UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

SENATE

25 May 2004

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor J B Goddard (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor T F Page and Dr E Ritchie (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr P E Andras, Dr J C Appleby, Professor J B Batchelor, Dr H M Berry, Dr R J Boys, Mr G Caiger (student member), Dr P F Chinnery, Dr S Cholerton, Professor W Clegg, Dr E G N Cross, Ms R C Gilroy, Dr G R Hammond, Professor M A Hughes, Dr A C Hurlbert, Dr E F S Kaner, Dr S McHanwell, Ms P A L Monck (Communications Officer), Dr C O Record, Professor C B Riordan, Professor C R Slater, Professor A C Stevenson, Ms C A L Watson (Welfare Officer) and Professor J Wheelock.

In attendance: Dr J V Hogan (Registrar), Mr H B Farnhill (Bursar), Mr P S Mitchell (Academic Registrar), Mr A J Gladdish (Website Editor) and Mrs D A Michie (Senior Assistant Registrar).

Professor Page was not present for item 66, Professor Goddard was not present for item 67, and Dr Berry and Miss Gilroy were not present for item 68.

Note: Copies of documents are filed in the Minute Book and are normally available on request from barbara.akinhead@ncl.ac.uk or ext. 6087.

MINUTES

PART A : STRATEGIC ISSUES

55. BOLOGNA PROCESS

Received an oral report from Dr E Ritchie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), on the Bologna Process. (A copy of the handout circulated at the meeting is attached as the Appendix to these Minutes).

(Appendix)

After noting that:

1. The meeting in Bologna in 1999 had been the first stage in a complex, ongoing process intended to bring European states together to promote a European Higher Education Area to enhance academic quality and the employability of graduates;

2. The United Kingdom (UK) realised the significance of the Bologna Process and broadly supported it, but had some concerns (for example over the proposal that masters’ programmes should be defined as lasting for two years, and the major difference in notional annual learning time) and would like more flexibility built in. However, it was essential that a means of reaching agreement was found if UK graduates were not to be seriously disadvantaged when it came to their mobility;
3. The University had begun to formulate a strategy on the way forward on this issue and
had started to raise awareness of the implications among staff, but there was still a great
deal of work to be done on the operational details. Universities UK had set up a
European unit to look at achieving a more collective approach to the Bologna Process,
but, owing to the complexity of the problems, so far most of the work which had taken
place had been carried out by individual institutions. Newcastle was regarded as quite a
leader in this area;

4. The Diploma Supplement was being proposed as a Europe-wide transcript which would
carry the information required to facilitate transfer and employment. It was not a
reflective document, like the University’s current Progress File, but more a statement of
work which had been carried out. Some students already possessed this and so it was
important that awareness was raised among University selectors. The UK had agreed that
the Diploma Supplement should be implemented by 2005 and so the University needed to
develop a method to do this. The aim was to achieve a combined document based around
the existing transcript of study and it was hoped that Campus Management could be
developed to provide the output required to produce a Diploma Supplement. However,
there was no money available to assist with implementation;

5. In the past, UK higher education had been attractive, particularly to European countries
and particularly for masters’ programmes. However, the market was now much more
competitive as high quality universities in Europe, such as Padua and Heidelberg, were
offering programmes taught in English and with generally much lower fees. This could
have serious implications for the UK.

Resolved that Dr Ritchie be thanked for her helpful presentation.

PART B : GENERAL BUSINESS

56. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 16 March 2004 were approved as a correct
record and signed, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 53, resolved (v), reword as follows:

Further consideration be given to the proposal to amend the terms of reference of
University Teaching and Learning Committee and University Research Strategy Group and
to make them sub-committees of Executive Board;

57. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Progress of business

Received a business tracking form.
   [Circulated with the Agenda as Document A. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
(b) Pro-Vice-Chancellors under Statute 13  
(Minute 44(b), 16.3.2004)  

Reported that the role description for the post of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) had been published on the web and all staff in the University had been invited to nominate candidates for the post.  

[See also Minute 66.]

58. 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) Increasing Giving to Higher Education  

A report, Increasing Giving to Higher Education, by a government task force had been published on 13 May. The task force, chaired by Eric Thomas, Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University, had concluded that a cultural aversion to fundraising was denying British universities more than £600m in extra income each year and said that, if Britons could be persuaded to follow the example of US donors, universities could raise £400 for each undergraduate student annually. It also recommended increased tax incentives to encourage giving and that the government should match the money invested in fundraising efforts. However the government considered it was already generous in terms of donations, even though it provided only limited tax advantages for those donating the money, and was looking at the financial implications of the recommendations. The report had been welcomed by Universities UK, which stated that it had ‘consistently emphasised the importance of varied funding streams’. Newcastle was already developing this area and had invested in ensuring that this was handled professionally by the Development and Alumni Office, as it was important that fundraising was handled professionally and not by high profile people such as chancellors, as was being suggested. It was of some concern that the government appeared to be using this report as an opportunity to look critically at university structures, particularly as it seemed to consider there was one correct structure.

