UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

SENATE

21 September 2004

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor J B Goddard (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor P H Baylis, Professor T F Page, Professor E Ritchie, Professor A C Stevenson and Professor M P Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr P E Andras, Dr J C Appleby, Professor J B Batchelor, Dr H M Berry, Dr R J Boys, Dr J E Calvert, Professor P F Chinnery, Ms R S Currie (Education Officer), Professor P S Davis, Professor A M Dickinson, Professor A M R Gatehouse, Ms R C Gilroy, Professor M Goodfellow, Mr T Gorman (Communications Officer), Dr G R Hammond, Ms L B Hargreaves (Welfare Officer), Professor C R Harwood, Professor M A Hughes, Dr A C Hurlbert, Dr S McHanwell, Dr C O Record, Professor C B Riordan, Professor R A Seymour and Professor J Wheelock.

In attendance: Dr J V Hogan (Registrar), Mr H B Farnhill (Bursar), Mr P S Mitchell (Academic Registrar), Mr R J C Burrow (Assistant Director of Human Resources), Mrs D A Michie (Senior Assistant Registrar) and Mr C Magee (Assistant Director, International Office). Mrs S Applegarth (Head of Academic Quality and Standards) attended for item 1.

The student members were not present for items presented under Reserved Business.

MINUTES

PART A : STRATEGIC ISSUES

1. QAA Institutional Audit Self Evaluation Document

Considered the QAA Institutional Audit Self Evaluation Document.

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

After noting that:

1. The Self Evaluation Document (SED) had to be submitted to the QAA by 25 October. Following receipt of the Document, the QAA would confirm the audit team and the five Discipline Audit Trails which the team would follow. Until that information was received, in order to ensure that the team would be able to meet with the relevant people, it was important that everybody kept the dates for the audit visit in their diaries;

2. The focus of the audit was the quality of the student learning experience and the maintenance of the standards of the Newcastle awards, therefore the emphasis in the SED was on teaching. However, information would be included on the research environment;

3. The structure of the Document followed the template which would be used by the QAA for the audit report. Advice had been sought both internally and externally on both the structure and length, which had been useful;
4. An Audit Steering Group had been created which had worked on the detail of the SED. There had been several drafts and opportunities had been made available for academic and administrative staff and students to comment and provide information and examples;

5. Preparation of the students’ submission was in hand. It would be based on responses received to a survey of students, although the response from postgraduates had been poor;

6. Greater emphasis could be made in the SED on the University’s role in the region and its successes in student enterprise, graduate retention in the region and other third strand aspects where these could be linked to teaching. The success of the University’s Partners programme should also be stressed;

7. Although the SED was mainly concerned with teaching, the vibrancy of the University’s research and its research ethos made an impact on the environment in which teaching was taking place, helped to attract good staff and supported student projects, and so these could be given more emphasis;

8. There had been differential growth in student numbers across the University as expansion was only possible where there was capacity. The current academic composition of the student body reflected the increase in students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The number of students studying medicine was restricted by the government and increasing the numbers of those studying laboratory-based subjects had consequences with regard to facilities etc;

9. The summary and conclusions section was not yet in its final form. Certain changes to improve it should be considered including:

   • The insertion of cross references to related points in the Document. (This had been intended but there had not been time to incorporate these before the meeting of Senate.)
   • The addition of a reference to the number of graduates who remain in academia and help to contribute to the reputation of Newcastle at a national level;

10. The audit team would need to report on developments since the last audit and this would include the outcome of the restructuring process, particularly in relation to the student experience. The restructuring process had been initiated to address a series of problems which had been identified and it was important that the positive outcomes of this were emphasised;

11. Although Senate had delegated responsibility for quality and standards matters to the University Teaching and Learning Committee, it was committed to monitoring this area and to ensuring that any issues were addressed. Its detailed discussions on issues relating to such matters in the previous academic year provided ample evidence of this commitment.

**Resolved that:**

(i) Any amendments that were required to specific points in the Document be put in writing and sent by email to Mrs Applegarth;

(ii) Senate approve the Self Evaluation Document in principle, subject to the changes noted above being made.
PART B : GENERAL BUSINESS

2. Minutes

*The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 6 July 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed.*

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Progress of business

Received a business tracking form.

