



Academics and business leaders meet at Northumbria for annual PRME conference

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Northumbria University teams up with Business in the Community for major conference on the future of responsible management education

Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University joined forces with Business in the Community (BiTC) to host an industry panel event focusing on what responsible companies expect from graduates entering the workplace.

The panel was part of the 4th Annual Principles for Responsible Education

Management (PRME) UK & Ireland Chapter AGM, which saw 70 delegates from 35 universities across the UK, Ireland, Canada, Malaysia and South Africa visit Newcastle.

Now in its 10th year, the PRME initiative has become the largest organised association between the United Nations and the world's business schools and management-related higher education institutions. It aims to foster a future of social, economic and environmental progress while creating opportunities for both business and academia.

Special guest speaker Jon Khoo, Innovation Partner at Interface Inc, opened the panel debate with a thought provoking speech on the role academia can play in sustainable business development and how students can challenge corporate narratives on today's sustainable development goals.

Following a successful career as a solicitor in the City of London, Jon joined Interface in 2012 having chosen to reapply his skills to tackle the global challenges of marine plastics, inequality and climate change.

Jon explains: "I strongly believe that business has the skills and responsibility to be a force for good and that by business collaborating with universities and NGOs it's proven that none of us is as smart as all of us."

Caroline Theobald CBE, co-chair of the North East Initiative on Business Ethics (NIBE), led the panel discussion which also featured Alix Cornforth, HR business partner at Quorn Foods, Angela Lockwood, chief executive from North Star Housing and Louise Hunter, director of corporate affairs at Northumbrian Water.

Dr Alex Hope, senior lecturer in Business Ethics at Newcastle Business School, organised the event.

He said: "PRME is closely aligned with the work of the United Nations and UN Global Compact in support of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals. The Goals were adopted by the UK and the other 192 Member States of the United Nations (UN) in 2015. They call for economic growth, innovation, affordable energy and upgraded infrastructure, as well as providing a path to end extreme poverty, fighting inequality and protecting the planet which will transform our world for the better.

“We are delighted to welcome so many representatives from the UK & Ireland Chapter of PRME to Newcastle. As a leading UK University with a global reach, Northumbria has a responsibility to engage and inform our partners on the opportunities the UN Global Goals initiative represents.

“They represent societal challenges which need solutions that the private sector and social enterprises can deliver and in the rush to transform business models and systems for the future, integrity and values will have a huge role to play. Finding solutions to societal problems is good business!”

Northumbria is one of the largest universities in the UK with almost 34,000 students from 132 countries. Newcastle Business School is in the top 1% of business schools worldwide with a double accreditation from AACSB (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) – an international hallmark of excellence.

According to the latest figures on higher education start-ups by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for 2015/16, Northumbria is also the number one university for start-ups based on the turnover of graduate businesses (£69.2m).

Newcastle Business School was the Times Higher Education magazine's UK Business School of the Year for 2015. Northumbria University is the number one university in the North East for 'good industry connections' according to the Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2015/16.

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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