

# NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

## SENATE

21 September 2022

**Present:** The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor Julie Sanders (Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost), Professor David Burn, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Nigel Harkness, Professor Jane Robinson, Professor Brian Walker and Professor Tom Ward (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr Vanessa Armstrong, Professor Caroline Austin, Professor Bruce Baker, Professor Chris Baldwin, Madeline Baugh (President, Students' Union), Dr Marie Devlin, Dr Barbara Eberth, Professor Catherine Exley, Professor Jens Hentschke, Professor Alex Hughes, Professor Andy Husband, Aleena Ikram (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students' Union), Jenny Johnstone, Dr Darren Kelsey, Danica Limawan (Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union), Dr Gareth Longstaff, Mack Marshall (Education Officer, Students' Union), Professor Rhiannon Mason, Kate McGill, Professor Anoop Nayak, Claire Morgan, Professor Graham Morgan, Professor Alison Shaw, Professor Annie Tindley, Dr Eimer Tuite.

**In attendance:** Lucy Backhurst (Academic Registrar) for Item 6, Professor Candy Rowe (Dean of Research Culture and Strategy) and Dr Nicola Simcock (Research Culture Manager) for Item 7, Dr Colin Campbell (Registrar), Justin Cole (Executive Director of External Relations), Nick Collins (Executive Director of Finance), Adrienne McFarland (Chief Operating Officer), Jackie Scott (Director of People Services), and Dr Simon Meacher (Head of Executive and Governance Office).

**Apologies:** Dr Shoba Amarnath, Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Professor Darren Evans, Professor Stephanie Glendinning, Dr Anjam Khan.

## MINUTES

### 1. OPENING REMARKS

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed new members of Senate to their first meeting. This was also the final meeting of Senate for Professor Julie Sanders and Adrienne McFarland before they left the University. Both colleagues were thanked for their contribution to the work and life of the University.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### 3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 29 June 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document A. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

### 4. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor and President's report. Highlights of this report are discussed below.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Reported:

1. HM Queen Elizabeth II

Senate recorded its deep regret at the death of the Queen and its sympathy for the members of the Royal Family.

2. Ukraine

On 8 September 2022, the University announced that it had formalized its twinning partnership with the National University of Water and Environmental Engineering (NUWEE) in Ukraine. Newcastle had signed a five-year agreement that would support long-term research and educational collaboration. The partnership would provide vital support so that NUWEE students and researchers could continue their work at their home university, and help with the rebuilding of the NUWEE campus.

3. Student Recruitment

Senate noted the latest position in relation to 2022 entry. The year had not been without its challenges, not least because of the extremely competitive environment, as home students sat exams for the first time in two years, as well as the ongoing uncertainty for international applicants and their ability to travel and start their studies.

At undergraduate level, and following a successful confirmation and clearing period in August, the University was on target to reach its home and international targets, thanks to teamwork and colleagues' efforts from across our University. In terms of taught postgraduate, there was confidence that the overall international target would be met, however, new Covid restrictions on movement in China posed a risk for student attendance and formal guidance on remote learning was expected from the government. There had been a drop in demand from PGT home students and this trend was evident across the sector.

4. Times Higher Education University of the Year

The University had been shortlisted for the prestigious Times Higher Education University of the Year award in recognition of its commitment to Environmental and Social Justice. The University had also been shortlisted for Outstanding Contribution to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for its Inclusive Futures programme, which aimed to support ethnically minoritised emerging leaders within the institution. Glyn Nelson, a Specialist Experimental Scientific Officer in the Bioluminescence facility had been shortlisted for Outstanding Technician of the Year. The winner of the University of the Year would be revealed at a ceremony in London in November 2022.

5. UKRI Stipend

In light of the cost of living crisis, UK Research and Innovation had announced a 10% uplift to the minimum student stipend for UKRI students effective from 1 October. UKRI-funded students at the University would receive the £1606 uplift in stipend at no cost to the University. Students funded by University scholarships would also receive a £1606 uplift in stipend, with guidance issued accordingly to budget holders. Students funded by other external funders would receive an increase in stipend only as determined by the funder. The future consequences of UKRI's decision were uncertain, but it was possible that the number of UKRI-funded students would fall.