(c) Higher Education Bill  

Reported that the House of Lords, which was currently considering the Higher Education Bill, had supported key amendments tabled by Baroness Warwick, the Chief Executive of Universities UK, which would limit the powers of the Office of Fair Access to dictate universities’ admissions procedures. The Bill would be considered again on 25 May.

(d) Guardian League Table  

The Guardian University Guide 2004 had been published that day. It had used new methodology, much to the detriment of this University which had been ranked 57th. The Guardian had taken into account such data as the number of first and upper second class
degrees awarded and the numbers of students from under-represented groups. This University awarded relatively few first class degrees and, although the Partners scheme was doing well in the region, the University was still adrift on its recruitment from state schools nationally. However, there was some concern about some of the datasets used. This matter would therefore be brought back for Senate to discuss what action was required once there had been time to carry out a clearer analysis of the issues.

59. REPORTS FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD

Considered Reports from the meetings of Executive Board held on 27 April and 11 May 2004. [Circulated with the Agenda as Documents B1 & B2. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Centre for Software Reliability and System Dependability as a University Research Centre

Considered: a recommendation that the Centre for Software Reliability and System Dependability be re-established as a University Research Centre for five years with effect from 1 June 2004.

After noting that:

1. At the time of restructuring, there were approximately 70 approved research centres, many of which were not productive in research terms. It had therefore been decided to disestablish them and encourage any which wished to be recognised as University Research Centres to submit a new, formal application. This application was one of the few to be submitted to date;

2. The Centre, which was formed mainly from staff in Computing Science, had been operating successfully for 20 years, was internationally recognised as a leader in dependable computing and had strong industrial links. It intended to develop a close relationship with the Informatics Research Institute, the EPSRC E-Grid, the Computing Science IRC and other relevant centres of research excellence in the University, and was expected to make a major contribution to the next Research Assessment Exercise as the area was regarded as among the top 30 research strengths of the University;

3. Both the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering and University Research Strategy Group had strongly supported the proposal.

Resolved that the Centre for Software Reliability and System Dependability be re-established as a University Research Centre for five years with effect from 1 June 2004.

University Research Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences and consequent name change for the School of the same name

Considered:

A recommendation that:

(i) A University Research Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences be established for five years with effect from 1 April 2004;
(ii) The title of the School of Cell and Molecular Biosciences be changed to the School of Biomedical Sciences with immediate effect.

After noting that:

1. The proposed Research Institute’s principal aim would be to foster world-class interdisciplinary research which would contribute significantly to the knowledge base of the biological and biomedical sciences. Many of the researchers involved were rated as 5/5* and formed a key part of the University’s research profile and the establishment of this as a recognised Institute formed an important step in taking this area forward;

2. The proposed name of the Institute reflected the research which would be carried out, while the proposed revised name for the School reflected the direction of undergraduate teaching. As any applications for research council funding would be made from the Institute the title raised no issues relating to eligibility to apply only to certain councils;

3. The Institute would be assigned to the Faculty of Medical Sciences;

4. The proposal had been very carefully scrutinised by both University Research Strategy Group (URSG) and Executive Board to ensure that the Institute would have an integrated, interdisciplinary approach and would offer added value to that which the School alone could provide, as it would not be appropriate to have an Institute which was simply congruent with a School;

5. Both the membership of the Institute and its management board were cross-faculty;

6. Since this was the first proposal for a new University Research Institute to come forward since those approved during restructuring, Senate should appreciate that applications for Research Institute status now involved the completion of a detailed URSG template, which had been developed based on experience and which addressed many of the issues raised by Senate. While the bid document was not currently in the public domain, it could be made available;

7. The major resource provided by the University to Research Institutes was space and the Head of School had defined the space which would be made available to the Institute;

8. The Director of the Institute was being recruited as part of the headroom funding recruitment drive and one of that person’s roles would be to attract resources to the new Institute. The other members would be existing staff in a variety of schools;

9. While it might be argued in favour of delaying the establishment of any new Institutes until the Executive Board review of the existing University Research Institutes had taken place, the approach of the next Research Assessment Exercise was so close it was important to facilitate the development of more structures which might assist with the University’s submission. The results of Executive Board’s review would be reported to Senate in due course;

10. Heads of Research Institutes were now invited to attend the Heads of School’s forum and this was helping to improve communication;
11. No degree programme titles would be affected by this proposal and there should be no adverse effects on recruitment.

