



BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

29 June 2020 - via Microsoft Teams (including videolink)

CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES

Contact Susan O'Donnell, susan.odonnell@northumbria.ac.uk, Secretary to the Board of Governors, with any queries about these Summary Minutes.

Present: Chris Sayers (Chair), Alison Allden, Craig Apsey, James Bromiley (from BG19/107), Jean Brown, Lorraine Brown, Alasdair Corfield, Dr Stuart Fancey, Sophie Haagensen, Dr Graham Hillier, Peter Judge, Emmanuel Kabengele, Sally Pelham, Amy Rice-Thomson (absent for BG19/105 and BG19/106), Claudia Shaw, John Taylor, Helen Thorne, Professor Andrew Wathey (until BG19/107), Dr Jeya Wilson, Simon Yellowley.

Apologies: Lucy Hatt, Nick Pope, Professor Jon Reast.

Observer: Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods

Secretary: Susan F O'Donnell, Richard Elliott (Assistant Secretary)

In attendance: Adam Dunlop, Jane Embley (absent for BG19/112 to BG19/130), Professor Peter Francis, Professor Steven Kyffin, Professor George Marston, Professor Glen McHale, Daniel Monnery, Simon Newitt, Emrys Pritchard (Restart Preparations and BG19/108), Lucy Winskell.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

Chair's Opening Remarks [Oral Report]

The Chair noted that this was the final Board meeting for Alison Allden, Graham Hillier and himself, that it was also the final meeting for Lucy Hatt, nominated representative of Academic Board, and that Adam Serfontein's term of office as co-opted member of Employment and Finance Committee would come to an end on 31 July. The Chair and Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of the Board and University Executive, extended their grateful thanks to all departing members for their many years of service to the University, for keeping faith in the University's Strategy and approach, and for their tremendous passion and contribution to its success in the last nine years. The Chair particularly noted the valuable professional guidance from Alison Allden and Graham Hillier, which would leave a legacy, and thanked them for their personal support.

The Vice-Chancellor noted the forthcoming leaving presentation for the Chair and, in the meantime, expressed gratitude for the departing Governors' extraordinary contribution and strong support for Strategy which was strengthened by their knowledge of the academic setting and the practicalities of governance.

Board and Committee Membership 2020/21 [BG19/102]

The Board of Governors considered a range of recommendations from Nominations Committee on 08 June 2020. A number of issues relating to the terms of office of Elected Staff Governors required further consideration by Nominations Committee. **The Board approved that James Bromiley and Sally Pelham be reappointed as Independent Governors for a third and final three year-term, both with effect from 19 December 2020, until 18 December 2023, that Helen Fairfoul be appointed as Chair of Employment and Finance Committee and that Helen Fairfoul become a member of Remuneration Committee.**

Chancellor Reappointment and 2020/21 Pro-Chancellors [BG19/103]

The Board of Governors approved that Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson of Eaglescliffe be reappointed as Chancellor of the University for a second and final five-year term from 01 August 2020; the Board also noted the designation of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board as Pro-Chancellors for the 2020/21 academic year.

Vice-Chancellor's Report [BG19/104]

The Board of Governors noted the Vice-Chancellor's Report, which focused on the implications of Covid-19 for the sector and the University. September's on-campus restart and student recruitment would continue to be the key issues over the summer and the thought was being given to recognising the efforts of staff at all levels who had been key in the effective response to Covid-19. The Government's support package for research had been announced, completing the overall support package announced on 04 May; Government focus in the medium term remained on quality and value, with issues such as grade inflation also prioritised. The major upsurge in civic engagement and emphasis on the contribution of HE to economic and social

recovery, especially in Newcastle and Gateshead, would also help strengthen the University's position and reputation. The recently published Graduate Outcomes data showed Northumbria ranked 50th in contrast to 69th in the final year of the DLHE survey, and was now the top UK HEI in the Times Higher Education's (THE) Young University Rankings of Universities under 50 years old, rising from 98th to 80th. **The Board noted the report and noted that the excellent ranking in the impact table for Sustainable Development Goals would resonate well with young people; the place agenda in Newcastle, where the two Universities were already working well with the Council and the NHS, was substantially aligned to the Goals. A Staff Governor thanked the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive for their leadership and supportive approach through the crisis phase of Covid-19.**

Restart preparations (including Health, Safety and Wellbeing considerations) [Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered preparations for on campus restart in September. The Government's "one metre plus mitigation" guidance would allow a four-fold increase in usable capacity compared to two metres. A full online offer would be maintained to support students who were unable to return to Newcastle in the short term, and a "transitions" module was being developed to ensure new students were ready for higher education and supported to navigate the blended approach and access support services. With health and safety considerations paramount, all buildings were being risk assessed in consultation with trade unions, with a target readiness date of 31 July, wider campus safety and access requirements including catering were being considered as part of a 'wider student experience' workstream, and there would be a mandatory re-induction programme for staff and students before return to campus. Full communications plans for students, staff, contractors and partners were in place, as were contingency plans for any return to lockdown, either local or national. **The Board noted that students were involved in restart planning via the Students Union, that appropriate arrangements were in place to clean rooms between teaching sessions and that the University would provide the required PPE for staff and students.**

Student Recruitment Update June 2020 [BG19/105 and presentation]