Self-funded students and students who did not receive an increase in stipend would be eligible to apply to a new Doctoral College cost-of-living impact fund that replaced the

previous Covid impact fund. All students could continue to access existing 'hardship' personal financial support funding if necessary.

## 6. Colleague and Student Success

Professor Martin Embley (Biosciences Institute) has received the Royal Society's Darwin Medal in recognition of his fundamental, paradigm-changing contributions to the understanding of mitochondrial endosymbiosis and the origins of eukaryotes in a new two-domain tree of life.

Dan Erskine (Early Career Researcher in the Translational and Clinical Research Institute) had been awarded an Alzheimer's Research UK Senior Research Fellowship (one of only two awarded in the round).

Professor Andy Husband (School of Pharmacy) had led a successful bid to NIHR for a Patient Safety Translational Research Collaborative, working with NUTH (worth £5.235m over 5 years).

Professor Majlinda Lako, Professor Evelyne Sernagor and Professor Alex Thiele (Biosciences Institute) had secured a £1.3m award from the Medical Research Council.

Jennifer Munkley (Early Career Researcher in the Biosciences Institute) had been awarded £513,099 for research into prostate cancer by Prostate Cancer UK.

Professor Chris Petkov and Dr Yuki Kikuchi (Biosciences Institute) had been awarded a 4-year £1.5m grant from the Medical Research Council.

Professor Lidija Siller (School of Engineering) has been named as one of the Women's Engineering Society Top 50 women in engineering for her work on carbon capture research.

Professor John Simpson (Translational and Clinical Research Institute) had been awarded £1.24m by MRC (MICA: Key mechanisms underlying inhaled GM-CSF's enhancement of phagocytosis and bacterial clearance by human alveolar macrophages).

The University won the Equality Diversity and Inclusion award from the North East CIPD for the Inclusive Futures programme with Common Purpose, which has been a key activity of the University's race equality work around colleague development and opportunity. Sarah Carnegie (Newcastle University Business School) won the Inspirational Practitioner award.

Katy Storie (Director of Sport) had won a grant from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for 'Future Female Leaders in Sport' a project that in part works with Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, a partner in Saudi Arabia.

## 7. Energy

A member of Senate had asked the following question: "What effect will the rapidly rising prices for energy have on the University budget? Does the University have a fixed price contract in place for energy or will it face massively increased energy bills in the next few months?"

The Director of Estates and Facilities had provided the following response:

“Our approach to Net Zero Carbon is largely being driven of two fronts, improving the energy efficiency of our buildings and generating zero carbon energy on site, both of which have a positive impact on our energy costs. The LED lighting project, Great North House decarbonisation project and careful management of our HVAC plant are enabling us to reduce the energy consumption of our estate. In parallel we are investing over £11m in rooftop PV panels which will generate approximately 10% of our electrical consumption and circa £7.5m on a Biofuel CHP which will generate approximately 22% of our electrical consumption and provide heat to our district heat network. These projects are an integral part of our 2030 net zero carbon target but will also insulate us to some degree from the significant volatility in the energy market.

The University has energy hedging contracts in place so has not been fully exposed to the increasing energy costs. The hedging levels are currently set based on a presumed gas consumption of 90% of historic levels, with any excess in consumption above this level exposed to daily spot gas prices. This has provided some protection, however, gas consumption (largely due to covid measures) has been well in excess of historic levels this year. As a result we have been experiencing a significant uplift in our energy costs since late 2021 with these increases continuing throughout 2022. Costs last year were broadly 40% ahead of the prior year. At the time of budget approval in July we made provision for our best estimate of energy costs in 2022-23 and beyond, taking account of reducing hedging positions over time. There remains a significant risk that incurred costs will exceed our budgeted position as wholesale prices continue to increase. We have held some cost contingency in the budget to partly mitigate this risk. We are closely monitoring the incurred costs and considering actions available to reduce energy consumption as we move towards the winter.”