Resolved that:

(i) A University Research Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences be established for five years with effect from 1 April 2004;

(ii) The title of the School of Cell and Molecular Biosciences be changed to School of Biomedical Sciences with immediate effect, subject to the agreement of Council.

60. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Considered a Report from the meetings of University Teaching and Learning Committee held on 10 March, 7 April and 5 May 2004.

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

Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Students

After noting that:

1. The need for a Statement of Expectations had arisen from a number of sources including demand from sponsors, the University’s obligation to meet the research councils’ new Standards and Code of Practice for doctoral students, pressure from research students for greater clarity on their rights to teach and the requirement to articulate the training provided;

2. While many schools and subject areas were already meeting this minimum standard, some were not and it was important that all did so;

3. The Statement would apply to all doctoral students, including those following the Integrated PhD programmes. However, it should not apply to all research students as it might not be appropriate for some of them to carry out teaching;

4. The Statement was intended to set out clearly what a doctoral student could expect as a minimum and did not attempt to describe the wide diversity of ways in which interactions between supervisors and their research students actually took place as this was contained in the Code of Practice. However, it would be helpful if the Statement could be amended to include at the beginning: an outline of how the University defined doctoral study; where the primary responsibility of the supervisor lay in the supervision of a student; an explanation that, while all supervisors would meet the minimum standards, this might be achieved in a number of different ways; and to set out clearly what were the responsibilities of the student;

5. There would need to be some flexibility in the implementation of the Statement;

6. While it would be desirable to be able to offer travel to at least one UK and one international conference to doctoral students, as some subjects in particular were becoming increasingly international, the University was under considerable financial
pressure and so the Statement included only the entitlement to one UK conference unless already funded to attend a conference overseas;

7. There were some potential legal issues related to the Statement as it was currently worded and it might be necessary to amend some of the wording to ensure that any possible misunderstandings were avoided. It needed to make it clear that this was the University of Newcastle upon Tyne’s statement of good practice;

8. There would be resource issues related to delivering this Statement, particularly for those schools which were successful in attracting large numbers of doctoral students, and, while some account had been taken of the implementation of this in the budget setting exercise, it might require some time before there could be full implementation;

9. The minimum number of 10 meetings with a main supervisor for a full time student had been reached following consultation with schools and, though this might be considered to be low in some subject areas, it had been arrived at after careful consideration. However, it was recognised that the quality of supervision was equally, if not more, important than the number of meetings;

10. It was essential that health and safety issues underlay all aspects of the Statement and it would be helpful if it was listed as a separate item. This would avoid having to include it in several different places;

11. It was not clear where responsibility for delivery of the Statement lay, ie with the University, faculty or school. It had been thought that the graduate schools would play a key role in the quality assurance areas but consideration needed to be given as to where responsibility lay for those not related to quality assurance;

12. It was important that students did not feel they could rely on payment for teaching and demonstrating to fund their studies and it would be useful to specify in the Statement the maximum notional number of hours which could be worked to comply with restrictions within work permits;

13. As a great many of the points raised related to resources, Executive Board should consider the proposal before it was brought back to Senate;

14. In addition, as the Statement related to research students, University Research Strategy Group should be involved in discussions on its further development, particularly with regard to the responsibilities of students.

Resolved that:

(i) The Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Students be approved in principle;
(ii) The Statement be amended in the following areas:

- an introduction be included which emphasised some of the main points of the purpose of studying for a doctorate and outlined the responsibilities of both supervisors and doctoral students,
- the wording be changed to avoid any misunderstandings or ambiguities about the nature of the commitment between the student and the University,
- a separate section be included to cover the health and safety issues and so avoid the need for duplication,
- the notional number of hours which could be worked by doctoral students within work permit restrictions should be stated;

(iii) Consideration be given to where responsibility for the implementation of the Statement should lie for matters not related to quality assurance;

(iv) A revised version of the Statement be considered by Executive Board and University Research Strategy Group before being brought to the next meeting of Senate.

Rationalisation of University Regulations and Senate Matriculation and Concessions Committee

After noting that:

1. It was considered that responsibilities needed to rebalanced to achieve a greater devolution to degree programme directors in those areas which were deemed appropriate, but with any issues relating to quality assurance or equity remaining a faculty responsibility;

2. A more detailed report, including the necessary minor consequential amendments to University Regulations, would be submitted by the Student Progress Section to the July meeting of Senate.

Resolved that Senate support, in principle, the intention to simplify and streamline the University Regulations on matters of progress and concessions.

Approval of recommendations relating to degree programmes and other qualifications awarded by the University

Noted.

Internal Subject Review of Dentistry

Noted.

61. FEES SCHEDULE 2004-05

Considered the Fees Schedule for 2004-05.

