UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

SENATE

14 OCTOBER 2003

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor Goddard (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Atkins and Professor Page (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr P E Andras, Dr J C Appleby, Professor Batchelor, Dr H M Berry, Dr R J Boys, Dr J E Calvert, Dr P F Chinnery, Professor Clegg, Dr E G N Cross, Professor Dickinson, Dr A M R Gatehouse, Ms R C Gilroy, Professor Goodfellow, Professor Hall, Dr G R Hammond, Professor Hughes, Dr A C Hurlbert, Dr S McHanwell, Ms P A L Monck (Communications Officer), Dr E Ritchie, Professor Riordan, Professor Seymour, Professor Slater, Professor Stevenson, Ms C A L Watson (Welfare Officer), Professor Wheelock and Mr A M Wilton.

In attendance: The Registrar, the Bursar, the Academic Registrar, Mrs D A Michie (Director of Publications), Mrs J Simpson (Head of Internal Audit), Mr R Wilson (Assistant Director of Finance) and Ms G M Bell (Assistant Registrar),

Mr Bambang Wasito Adi (Indonesian Cultural Attache in London), Professor Sunarto and Professor Rahim (Indonesian National Accreditation Board) attended by invitation.
PART A: STRATEGIC ISSUES

I. RESTRUCTURING

(Minute 35, 3.12.2001)

1. Reported:

That Senate, at its meeting on 3 December 2001, had resolved that the Vice-Chancellor present a critical evaluation of the performance of the new structures to Senate and Council not later than 30 September 2003.

Considered:

A report from the Vice-Chancellor. (Appendix A)

After noting:

1. that the report highlighted a number of very positive improvements in the University’s comparative performance over the last few years which staff should be proud of,

2. that the restructuring exercise had involved major change in many areas of the University and it was essential to ensure that it was moving in the right direction - this paper was part of the evaluation process,

3. that as a starting point the report compared the University’s performance on a number of measures against a group of comparator institutions which taken as a whole demonstrated a lot of positive changes. The Vice-Chancellor provided further figures in relation to the year 2002-03 which highlighted the continuing positive trends:

   • further growth in total income meant a 34.5% increase overall in the last three years

   • growth in income from overseas and non-EC domicile fees had risen to 55.8% for the past three years

   • the ratio of overseas fees to total income were indicative of potential for further growth in this area

   • income from research grants and contracts had grown by 26.3% but this was an area that still required improvement

   • a 45% change in the ratio of research grants and contracts income to total income which was an important factor for the RAE assessment
• proportionately the University does need to increase the amount it receives from research councils

• comparisons showed a move down in the ratio of total staff costs to total income but not in percentage terms although as the voluntary severance costs disappear the University should reduce the ratio further

4. that there were some issues which remained difficult for the University, some of which were widespread in higher education but some had been highlighted by restructuring and it was these that the University needed to focus on,

5. that there had been a presentation to Executive Board on the outcome of the Employee Opinion Survey and over the next few weeks information would be cascaded to faculties and schools and services. The Vice-Chancellor was seeking specific feedback about what employees think the University ought to be doing to improve areas of difficulty. This review had deliberately been kept as a separate exercise since the Survey was broader in scope than the restructuring review. However it was accepted that the results might also inform the restructuring review process,

6. the view that local issues could in some cases involve significant time demands on staff and that these difficulties also needed to be given appropriate attention,

7. that the intention behind the review of the resource allocation method by Professor Stevenson was to move to a model which incentivised earned income, for example the distribution of overseas fee income,

8. that a review of communication mechanisms should include consideration of forums, in addition to the Beehive, that might facilitate collegiality, and finding ways of providing opportunities for groups of staff to have an input into the decision making process through, for example the use of working parties or representatives of groups of heads of school or other positions,

9. the view that issues of academic staff effectiveness and well being were of particular relevance to Senate. Communication and line management within some schools were specific issues,

10. that it was important to give Schools a reasonable opportunity to work and not to make changes too quickly. However, some changes had been made already where there were obvious difficulties,

11. that the Government had announced it would in fact be funding units rated 4 in the last RAE but only until the next exercise,
12. that a key driver in the University’s success was to ensure it was financially viable and the Vice-Chancellor’s view that it had achieved that,

13. that Executive Board had considered what statistics should be used in the review and agreed they needed to be relevant, such as the HEFCE performance indicators, and examined on a regular basis including the long term picture as well as year on year positions,

14. that so far a lot of effort had gone into the development of the academic structure of University Research Institutes although they were all at different stages of evolution. Some had buildings and others would operate as virtual structures. They would not all be run on the same basis financially but rather appropriate account would be taken of the relationship with Schools. Further work was required on how the individual institutes would operate,

15. the view of one member that it would be helpful to review as a matter of priority the configuration of the neuroscience area,

Resolved:

(i) That the Vice-Chancellor note the views and comments of Senate and take account of them in giving attention to improvement measures.