#### 8. University Promotions Committee

At its meeting on 13 September 2022, Executive Board had approved the appointment of the following colleagues as members of University Promotions Committee:

Professor Akane Kawamura – Professor of Chemical Biology in the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences

Professor William Maloney – Professor of Politics in the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology

Professor Jan Quinn – Professor of Eukaryotic Microbiology in the Biosciences Institute

#### 9. University Calendar

During the pandemic, the University calendar had been reviewed annually and changes were made. This created challenges, including for long-term planning. A consultation was now underway aimed at agreeing a calendar for the next five years that was optimum for the business of both education and research. A full equality analysis would be carried out. Following the consultation, a proposal with recommendations would be brought to Senate, following consideration by University Education Committee and University Research and Innovation Committee.

#### 10. Library Regulations

Senate noted that minor changes had been made to the Library Regulations in relation to a move to online only theses deposits and use of digital media to post notices regarding charges.

#### 11. Convocation

The annual meeting of Convocation, which had been scheduled to take place on Saturday 8 October, would now be held on Saturday 26 November. A large number of nominations had been received for the role of Chair of Convocation and an online election would be conducted in which all University alumni were eligible to vote.

## 12. Committee Appointments

Senate approved the following to be appointed/\*re-appointed as members of the committees/bodies from 1 August 2022 until 31 July 2025 (unless otherwise indicated):

Appeals Panel for Promotions Review	Dr Lisa-Marie Shillito* Dr Wenxian Yang*
Public Lectures Committee	Dr Martin Farr* Dr Greg Mutch* Dr Meiko O'Halloran* Dr Andrea Rehberg
Research Ethics Committee	Dr Violetta Hionidou*
Riddell Memorial Lectures Committee	Dr John Appleby* (until 31 July 2024) Dr Stephen Overy Dr Patrick Rosenkranz Dr Duncan Wright

## 13. Office for Student Condition B3

The revised Condition B3 on regulating student outcomes would come into effect on 3 October. The outcomes used to assess compliance would relate to student continuation and completion, degree outcomes, including differential outcomes for students with different characteristics, and graduate employment and, in particular, progression to professional jobs and postgraduate. Final decisions on the minimum numerical thresholds were to be made this month. Regulatory intervention may apply where providers breach the condition. OfS guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework for providers and students' unions was also expected to be published imminently.

## 14. Times Good University Guide 2023

In results published on 16 September, the University had improved its overall ranking in the guide to 33rd, up 9 places from last year. The University's rank had increased in three measures: Student-Staff Ratio (+14), Graduate Prospects (+8), and Student Experience (+4); and fallen in two measures: Teaching Quality (-2) and Research Quality (-5). The University ranked joint 22nd in the Russell Group, up two places from last year and in the Top 10 for 10 subjects (previously 8 subjects).

## 15. Travel Working Group

Following feedback, including the discussion at the last Senate meeting, the Executive Director of Finance had established a Travel Working Group. The Group included representation from across the University, including Senate, and had now met twice to consider the issues relating to the travel policy and the performance of the travel management company. The group had agreed the immediate priority items within its scope as: improvement in the performance of Selective Travel; consideration of the policy to mandate the use of a travel management company; subsistence rates and allowances within the current travel policy; and the process for reclaiming travel-related expenses. The group was working towards a policy update recommendation to

Executive Board in due course. It was suggested that the group might consider how a large decrease in travel would affect different sections of the University.

**5. SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 11 JULY 2022**

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 11 July 2022.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Senate received an overview of the budget for 2022-23 and financial plans for 2023-24 and 2024-25 which had been approved by Council on 11 July 2022.

**6. COST OF LIVING**

Received a report from the Vice-Chancellor and President.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Senate received a presentation on measures to support students with the cost of living rise.
2. A Cost of Living Working Group had been convened by the Academic Registrar involving Sabbatical Officers, NUSU staff and key stakeholders. The purpose of the group was to develop a package of support for all students to offset the impact of the cost of living increase on the student education experience. In addition, the Doctoral College Executive Group was considering the specific needs of research students in this context.
3. Alongside the work within the institution, work with Academic Registrar's from Northumbria and Durham universities was taking place to share practice and leverage support from the city and region for additional measures to be put in place.
4. The Students' Union was appreciative of the work that had been done on this agenda so far. Senate reflected that some if not many students would drop extracurricular activities in favour of part-time work, and this could adversely affect their studies. There was a particular need at this time for all colleagues to demonstrate empathy and understanding towards students. The Students' Union was encouraging students to apply for a Participation Bursary to remove financial barriers from impacting on students' experience.
5. Senators encouraged the University to give thought to potential policy amendments to take account of the challenging circumstances facing students. Measures that might help included changes to the Personal Extenuating Circumstances procedure; consistent and up to date timetabling; and avoidance of assessment deadline bunching; introducing payment for student representatives involved in quality assurance and student voice structures. It was noted, however, that there was in some cases more limited flexibility for changes to assessment for students on programmes accredited by professional bodies.
6. The urgency and timing of communications on support available was of critical importance. Special recognition ought to be given to the impact on students from underrepresented groups.