The Board of Governors considered an update on recruitment for 2020/21 as at 15 and 25 June 2020. **The Board noted the positive position under the uniquely challenging circumstances, and that appropriate arrangements and contingency plans were in place for confirmation and clearing.**

2020/21 Planning, Budget and Financial Forecasts [BG19/106]

The Board of Governors considered a draft budget for 2020/21 that had been endorsed by Employment and Finance Committee on 15 June 2020. **The Board noted that the budget process had shown the strength of systems, scenario planning and flexible resource deployment, noted that robust preparations for worse-case outcomes and risks were in place, and approved the budget for 2020/21.**

Four Key Objectives for 2019/20 [BG19/107]

The Board of Governors considered progress on the four key strategic objectives set for the academic year 2019/20 in the light of Covid-19, including challenges and opportunities. For NSS, a bespoke programme survey had produced valuable feedback on teaching quality, assessment and personal tutoring, and there had been significant work across all Faculties to respond to student concerns. The REF proleptic appointment programme had been successful and a submission of the desired headcount would be made; focus was now on improving the quality of impact case studies. Relating to organisational culture, the University's leadership, support and communications during the Covid-19 crisis had been well received and indicated the desired changes in culture had emerged more strongly during the crisis and a recognition scheme for staff members who had made an outstanding contribution to the Covid-19 response was being formulated. Key messages about the financial position for 2020/21 and its implications had been communicated and would continue to be refined as the position developed. **The Board noted the update and commended the progress made on all four objectives.**

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Q3 Report [BG19/108]

The Board of Governors noted the Health, Safety and Wellbeing update for February to April 2020.

Students' Union President's Report – June 2020 [BG19/109]

The Board of Governors considered the Students' Union President's Report, which included an update on the newly appointed Sabbatical Officers. The University's No Detriment Policy for third term 2019/20 had been well received, online events remained successful and the momentum of the Black Leaders Programme had also been maintained online, with the Black Lives Matter movement providing a voice for black students. **The Board noted the report and reconfirmed its support for the Black Leaders Programme.**

Monthly Finance Report P10 2019/20 [BG19/110]

The Board of Governors considered the monthly report. Due to the fast-moving Covid-19 situation, the forecast was changing frequently but the 2019/20 outturn was expected to remain ahead of budget; the cash

position remained strong. The University remained some distance from the OfS liquidity threshold for reporting as a Reportable Event. **The Board noted the report.**

Deed of Covenant for Subsidiary Companies [BG19/111]

The Board of Governors approved the Deeds of Covenant to cover gift aid payments from Northumbria University Services Limited and Northumbria University Nursery Limited, noting that these would require signatures by 31 July 2020.

Philanthropic Priorities 2020-23 [BG19/112]

The Board of Governors considered a proposed new approach to prioritising fundraising activity to focus on Widening Participation (including postgraduate and research students as well as undergraduates), Integrated Health and Social Care and a new Gallery. **The Board noted the proposed approach.**

Student Protection Plan – annual review* [BG19/113]

The Board of Governors noted the Student Protection Plan 2020/21, following its annual review.

Degree Outcomes Statement (draft) [BG19/114]

The Board of Governors considered the current draft of the University's Degree Outcomes Statement. The regulatory submission deadline had been postponed from 31 July to 31 December by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment, but the University intended to have the Statement available and accessible to all for the start of the new Academic Year. **The Board noted the draft and that the final version would require Board approval prior to publication. An update on work to narrow the BAME attainment gap should be provided to a future Board meeting following consideration by Strategic Performance Committee as part of the action plan to deliver the Access and Participation Plan.**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report [BG19/115]

The Board of Governors commended the annual report, which was a requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 and had also been commended by Employment and Finance Committee on 15 June 2020.

OfS Prevent Monitoring Outcome* [BG19/116]

The Board of Governors noted the outcome of the OfS assessment of the University's compliance with the Prevent Duty following the accountability and data return submitted in December 2019.

Board of Governors Summary Minutes. 24 February 2020. Summary Minutes and Confidential Minutes. 27 April 2020 and Written Resolutions [BG19/117 – BG19/120]

The Board of Governors confirmed the Summary Minutes of its Meeting on 24 February 2020, the Summary Minutes and Confidential Minutes of its Meeting on 27 April 2020, and of Written Resolutions WR BG19/100 and WR BG19/101 as accurate records.

Minutes of the Covid-19 Board sub-group [BG19/121 - BG19/124]

The Board of Governors noted the minutes of the meetings of the Covid-19 sub-group on 21 April, 05 May, 19 May and 02 June 2020; the minutes should be treated as Reserved and would not be published.

Summary Action List and Matters Arising [BG19/125]

The Board of Governors noted the Summary Action List and Matters Arising. There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

Summary Minutes and Confidential Minutes of Meetings: Employment and Finance Committee 20 April, 18 May and 15 June 2020; Strategic Performance Committee 16 June 2020; Audit Committee 08 June 2020; Nominations Committee 08 June 2020 and Academic Board 03 June 2020 [BG19/126-BG19/130]

The Board of Governors noted the Summary Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the above meetings.

Board of Governors Annual Agenda Plan 2020/21 [BG19/131]

The Board of Governors noted the draft Annual Agenda Plan for the 2020/21 academic year.

Susan F O'Donnell
Secretary to the Board of Governors
July 2020