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

4. Vice-Chancellor’s business

(a) 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*

(b) Admissions to Higher Education Report

Steven Schwartz had published his report on Admissions to Higher Education on 14 September. This report proposed the introduction of a two-stage applications process in which students would select their preferred universities and courses as of now but no offers would be made until after applicants received their results in August. This would get rid of the need for clearing as offers would be made on known grades and would be a more efficient way of conducting the admissions process.

Charles Clarke, the Education Secretary, was strongly supporting the introduction of a post-qualifications applications system and had asked the Director General for Higher Education at the DfES to head a group to oversee its implementation. This two stage proposal would be one of the options considered.

The report also called on universities to publish admissions policies, detailed criteria for course admissions and an explanation of admissions processes. Positive discrimination was not recommended but universities were encouraged to consider factors other than just A level results. This University would support such openness and already considered potential rather than simply actual results in its operation of the Partners programme. Work had begun on how best to take this forward, particularly with regard to the possible effects on dates of terms as it was likely that the secondary school year would be restructured to allow a post-qualifications system to operate.
(c) Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Dentistry
(Minute 74(d), 6.7.2004)

Senate and Council had previously been informed about the cut in the budget of the Northern Deanery and the implications of this reduction. Since then the BMA had called on the University’s Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Dentistry to re-think the £2.8m in cuts, claiming that the Institute was in danger of not meeting the criteria for training specialist doctors after study leave had been cancelled for 2,000 North-East doctors. The BMA’s Newcastle office had been overwhelmed with complaints from junior doctors, consultants and GP trainers since the cuts were announced.

The Institute was trying to find a way to reinstate study leave and all study leave was likely to be approved but, in the light of the reduced budget, this would inevitably affect other areas adversely.

(d) Nanotechnology

A Newcastle University nanotechnology facility had received a £3m boost from the Department of Trade and Industry. INEX, a microsystems and nanotechnology facility for industry, was among recipients of awards from the Government’s £90m micro and nanotechnology manufacturing initiative.

(e) Sunday Times University Guide 2004

Newcastle University had risen three places in the new Sunday Times University Guide and was now ranked 19th. Perfect scores were recorded for medicine (one of just four UK schools to achieve this), anatomy and physiology, molecular biosciences, pharmacology and pharmacy, psychology and speech. It also stated that the University’s stature was underpinned by an excellent research profile.

(f) University welcomes boost for student enterprise

The University had some of the most entrepreneurial students in Britain, as indicated by the success of one group which had won the national SIFE (Students into Free Enterprise) award recently. This group would now represent the UK and compete against teams from 37 other countries in the SIFE World Cup in Barcelona in October. The University had therefore welcomed the announcement by the Chancellor that the government was setting up a national centre to help students and graduates start up in business.

5. Revision of governing structures for the regional clinical teaching on the MBBS programme

Considered a report from the Faculty of Medical Sciences Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. The four regional Divisions of the Faculty of Medical Sciences had originally been established in order to facilitate the development of the regional academic and NHS partnerships which were needed to underpin the proposed expansion of medical education in the North East of England. The Divisions had essentially been consultative bodies and had
been influential in ensuring the University’s success in the bids submitted to increase the number of undergraduate medical student places. As a result the number of places had increased by 85% over a period of three to four years;

2. In order to accommodate the expansion in medical student numbers, a new way of thinking about teaching in the region had been needed. A revised programme of study had therefore been approved and introduced. However, a tight system was now required to ensure there was adequate academic management, quality management, curriculum governance and equity of experience on this programme. The Faculty did not consider the existing Divisional structure appropriate to fulfil this task and so wished to replace it with a more effective one. It considered the establishment of the Standing Sub-Committees of the Board of Medical Studies, one in each of the four Clinical Base Units, would achieve this;

3. Discussions had taken place with the four Divisions and they had agreed that the structure was no longer working effectively. They supported the proposal to disestablish them;

4. A Statutory Visitation by the General Medical Council (GMC) was scheduled for 2004-05 which would take place over a period of 12 to 15 months and would inspect the programme to measure its compliance against such GMC requirements as assessment, student support etc. The results of the Visitation would be reported to the Privy Council. It was therefore essential that the right structures were in place;

5. The embryos of the proposed Standing Sub-Committees of the Board of Medical Studies had already begun to operate in response to the increase in the number of students.

Resolved that the four regional Divisions of the Faculty of Medical Sciences be disestablished with immediate effect, subject to the agreement of Council

6. Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice

Considered revisions to the Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice.

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

Resolved that the revisions to Appendix 1 of the Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice be approved, subject to the agreement of Council.

7. Report from University Teaching and Learning Committee

Received a report from the meeting of University Teaching and Learning Committee held on 5 July 2004.

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

8. Revised Promotions Criteria for Chairs and Readers
(Minute 82, 27.5.2003)

Reported that Senate, at its meeting on 27 May 2003, resolved that it receive a report on the operation of the revised procedures after the 2004 exercise and a report to monitor promotions on the basis of teaching.

Received a report prepared by the Assistant Director of Human Resources, Mr R J C Burrow.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
9. **Membership of Senate**

Received a list showing the membership of Senate for 2004-05.

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

After noting that:

1. The Chairman welcomed new staff and student members to their first meeting of Senate;
2. There was a vacancy in the non-professorial elected membership following Professor Ritchie’s appointment as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning);
3. The normal election procedure was cumbersome and time consuming and so a simple mechanism was required to allow casual vacancies in the elected membership to be filled quickly and easily.

**Resolved that a proposal for a simple way of filling casual vacancies in the elected membership be brought to a later meeting of Senate.**

10. **Dates of meetings 2004-05**

Reported that Senate would meet at 2.00 pm on the following dates in 2004-05:

- 21 September 2004
- 16 November 2004
- 18 January 2005
- 8 March 2005
- 26 April 2005
- 7 June 2005

11. **Senate Dinner**

(Minute 625, 24.5.77 refers)

Members of Senate were reminded that the annual Senate Dinner would be held on Tuesday, 16 November 2004 in The Courtyard, Research Beehive.

12. **Congregation dates: July 2005**

Reported that congregation ceremonies following the end of the Summer Term 2005 would be held on the following dates:

- Tuesday, 5 July (provisional)
- Wednesday, 6 July all day
- Thursday, 7 July
- Friday, 8 July
- Saturday, 9 July am
13. Semester and term dates 2004-05 and 2005-06

Reported that:

(a) In accordance with recommendations approved by Senate in respect of the academic year structure, the dates of terms and semesters for 2004-06 were as follows:

**Academic Year 2004-05**

- Autumn: Monday 13 September – Friday 10 December 2004
- Spring: Monday 10 January – Friday 18 March 2005
- Summer: 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**

- Autumn: Monday 19 September – Friday 16 December 2005
- Spring: Monday 16 January – Friday 24 March 2006
- Summer: 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

(b) The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), Professor Ritchie, had requested that the current arrangements for the length of the teaching year should be reviewed and the dates for 2006-07 onwards should be regarded as provisional.

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

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
PART C : RESERVED BUSINESS

15. Academic distinctions – title of Professor Emeritus (Statute 31(4))

Reported that in accordance with Statute 31(4), Senate may accord the title of Professor Emeritus on professors retiring from the University.

Considered: proposals from the Vice-Chancellor for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

After noting that:

1. It would be useful if the reason for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus was stated when the proposal was made;

2. The introduction of categories of Professor Emeritus should be considered. This would allow those who were likely to continue to be research active to be identified and entered in the University’s Research Assessment Exercise submission;

3. Executive Board was due to receive a report on this topic at its next meeting.

Resolved that:

(i) A report on this issue be brought to a later meeting of Senate;

(ii) The title of ‘Professor Emeritus’ be conferred on the following from the dates shown:

   Professor J M Davison, retrospectively from 1 July 2004
   Professor C J S Petrie, from 1 October 2004
   Professor S J Yeaman, from 1 October 2004