**7. RESEARCH CULTURE ACTION PLAN**

Received a paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document E. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The Research Culture Action Plan was the result of extensive consultation with the University's research community, presenting five 'Pillars' for a positive research culture. Specific barriers to progress were highlighted, along with details of a menu of workable action points that could be adopted across the University. Releasing quality time for research' and 'building a safe and inclusive research environment' were the initial priority areas.
2. It was suggested that there was a need to set milestones and targets for achievement of the actions highlighted in the plan. An accompanying research culture survey would soon be published, and analysis of the findings would inform success measures.
3. The programme of work ensuing from the action plan and survey needed to add value and drive change. Difference and diversity in ways of academic working would need to be captured.
4. The University had partnered with an external organisation, 'Positive About Inclusion', to commission a report addressing inappropriate behaviours in research and how these could be addressed and prevented more effectively.

***Resolved that Senate approve the Research Culture Action Plan.***

## **8. UNIVERSITY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Received a report from the Vice-Chancellor and President.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Senate received an update on progress against the Vision and Strategy, referenced against the strategic implementation priorities agreed at the joint meeting of Senate and Council in March 2022. Council received a biannual strategy performance update.

## **9. STUDENT SURVEYS**

Received a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document G. Copy filed in in the Minute Book.]

Noted:

1. Senate received reports detailing the outcomes of the University's participation in the National Student Survey 2022 and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2022, and Semester 2 Stage Evaluations, as well as an overview report.
2. Key concerns across all three survey reports highlighted the following issues:
  - Consistency - students describing otherwise satisfactory or even excellent experiences which were significantly negatively impacted by a handful of modules, staff or experiences that dragged down their overall experience.
  - Communication – students describe changes to courses and timetables as not being sufficiently communicated to them or with enough notice. Many students describe staff not being contactable and that they have received little or no communication from their personal tutors.

- Assessment and feedback - students in each survey describe assessment deadlines being too bunched together and that feedback is too delayed. When they do receive feedback, they feel as though it is vague and not specific enough to help them improve.
  - Student voice - students describe how they do not know what is done with their feedback, they feel as though nothing changes when they share their views. Many students do not feel a part of decisions being made about their courses.
  - Value for money – students describe how they do not feel their experience was good value for money and cite significant disruptions from the pandemic and industrial action.
3. Senate noted the potential implications of the National Student Survey results for the University's performance in the forthcoming Teaching Excellence Framework exercise.
  4. It was suggested that the overwhelming majority of colleagues were dedicated and delivering a positive experience for students. Supporting colleague morale was important, particularly where poor student survey performance was accompanied by disappointing REF outcomes.
  5. Members discussed issues such as assessment bunching, lack of awareness among students about representation structures, and failure to close the feedback loop, which were judged to be fixable. It was agreed that there was a need to rebuild the relationship with students through co-production and sharing space. Addressing other structural issues, including IT and timetabling, should be given priority.
  6. Reviews of progression and promotion criteria, which took colleague behaviour and impact on the student experience into account, were underway.
  7. It was suggested that Heads of School needed to have safe spaces to share dialogue, ideas, good practice and challenges.

## 10. **WORKLOAD PLANNING**

Received a report from the Chief Operating Officer.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in in the Minute Book.]

Noted:

1. Senate considered an overview of the progress made by each Faculty with the implementation of the University Workload Planning Policy. Positive progress was being made.
2. Senate agreed that there should be further movement towards a more consistent way to measure workload, development of transparent tariffs, workload modelling software, and a more data driven reporting process.