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

Resolved that the Fees Schedule for 2004-05 be approved for submission to Council.
62. **CONGREGATION DATES : JULY 2005**

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

- Tuesday, 5 July 2005 (all day) (provisional)
- Wednesday, 6 July (all day)
- Thursday, 7 July (all day)
- Friday, 8 July (all day)
- Saturday, 9 July (am)

63. **MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE**

Reported that:

(a) Following a ballot, the following were elected by their colleagues to serve on Senate in the professorial constituency from 1 August 2004 until 31 July 2007:

   Professor P S Davis
   Professor C R Harwood

(b) The following had been appointed Sabbatical Officers for 2004-05 and would be ex officio members of Senate for that period:

   Communications Officer Thomas (Tom) Gorman
   Education Officer Ruth S Currie
   Welfare Officer Lucinda (Luci) B Hargreaves

64. **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 E. Copy filed in the Minute book.]

65. **MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**Senior Management at the University**

(Minute 53, 16.3.2004)

Received an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor from which it was noted that:

1. Senate’s resolutions from the meeting on 16 March 2004 had not been forwarded to Council owing to the absence of the Vice-Chancellor. Instead, Council received a
briefing note from the Chairman which outlined plans to review the senior management at the University;

2. Council was also considering other issues which needed to be resolved, including how research should be represented externally.

66. Report from the Committee on the appointment of Pro-Vice-Chancellors under Statute 13 (Minute 44(b), 16.3.2004)

Considered a recommendation from the Committee on the appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) under Statute 13.

After noting that:

1. One candidate had been interviewed and during the presentation had made a cogent case for there to be a reference to research included within the title. The Committee had therefore unanimously agreed that, while it had been helpful during the selection process to have a different title as it made it clear that this was a new role and not merely a reproduction of the existing one, it should recommend to Senate that the title be amended to Pro-Vice-Chancellor (External Affairs and Research);

2. This Pro-Vice-Chancellor’s responsibility for research would be purely external, for example representing the University’s research on the Northern Way project. It was hoped that this demarcation of responsibility would resolve the confusion which had existed previously;

3. As health and safety was such an important issue for the University, the Committee had decided that it recommend that responsibility for health and safety matters be included in this Pro-Vice-Chancellor’s role description and had also recommended that a member of Council be identified who would take a particular interest in this in order to monitor the University’s performance. This recommendation had been submitted subsequently to Safety Committee which was pleased to see this proposed change to its constitution;

4. One other nomination had been received but, having very carefully considered the curriculum vitae of the candidate, the Committee had decided that the person nominated was at a much earlier stage in their career, with limited experience at a University level on cross-faculty issues and so would find it very difficult to fulfil the role. It was therefore decided to interview just the one candidate.

Resolved that:

(i) Senate support the recommendation that, in the light of concerns expressed by members of Senate and the possibly misleading message which might be sent externally if the University did not have a Pro-Vice-Chancellor who was able to speak on research matters and represent research externally, the title of the role be amended;

(ii) Senate support the recommendation that the role description be amended to include responsibility for health and safety matters;
(iii) Senate support the recommendation that Professor T F Page be appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor (External Affairs and Research) from 1 August 2004 until 31 July 2007, for submission to Council.

67. Report from the Committee on the appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor under Statute 12 (Minute 47, 16.3.2004)

Considered a recommendation from the Committee on the appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor under Statute 12.

After noting that:

1. The current Deputy Vice-Chancellor was involved in a number of key projects in which it was important that the University continued to have the involvement of a member of University staff with relevant experience;

2. There was going to be a great deal of change in the senior management team and it would be useful if the new team could be given time to become established before further change was introduced;

3. The Committee believed that it would be useful to retain the current membership of the Committee given that the members were now familiar with the issues which had been raised concerning the role of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor;

4. It was unlikely that a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor could be appointed in time to take up the role with effect from 1 August 2004.

Resolved that:

(i) Senate support the recommendation that Professor J B Goddard be re-appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 1 August 2004 until 31 July 2005, for submission to Council;

(ii) The Committee on the appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor continue in existence.

68. Consolidated report from Faculty Promotions Committees

Considered a consolidated Report from Faculty Promotions Committees.

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

Noted that:

1. The date from which ‘the following should be placed at a point on the discretionary range’ should be amended to read 1 August 2004;

2. The Vice-Chancellor had approved the addition of a name to the list of those submitted for promotion to senior lecturer in the Faculty of Medical Sciences.

Resolved that the recommendations in the Report be approved for submission to Council.
69. **Professorial Fellowship**

   Considered a proposal for the award of a Professorial Fellowship.
   
   [Circulated with the Agenda as Document G. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

   *Resolved that Mr A I B Moffat be awarded a Professorial Fellowship with immediate effect for a period of three years, to 24 May 2007.*