(ii) That an annual Executive Board review of the University’s overall performance should henceforth be presented to Senate and Council.

PART B : GENERAL BUSINESS

II. MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 24 June 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed.

III. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

3. (i) Deaths

Received:

A report on deaths recently announced by the University.
[Details filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved:

That Senate record its deep regret and sympathy for the relatives concerned.
(ii) **Top up fees**

Reported:

(a) That the University would not wish to implement any measures that had the effect of putting people off participating in higher education but top-up fees were argued by the Government to be the only practical way the University could generate additional income. The students expressed a real concern about increasing debts, the time it would take students to repay loans and for the inadequate level of support available to those who felt they could not afford to go to university. There was, however, a big difference between having to find money immediately and repayment at a later date. It was still unclear what the actual net benefit to the institution would be of a £3k top-up fee and a working group, chaired by Professor Atkins, was giving further consideration to the University’s position. The Vice-Chancellor had agreed a position with the region’s other V-Cs which was contingent upon (i) knowing what percentage would be required to go on bursaries and (ii) that it did not involve HEFCE substitution. Consultation was currently taking place in relation to teaching, research and cost recovery. In relation to the teaching resource a movement of funding bands had been modelled internally. The greatest financial risk was if funding of postgraduate research students was to be uncoupled from the last RAE which could represent a significant diminution in income.

(iii) **The Visitor**

Reported:

The disestablishment of the Lord Chancellor’s Office and the establishment of a new Ombudsman which would look at student complaints. It was not yet clear what mechanism would be used to consider staff complaints.

**IV. REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD**

4. **Received:**

Report from the meeting of Executive Board held on 22 July 2003.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
Item A. Revised Credit Control Policy for Tuition Fees and Accommodation Debt

Noted:

That a paper on the above from the Academic Registrar would be presented to the December meeting of Senate.

Item B. Readership appointments
(Minute 80, 27.5.2003)

Resolved:

That the item be noted.

Item C. Occupational Health

Resolved:

That the item be noted.

Item D. HEFCE Staff Recruitment Incentives Scheme (“Golden Hellos”) 

Resolved:

That the item be noted.

V. REPORT FROM STRATEGY BOARD

5. Received:

Report from the meeting of Strategy Board held on 16 September 2003. [Circulated with the Agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Item A. HEFCE Project Capital Allocation Round 3 (3PCA)

After noting:

1. that following Strategy Board’s consideration the bid had been submitted to HEFCE by the deadline of 1 October,

2. that the report outlined the process by which Strategy Board had reached its decisions,

3. that ultimately the approved list was a mix of creative priorities and institutional wide needs,
4. that once the University had received HEFCE’s decision on the bid it would need to manage actively the implementation of the various projects,

Resolved:

That in addition to those mentioned in the report, Professor Atkins be thanked for her extensive contribution in bringing the bid together.

Item B. Estate Strategy Group

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

VI. ANNUAL REPORT FROM PUBLIC LECTURES COMMITTEE

6. Received:

Annual Report from Public Lectures Committee for 2002-03.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

VII. PRO-VICE-CHANCELLORS UNDER STATUTE 13

7. Reported:

(a) That Professor M J Atkins and Professor T F Page’s term of office as Pro-Vice-Chancellors would end on 31 July 2004.

(b) That Statute 13 stated that ‘The council shall, if the senate so recommend, appoint one or more pro-vice-chancellors on the nomination of the senate. They shall hold office for periods fixed by the council on the proposal of the senate ........’

(c) That the procedure for the appointment of Pro-Vice-Chancellors under Statute 13, set out in Senate Standing Order XII.B, was as follows:

1. At least six months before a Pro-Vice-Chancellor appointed under Statute 13 is due to vacate that office, the following Committee shall be constituted to recommend to Council the action to be taken in accordance with Statute 13:

   (a) The Vice-Chancellor (Chairman)
   (b) Four members elected by and from their own number (excluding student members) by Senate
   (c) Four other Senate appointed members (who need not be members of Senate)

2. The following procedure shall determine the appointment of the Senators on the Committee under (b) above:
(i) Electors shall be invited to nominate candidates. Nominations shall be submitted to the Registrar (or his nominee) within a period determined by the Registrar. Nominations shall include a statement confirming the nominee’s willingness to serve if elected.

(ii) If the number of nominations equals the number of vacancies, those nominated will be deemed appointed.

(iii) If there are more nominations than there are vacancies the vacancies shall be filled by election by postal ballot.

Considered:

(a) A proposal by the Vice-Chancellor that Senate recommend to Council that steps be taken to appoint two Pro-Vice-Chancellors under Statute 13 from 1 August 2004.

(b) A proposal by the Vice-Chancellor that, subject to approval of the recommendation in (a) above, only one statutory committee be constituted to recommend both appointments.

