



Left to right - Dr Rachael Chapman was presented with the Vicky Randall Prize by Professor Randall's daughter, Louisa Long.

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Prestigious award recognises academic's inspirational teaching

Dr Rachael Chapman has been awarded the inaugural Vicky Randall Prize by the Political Studies Association in honour of her outstanding contribution to advancing teaching and learning in Political Studies.

An Associate Professor in the [Department of Social Sciences](#) at Northumbria University, Dr Chapman teaches International Relations and Politics and won praise from the judges for “providing superb active learning experiences for her students, her generous support for colleagues and her commitment to

developing lasting partnerships with the broader community”.

The [Political Studies Association \(PSA\)](#) exists to promote and develop the study and teaching of Politics. Academic prizes are presented to individuals and organisations each Spring during the PSA Annual International Conference.

[Dr Chapman](#), who has developed partnerships with local organisations to ensure her students gain real-world knowledge and experience during their studies, was presented with the new teaching prize named in memory of [the late Professor Vicky Randall](#), a former chair of the PSA. Professor Randall’s daughter, Louisa Long, was able to present the award at the annual conference.

[Urban Green Newcastle](#) is the independent charity that collaborates with the people of Newcastle upon Tyne, local businesses, and partners to create safe, welcoming and well-maintained parks and allotments that benefit all communities across the city.

Dr Chapman now regularly works with the organisation to develop live projects for students around engaging the community in the co-design and management of local parks.

The judges added: “This process involves students making real-life budgeting decisions and wonderfully demonstrates deliberative democracy in action. This approach has both enhanced and transformed student outcomes and provided a positive contribution to the local community. Dr Chapman has worked tirelessly to disseminate her experiences to both academia and community groups. She is an inspiration to all of us who teach Politics.”

Dr Chapman, who is supporting her current students to develop health and wellbeing proposals for Heaton Park with Urban Green Newcastle, said: “This project is an experiential learning activity for our students and blends independent research with teaching and a focus on employability. Working with partners like Urban Green Newcastle is key to supporting students to acquire real-world experience in working with a client brief and a fixed budget to develop solutions to real life problems.

“I am honoured and delighted that this work has been recognised by the PSA

and look forward to developing it and related research further, with help from our partners at Urban Green Newcastle.”

Sports and Activities Officer at Urban Green Newcastle, Malcolm McKenna, said: “We are very proud and privileged to be part of this project, which is giving students real-world experience and an understanding of the impacts of their decisions while working within a set budget.

“Seeing the project from start to finish and taking part in their learning has been wonderful to see first-hand. When I reviewed the projects that were delivered, it showed the commitment of the students involved and the initiative ways of interpreting the brief.

“This year’s winning project was of the highest standard and hit the project brief brilliantly. We are looking forward to the project being put into action later this year. Dr Chapman’s passion was evidently shown during lectures and is key to the success of this partnership.”

Chief Executive of the PSA, Michelle Doyle Wildman, said: “The late Professor Vicky Randall was chair of the PSA from 2008 to 2011 and was widely admired as a pioneer in gender research who also gave generously of her time and wisdom to mentor emerging scholars. Rachael clearly continues Vicky’s legacy and is a very worthy winner of this prize.”

The collaboration with Urban Green Newcastle has received further recognition from the [British Academy](#).

Dr Chapman has been awarded a £118,000 British Academy Innovation Fellowship which will feature as a case study the model of greenspace management which has emerged in Newcastle, implemented by Urban Green Newcastle.

Through research and knowledge exchange, the [Innovation, Co-Governance and Democracy in Urban Greenspaces](#) project will draw democratic performance and governance comparisons between Newcastle and two different UK case studies involving charities.

The project will address democratic, trust and capacity challenges associated with adopting these pioneering solutions to dealing with budget cuts. It will

also develop new diagnostic tools, guidance and support for the development of successful democratic partnerships.

The [International Relations and Politics BA \(Hons\)](#) and [History and Politics BA \(Hons\)](#) programmes at Northumbria take an integrated approach to academic theory by applying it to real world problems and achieving 21st century employability skills.

Discover more [here](#) about Dr Chapman's teaching and watch a video about the collaboration with Urban Green Newcastle.

Ends

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Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk