

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

22 September 2021 - via Microsoft Teams (including videolink)

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: C Apsey (Chair), Dr R Blackman-Woods, S Haagensen, H Thorne, A Sjoberg, Professor A Wathey, S Yellowley.
 Apologies: J Brown, A Dunlop
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary)
 In attendance: H Bower [SPC21/07], Professor C Broughan [SPC21/03 and SPC21/04], Professor T Lawson, Professor G Marston [SPC21/02], D Monnery, S Newitt, L Winskell, Professor G Wynn [SPC21/03].

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

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| 1. | <p><u>Introduction</u>
 <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. Key developments were generally grouped into the ongoing impacts of the Covid pandemic, where 2021/22 appeared likely to be a much more normal year, and the Government's emerging HE reform programme, where the views of the new Secretary of State for Education were awaited and short consultations on the Lifelong Learning Entitlement and on elements of the Augar recommendations were expected. There was the potential nationally for some industrial relations issues relating to the USS and the return to campus. The Committee noted the update.</p> |
| 2. | <p><u>Strategic Discussion Items</u>
 <u>Scenario Planning for Government Policy Changes</u> [Presentation]
 The Committee considered a presentation on potential changes in Government policy in the coming months; formal announcements had not yet been made. A range of risks to income were identified, and options to mitigate the risks, many of which represented advantageous developments in any case, were outlined. The Committee's feedback on the presentation, which would be used at the Board/UE Awayday on 5 October, was sought. The Committee suggested that it could be informative to plot the relative probabilities of income risks occurring, and noted that the potential impacts of the proposed Lifelong Learning Entitlement could affect a number of areas of activity in addition to income. The Committee noted that participation rates in the North East remained well below national averages.</p> <p><u>University Strategy 2018-23 Update and Performance Report</u> [SPC21/01]
 The Committee considered the performance of the University Strategy as at the end of Period 12 2020/21 (End of Cycle). Performance for KPIs was four at green, six at red and one where data was not yet available. 26 Business Outcomes were defined as 'on-track', while 22 had some issues that were being managed and were 'off-track'. The Committee suggested that prioritisation of Business Outcomes focusing on student outcomes would be valuable, and that an assessment of which off target metrics could be recovered by the end of the Strategy period should be carried out. It was also recommended that lower priority outcomes be deliberately delayed to increase management bandwidth for the higher priority outcomes. The Committee noted that some Business Outcome delivery plans required review in the light of the recent NSS results.</p> <p><u>Carbon Management Strategy</u> [SPC21/02]
 The Committee considered the Carbon Management Strategy, which set out a broad direction of travel towards an 80% reduction in carbon compared to 2015 by 2030, and zero carbon by 2040. The Carbon Management Strategy was closely related to the Estates Strategy and the two would be integrated so that more efficient buildings would have carbon as well as financial benefits; the relationship with the IT</p> |

	<p>Strategy was also key. The Committee noted that progress on carbon reduction was monitored via BO47 ‘we have an enhanced reputation for sustainability’, and noted that a separate progress report would be brought to Board of Governors annually. The Committee endorsed the Strategy for consideration by Board of Governors on 4 October.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Performance Monitoring</u> <u>NSS 2021 Results and Response</u> [SPC21/03 and presentation] The Committee considered the NSS results, the latest in a six-year period of decline. Arresting this decline required a new approach centred around long-term cultural change. The Continuous Programme Performance Review framework was in place, Deputy Faculty PVCs (Education) had been nominated and the new PVC (Education) would bring forward proposals for change - a three-year plan for education enhancement based on the holistic themes of <i>Quality, Pride, Fulfilment</i>. The Committee expressed its concern at the results themselves and at the fact that the extent of the decline had not been anticipated; processes for acquiring and responding to feedback quickly needed to be put in place, and senior staff needed to engage more directly with students. Work was required to ensure that education could excel in a research-focused environment. The Committee noted that all modules were subject to the same evaluation criteria, with campaigns to encourage completion, and that all NSS-relevant data would be considered in close to real time by the NSS project board chaired by the VC. The Students Union was encouraging the formation and strengthening of academic societies (which included staff) as one means of driving an improved sense of community and encouraging direct feedback, and would also report its findings from departmental round table meetings to a future Committee meeting.</p> <p><u>Student Experience and Learning Outcomes – 2020/21 Annual Report</u> [SPC21/04] The Committee considered a summary of Student Experience and Learning Outcomes since the November 2020 meeting. Northumbria’s performance on the new Proceed (the likelihood of new students finding professional level employment or embarking on further study in the year after they graduate) metric was positive; the metric was likely to be significant in TEF. NSS had been addressed in detail in the previous item. The Committee noted the report.</p> <p><u>League Tables 2021</u> [SPC21/05] The Committee considered a summary of the recent Guardian University Guide 2022, in which Northumbria’s ranking had fallen from 27 to 41, largely because of the NSS results. The Times Good University Guide had been published after the report was circulated; Northumbria’s ranking had fallen from 57 to 62. The Committee noted the report.</p> <p><u>Graduate Outcomes Survey 2021 Results (2018/19 Leavers)</u> [SPC21/06] The Committee considered the July 2021 graduate outcomes data, covering 2018/19 leavers. Northumbria’s ranking in the Graduate Prospects metric in the Times Good University Guide had improved from 56 to 50. The Committee noted that graduate employment opportunities for the 2019/20 cohort would be impacted by pandemic limitations; the NU Opportunities scheme had been established to help mitigate that.</p> <p><u>Student Recruitment Semester 1 - Implications</u> [SPC21/07 and Presentation] The Committee received an update on student recruitment for semester 1 2021/22 and plans for semester 2 and 2022/23. Recruitment for semester one had generally progressed well, with quality maintained; international recruitment appeared to have been particularly successful. Preparations for the January and September 2022 cycles were now in progress. The Committee noted the update and noted the work in progress to address those areas of recruitment that had performed less well.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Constitutional/Other Business</u> <u>Committee Membership and Terms of Reference 2021/22</u> [SPC21/11] The Committee endorsed the addition of social and environmental sustainability to its terms of reference and confirmed that the terms of reference agreed by Board of Governors for 2020/21 otherwise remained appropriate for 2021/22.</p>

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Richard Elliott
Assistant Secretary to Strategic Performance Committee
September 2021