After noting:

1. that currently the two Pro-Vice-Chancellors had very different portfolios and the question of whether one committee could adequately represent the interests of each portfolio,

2. the advantage in having one committee would be to ensure comparability of treatment for the two appointments,

3. and after a vote on a proposal that one committee be constituted to recommend both appointments as opposed to each appointment having a separate committee which was supported by a majority of 17 votes to 4,

Resolved:

That the recommendations in (a) and (b) above be approved.

VIII. PROFESSORIAL FELLOW

8. Considered:

A paper concerning the award of the title ‘Professorial Fellow’.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document E. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
After noting:

1. that some other universities had adopted the use of this title and found it to be useful in certain cases,

2. some uncertainty amongst members about the kind of person who might be awarded such a title but acknowledging the fact that it was not possible to talk about particular cases,

3. that the title would be co-terminus with the period of funding only,

4. that the title of Professorial Fellow already existed for a position in the field of Applied Christian Theology, a post shared with Durham University, and that the University should ensure that there was no conflict with different constitutions for the same title,

5. that the award of Professorial Fellow was intended to be a courtesy title and not a contractual one,

6. concern about how the award might be viewed by some staff and how it reconciled with the promotions procedure particularly for promotion to personal professorship,

Resolved:

That a further paper be presented to Senate which included information on the provenance of the Professorial Fellowship in Applied Christian Theology and greater clarity about the route by which people could access this title.

IX. MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE

9. Reported:

(a) That the following had been appointed by the Boards of the Faculties shown to serve on Senate with immediate effect until 31 July of the year shown:

Humanities and Social Sciences:  Dr E G N Cross (06)  
Ms R C Gilroy (06)  
Mr A M Wilton (05)

Medical Sciences:  Professor A S Dickinson (06)  
Dr G R Hammond (06)  
Dr C O Record (05)
Science, Agriculture and Engineering:  
Dr P E Andras (06)  
Dr R J Boys (06)  
Dr A C Hurlbert (05)

Received:

A list showing the membership of Senate for 2003/04.  
(Appendix B)

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed to the meeting new staff and student members of Senate.

X. DATES OF MEETINGS 2003/04

10. Reported:

That Senate would meet on the following dates in 2003-04:

- 2.00 p.m. Tuesday 14 October 2003
- 2.00 p.m. Tuesday 2 December
- 2.00 p.m. Tuesday 27 January 2004
- 2.00 p.m. Tuesday 16 March
- 2.00 p.m. Tuesday 25 May
- 2.00 p.m. Tuesday 6 July

XI. SENATE DINNER

(Minute 625, 24.5.77 refers)

11. Members of Senate were reminded that the annual Senate Dinner would be held on Tuesday, 2 December 2003 at Close House Mansion, Heddon-on-the-Wall.

XII. CONGREGATION DATES: JULY 2004

12. Reported:

That congregation ceremonies following the end of the Easter Term 2004 would be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday, 7 July 2004
- Thursday, 8 July all day
- Friday, 9 July
- Saturday, 10 July a.m.
XIII. SEMESTERS AND TERM DATES 2003/04, 2004/05 & 2005/06

13. Reported:

That, in accordance with recommendations approved by Senate in respect of the academic year structure, the dates of terms and semesters for 2003-06 were as follows:

**Academic Year 2003-04 (Leap Year)**

- Michaelmas: Tuesday 16 September – Friday 12 December 2003
- Epiphany: Monday 12 January – Friday 19 March 2004
- Easter: Monday 19 April – Friday 11 June 2004

- Semester 1: Tuesday 16 September 2003 – Friday 23 January 2004
- Semester 2: Monday 26 January – Friday 11 June 2004

**Academic Year 2004-05**

- Michaelmas: Monday 13 September – Friday 10 December 2004
- Epiphany: Monday 10 January – Friday 18 March 2005
- Easter: Monday 18 April – Friday 10 June 2005

- Semester 1: Monday 13 September 2004 – Friday 21 January 2005
- Semester 2: Monday 24 January – Friday 10 June 2005

**Academic Year 2005-06**

- Michaelmas: Monday 19 September – Friday 16 December 2005
- Epiphany: Monday 16 January – Friday 24 March 2006
- Easter: Monday 24 April – Friday 16 June 2006

- Semester 1: Monday 19 September 2005 – Friday 27 January 2006
- Semester 2: Monday 30 January – Friday 16 June 2006

XIV. REPORTED BUSINESS

14. 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 Chairman of Council on behalf of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairmen.

(Appendix C)
PART C : RESERVED BUSINESS

XV. ACADEMIC DISTINCTION – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS
(STATUTE 31(4))

15. Resolved:

That Senate Standing Order XI be suspended and that the title of ‘Professor Emeritus’ be conferred retrospectively on the following from the dates shown:

1 January 2003:
Professor J E Dobson

1 August 2003:
Professor D Newton
Professor P D Snashall

1 October 2003
Professor N E F Cartlidge