

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

23 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 S Fancey (Chair), L Bird, Dr R Blackman-Woods, K Fawcett, Professor A Long
 Apologies: S Haagensen, A Parker, J Thompson, S Newitt
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary).
 In attendance: Professor L Bracken [SPC23/19], Professor T Lawson, P MacDonald, D Monnery, P Thomas [Student Recruitment Presentation], Professor G Wynn [SPC23/20-21]

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1. **Vice-Chancellor’s Horizon Scanning** [Oral Report]
 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. A partnership agreement between the five North-East universities focussing on strategic priorities had been concluded and would be launched after the upcoming mayoral election. The University had been shortlisted for a range of awards, including University of the Year in the WhatUni Student Choice Awards which were voted on by students. **The Committee commended the open communications and speed of implementation of the cost management exercise, and noted that UUK was preparing a “white paper” for the incoming Government on items that would benefit the HE sector at no cost to the public purse .**

2. **Strategic Discussion Items**
University Strategy 2024-30 Approach to Reporting and Assurance on Implementation [SPC23/18]
 The Committee considered the University Strategy 2024-30 Approach to reporting and assurance on implementation. The approach 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. This would ensure that the strategy implementation was integrated and embedded in planning and operations; the effective assurance would be further strengthened by the use of three “deep-dives” by the Committee into a Strategic Ambition each year, along with an annual summary of performance that would be reported to Board of Governors. **The Committee noted that the nature of the assurance provided would evolve over the Strategy period, moving from progress updates on actions to assessment of impact and outcomes and commended the proposed approach which would be reported to Board of Governors on 29 April 2024.**

Research Excellence Framework 2029 [SPC23/19 and Presentation]
 The Committee 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 Committee 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, and a continuing focus on REF would further embed a culture of research excellence.**

Student Recruitment [Presentation]
 The Committee noted an update on Student Recruitment for 2024/25 and its implications for the University.

3. **Performance Monitoring**

Student Experience and Learning Outcomes – Q2 2023/24 [SPC23/20]

The Committee considered an update on Student Experience and Learning Outcomes Q2 2023/24. There had been an improvement in retention compared to 2021/22 and average recorded attendance in semester one was higher than the previous two years in every week expect for teaching week 12 immediately before the Christmas vacation. Following the introduction of the new Apprenticeships Achievement Framework in 2022/23 which saw a significant change to the apprenticeship compliance environment, data showed that the University currently exceeded the minimum standard expected across all metrics. **The Committee noted the update and that the new student portal appeared to be providing improved support to those with complex cases.**

Annual Quality and Standards Report (2022/23) [SPC23/21]

The Committee considered the Annual Quality and Standards report for 2022/23 which focused on the key activities relating to 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 and two new sub-Committees of Education Committee, Student Wellbeing, and Student Access and Success, had been established to focus on relevant data and related issues as well as to contribute to the delivery of the Education Strategy. **The Committee noted the report, noted the importance of close monitoring of performance against the thresholds for OfS condition of registration B3 in particular, and requested that the importance of the B3 metrics be explained at Board of Governors.**

Richard Elliott
Assistant Secretary to Strategic Performance Committee
April 2024