## 11. **STUDENT CHARTER**

Received a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document J. Copy filed in in the Minute Book.]

Noted:

1. The revised version of the Student Charter had been considered and endorsed by University Education Committee. The document had been shortened, and the language made more student-friendly.

***Resolved that Senate approve the Student Charter for the 2022-23 academic year.***

*[Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, an academic colleague drew attention to a contradiction between the Student Charter and the University's core value of academic freedom. As a consequence, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education as Chair of University Education Committee has agreed the following amended wording: "All students are expected to be respectful of other students and staff, including while engaging in academic debates that concern views held by other students or staff."]*

## 12. WHITE SPACE

Noted that:

1. The Vice-Chancellor invited members of Senate to submit suggestions for future agenda items.

## 13. APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

Received a recommendation from the Vice-Chancellor and President.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in in the Minute Book.]

Noted:

1. Following approval of a proposed process for the appointment of a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor by Senate and Council in June and July 2022, an appointment panel had been convened in accordance with Statute 11. Senate noted the recommendation of the panel to appoint Professor Brian Walker as Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
2. The appointment of Professor Walker would create a vacancy for a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation. Senate agreed to recommend to Council the appointment of an Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, and noted that an external search for a permanent appointment would commence as soon as possible. Members of Senate were invited to nominate members of a joint Senate and Council selection panel.
3. The departure of the current Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost had resulted in the need to reallocate other responsibilities. It was proposed that the remit of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global should be enhanced to include Sustainability. Council would be asked to approve the re-appointment of Professor Richard Davies as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global and Sustainability for a new five year term.
4. Responsibility for Social Justice would now sit fully with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Place.
5. With respect to leadership of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, a period of consultation was underway, and the Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion would be attending meetings of Executive Board as an interim arrangement in the short-term. The Vice-Chancellor would return to Senate with a recommendation for leadership of this portfolio later in the academic year.

***Resolved that Senate approve a change in job title for the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global to Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global and Sustainability.***

#### 14. REPORT FROM HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

Received a recommendation from the Honorary Degrees Committee.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in in the Minute Book.]

Noted:

1. Senate considered a proposal that had received unanimous support from Honorary Degrees Committee.

***Resolved that Senate approve the award of an honorary degree (DMus) to the individual named within the report.***

#### 15. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 29(4))

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 29(4), Senate may accord the title of Professor Emeritus on professors retiring from the University.

Considered a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor and President following consultation with the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

***Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:***

***Professor Annie Borland, with effect from 1 October 2022***  
***Professor Rob Upstill-Goddard, with effect from 1 February 2023***  
***Professor Andrew Soward, with effect from 1 February 2023***

#### 16. APPOINTMENT OF A PUBLIC ORATORS

Reported that, in accordance with Senate Standing Order 11, Senate shall appoint Public Orators after considering a report of a Committee.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Members of Senate were invited to submit nominations for the appointment of an additional Public Orator.

***Resolved that Senate approve:***

- 1) ***The appointment of Professor John Fitzgerald as Public Orator from 1 August 2022 to 30 September 2025.***
- 2) ***The re-appointment of Dr James Harriman-Smith as Public Orator from 1 August 2022 to 30 September 2024, and of Professor David Jones as Public Orator from 1 August 2022 to 30 September 2023.***

#### 17. SENATE MEMBERS ON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

Resolved that the following members of Senate be appointed to committee membership as follows:

University Education Committee	Professor Andy Husband
University Research and Innovation Committee	Professor Alex Hughes
Environment and Sustainability Committee	Professor Alison Shaw

**18. SENATE SUB-COMMITTEES**

Received

[Circulated with the agenda as Document O. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**19. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE**

Received a report from the meeting of:

a) University Education Committee: 1 June and 7 July

[Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**20. MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE**

Received a report

[Circulated with the agenda as Document Q. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**21. SENATE DELEGATION OF POWERS**

Received

[Circulated with the agenda as Document R. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**22. STANDING ORDERS OF SENATE**

Received

[Circulated with the agenda as Document S. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**23. REPORTED BUSINESS**

Received a report of action taken in accordance with agreed procedures, approved where necessary by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and/or the Chair of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairs.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document T. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]