety, commended award successes and noted that the Audit Committee had requested that the increase in Sports related incidents was followed up and reported to the Committee at its next meeting.**

**4 Chair's Reports**

**Academic Board: 30 May 2024** [BG23/115]

The Board noted that at its 30 May meeting the Academic Board had approved the Apprenticeships Framework.

**Strategic Performance Committee: 3 June 2024** [BG23/116]

The Board noted that at its 3 June meeting Strategic and Performance Committee had considered the first Strategy "deep dive" into the Creating New Knowledge Strategic Ambition and a report on Strategic Partnerships.

**Audit Committee: 6 June 2024** [BG23/117]

The Board noted that at its 6 June 2024 meeting Audit Committee had given in depth

consideration to a number of items on the agenda for this meeting and had approved the Internal Audit plan for 2024/25 noting that a reserved slot had been included to allow for flexibility, and that the five remaining reports from the 2023/24 were all on track to be reported at its September meeting.

**Employment and Finance Committee: 10 June 2024** [BG23/118]

The Board noted that at its 10 June 2024 meeting Employment and Finance Committee had endorsed several items on this agenda and had considered the introduction of a new academic practice role.

**London Campus Board of Directors: 14 June 2024** [BG23/119]

The Board noted that at its 14 June 2024 meeting the London Campus Board had considered an initial proposal from QAHE on building usage which would be submitted for consideration at a future Directors' meeting

**5 Constitutional Matters**

**Annual Evaluation of Board Effectiveness** [BG23/124]

The Board noted the outcomes of the Annual Evaluation of Board Effectiveness. The responses to all questions had been either agree or strongly agreed and one free text comment had been received. Alternative approaches to securing better response levels to the surveys would be considered for the 2024/24 exercise.

**Outcome of Review of Committees** [BG23/125]

The Board approved the the separation of the people responsibilities of the current Employment and Finance Committee into a new People Committee, which would take place adjacent to but separate from the current Remuneration Committee and that the remaining responsibilities of Employment and Finance Committee would be taken up by a new Finance and Resources Committee with effect from 1 August 2024.

**Governor Terms of Office** [BG23/126]

The Governors affected took no part in this item.

The Board approved that Katherine Fawcett be offered a second and final term of office as Professional Services Staff Governor to run from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2027, that John Hudson be offered a second term as Co-opted Member of Audit Committee, that because of recent high levels of turnover on Audit Committee, Helen Thorne's final term of office be extended to 30 June 2026 in accordance with the provisions of Governance Regulation 2.5 to allow her to continue to chair Audit Committee to the end of the 2025/26 academic year, and that Dr Laura Brown be granted approximately one year's maternity leave of absence from 1 August 2024.

**Governance Regulations** [BG23/136]

The Board approved the amended Governance Regulations following consideration by Nominations Committee on 17 June 2024

**Chair's closing remarks**

The Chair extended the Board thanks to Nerius Shah and Liv Bird, whose final meeting this was, for their input to the Board and its Committees as well as other events during their time as Sabbatical Officers, noting the positive impact they had had on the student community.

Georgina Bailes  
Secretary to the Board of Governors  
July 2024