



Dr Woods

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Northumbria University appoints Chair-elect

Northumbria University, Newcastle, has today announced the appointment of Roberta Blackman-Woods as the Chair-elect of its Board of Governors.

Dr Woods will take up her role with Northumbria on 1st August 2020 when the University's current Chair, Chris Sayers, stands down after three terms in office as an Independent Governor.

A former Head of School and Associate Dean, and a visiting professor here at

Northumbria, Dr Woods has strong links with the University. She recently stepped down as the Member of Parliament for City of Durham – a position she has held since 2005. During her time in parliament she served as a Deputy Minister and worked in the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, where she was involved in shaping higher education policy. Since 2010 she was also the Shadow Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, and has chaired the All-Party Parliamentary University Group.

At an international level Dr Woods has served as Vice-Chair of the United Nations All-Party Parliamentary Group. She has also been an active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), making extensive use of these networks to support global education initiatives and foster better parliamentary governance. As a sociologist with expertise in housing, Dr Woods served as a social policy academic at the University of Ulster and the University of Newcastle. She was also Dean of Social and Labour Studies at Ruskin College, Oxford.

Commenting on her new role Dr Woods said: “I am simply delighted to be appointed as the next Chair of the Northumbria University Board of Governors. It is a university I know well, and I very much look forward to working with the whole Northumbria team to ensure the University’s fantastic success continues.”

Chris Sayers, current Chair of Northumbria’s Board of Governors, added: “I am delighted that Roberta will be succeeding me as Chair of the University. She will bring real strengths and exceptional experience to the role at a time when the University needs the very best leadership to continue to achieve our vision, and I am confident that the Board will be in very good hands.”

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive at Northumbria, said: “I am delighted to welcome Dr Woods as our Chair-elect. She brings an exceptional range of experience of higher education, as a Parliamentarian, as a strong advocate of the sector, and as an academic and I very much look forward to working with her in this new capacity. “

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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