

EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

10 June 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: H Fairfoul (Chair), Dr R Blackman-Woods, M Larsen, Prof A Long, H Kajee, N Shah, L Orme
 Apologies: H Colclough, P Thomas
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary)
 In attendance: T Allardyce [EF23/95], H Bower [Presentation], Dr S Corbett, J Embley, Prof T Lawson, D Monnery, P MacDonald (via Teams), A Robinson, C Stogden

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1	<p><u>Introduction</u> The Chair noted that this was Nerius Shah's last meeting as Students' Union President, thanked him for his contribution to the Committee during his term of office and extended the Committee's best wishes for the future.</p> <p><u>Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning</u> [Oral Report] 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. The VC had been one of ten VCs to attend a meeting with the Education Secretary and other senior ministers, including the PM, at Downing Street to discuss antisemitism on campuses and provide reassurances that mitigations were in place and the matter was being taken seriously. 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 had won the 'Team of the Year' Universities Human Resources Award for Excellence in HR. The Committee noted the update and requested a review of Freedom of Speech Act and implications due to be in effect from 1 August at a future Board meeting.</p>
2	<p><u>People</u> <u>Introduction of Academic Practice Role</u> [EF23/89] The Committee considered the introduction of a new role, Assistant Professor (Practice) from 1 September 2024 within the Academic Career Framework. The role had been developed to support the new Strategy and would be primarily aimed at new members of staff, although it was possible for existing staff to express an interest in moving to the new role. The role focussed on excellence in contemporary practice and would enable post holders to spend a greater proportion of their time teaching than the current workload model although it was under the same contract as other academic posts. Feedback from UCU and staff on the new role had been positive with some requests to change to the role from existing staff received; criteria for promotion for this role were currently being developed. The Committee noted the report and noted that while the new role was open to existing staff, they would have to demonstrate that they met the criteria to be considered, the main criterion being 'contemporary practice.' It was expected that this role would constitute approximately 10% of the overall academic work force but that this point would be reached over time and would be recruited to as vacancies arose. Support would be given to post holders to maintain their contemporary practice and it was expected that some roles would be fractional to allow for continued industry practice.</p> <p><u>Mercer Master Trust Report</u> [EF23/90] The Committee considered the Mercer Master Trust Annual Report following consideration by the NU Services Ltd Board of Directors on 4 June 2024. The report covered the period 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023 and provided assurance that both Northumbria University and Northumbria University</p>

	<p>Services Limited employees were in a well-managed pension scheme (UCRSS). The Committee noted the report and requested further information which would be provided by circulation.</p> <p><u>Pensions Update</u> [Oral Report] The Committee noted that an actuary’s report into the Teachers Pension Scheme had been requested by Manchester Metropolitan University and it would be discussed by the six largest HE contributors to the scheme as part of the on-going exploration of options.</p>
3	<p><u>Core Financial Performance and Planning</u></p> <p><u>Student Recruitment</u> [Presentation] The Committee noted an update on Student Recruitment for 2024/25.</p> <p><u>Planning and Budget Proposals 2024/25</u> [EF23/91] The Committee noted the Planning and Budget Proposals for 2024/25 which were broadly in line with those discussed at the 15 May Committee meeting and endorsed the Budget for 2024/25 for submission to Board of Governors.</p> <p><u>Finance Monthly Report: P9 2023/24</u> [EF23/92] The Committee noted the financial performance for period 9 (April) which had improved on the previous period though it was continuing to be carefully monitored; it was expected that the bank covenant would be met.</p>
4	<p><u>Policy/Regulation/Projects</u></p> <p><u>Durant Hall Project Update</u> [EF23/93] The Committee 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 endorsed the additional costs for submission to Board of Governors on 24 June 2024.</p> <p><u>Contracts and Legal Claims Summary</u> [EF23/94] The Committee noted the update and that Northumbria University would not be the lead for the ESPRC Manufacturing Research Hub Call therefore no future approval would be required. An approval for computer equipment purchases would be requested by written resolution.</p> <p><u>Nigeria TNE Partnership Opportunity</u> [EF23/95] The Committee noted the opportunity, which would return to the Committee in September for formal consideration.</p> <p><u>Students’ Union Financial Performance P9 2023/24*</u> [EF22/96] The Committee noted the report.</p>

Richard Elliott, Assistant Secretary to Employment and Finance Committee
June 2024