M I N U T E S

PART A : STRATEGIC ISSUES

1. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

Received an oral report from Professor E Ritchie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) on the results of the first National Student Survey, together with a paper of background information.

[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. The University was addressing the results of this survey as a high priority and was well aware of the potential impact it could have on student choice in the future. The survey was likely to be central to determining the University’s place in future league tables. Although there were issues concerning the methodology used, overall the University’s results were a little disappointing, placing the University in the mid range of institutions.
2. Professor Ritchie, supported by staff from the Academic, Executive and Planning Offices, and UTLC had undertaken an extensive analysis of the survey results and had identified areas for improvement.

3. The survey would be repeated in 2006 and then would probably run either annually or every other year beyond 2006. It was important to put actions in place now to ensure that we improved our position in the next survey. The University was also looking at how we use the information that we collect from our students and would run its own internal survey in 2006.

4. The best set of results for Newcastle came in the Learning Resources category and the worst set of results came in the Assessment & Feedback category. This latter in particular had raised concern in many institutions. UTLC had already set up a special group to review Assessment and Feedback. The Student Union Officers, who were closely involved in the work of this group, endorsed the importance of timely feedback, particularly to first year students.

5. Some concern was expressed that not all academic staff were aware of the results and, given the importance of this survey, this was both a surprise and disappointment. The Faculty PVCs outlined their plans for addressing this and the outcomes in each of their Faculties, which included reviewing the relevance, delivery styles and resources for those courses that the students had criticised the most.

6. The importance of providing prompt and effective feedback on work had in particular been identified as an area which needed to be improved.

7. All schools were required to have a workload model but there were concerns about the value placed on contact with students as part of the teaching and learning activity in such models.

8. That there were important issues concerning the University’s commitment to teaching which needed to be communicated and built into the institutional culture and there was a general view that leadership in academic schools was key to improving the performance in the survey. However Senators were clear that the University should not remove support for its research goals in response to this report.

Resolved that:

(i) Professor Ritchie and others be thanked for their work to date on the analysis of the National Student Survey and in particular for the suggested actions contained in the paper which needed to be pursued. There may well be merit in focussing in particular on 3 or 4 key areas for improvement and this should be something to which UTLC gives further consideration.

(ii) There was a clear agenda here now for Schools to address and this should form the basis of the next Heads of School Forum meeting on the 25th November.
PART B : GENERAL BUSINESS

2. MINUTES

Resolved that:

(i) The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 70, note 16, delete ‘Dean of Development’ and substitute ‘Dean of Clinical Medicine’.

(ii) The Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 5 July 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Progress of business

Received a business tracking form.

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

(b) Structure, roles and responsibilities of the senior management team

(Minute 70, 7.6.2005)

Reported that Senate, at its meeting on 7 June 2005, had resolved that the Vice-Chancellor should prepare a paper on the structure, roles and responsibilities of the senior management team and bring it to a future meeting of Senate.

Received a paper from the Vice-Chancellor.

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

After noting that the Vice-Chancellor had reviewed the areas of responsibility of the senior team in the light of recent PVC appointments.

Resolved that the paper be agreed and be put onto the University’s website for ease of reference.

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) **Sunday Times League Table**

Noted that:


2. The league table used 2003/04 data from the Higher Education Statistics Service (HESA), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the national Funding Councils and the 119 institutions. The institutions were marked and ranked across the following eight areas, for which Newcastle’s positions were also shown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Newcastle Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuation/dropout rates</td>
<td>17th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Satisfaction/Student satisfaction</td>
<td>18th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Employment</td>
<td>19th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/AS-level entry grades</td>
<td>21st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers’ Citations</td>
<td>22nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student/Staff ratios</td>
<td>28th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% First &amp; 2:1 Degrees awarded</td>
<td>28th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Rating</td>
<td>31st</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The University of Newcastle’s overall position in the League Table was 26th, compared to 19th in 2004. The greatest falls in ranking occurred in Student:Staff Ratios and Graduate Employment. There were no significant increases.

4. There were aspects to the Sunday Times methodology which institutions could dispute. The National Student Survey was a rather blunt instrument, the weighting of the eight measures could be debated, and the level of response in the new Head Teachers’ survey was low. However, it was more important that the University recognised the significant messages inherent in the results.

- We must maintain focus on Student: Staff ratios. This included the need to manage HESA data with particular care.
- We must extend our efforts to reduce undergraduate drop-out rates.
- We should seek to increase our average entry qualifications and the proportion of Firsts and 2:1 degrees awarded.
- The Research Rating was based on the 2001 RAE. It was vital that the University prepared well to maximise its performance in the 2007/08 RAE.
- We must try to regain the 2002/03 performance on graduate employment.
- We should also note that the measure of teaching satisfaction in the Sunday Times was a hybrid of the recent National Student Survey and earlier QAA data. The Sunday Times intended to phase out the QAA element and therefore future league tables would reflect to a greater extent our mixed results in the 2005 National Student Survey.
(c) **Science City**

Noted that:

1. The submission of a prospectus to the Treasury by the three partners (the University, One North East and the City Council) was made in July. The Treasury recently responded to One North East welcoming the prospectus as “work in progress” and encouraging the partnership to continue working towards a more detailed plan.

2. The partnership had purchased the Scottish and Newcastle Brewery site on 3 November 2005, following extensive negotiations between them to ensure that the best interests of all parties were being represented in the details of the agreement. The overriding aim of the land purchase for the partnership was to help the University develop its science base and thus continue to contribute towards the economic wealth of the region.

3. A formal project leadership and management structure had been established within the University, led by Professor Goddard, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and supported by the Executive Office. The structure included a Council Advisory Group. This group had met informally prior to the signing of the agreement and would meet formally before the next meeting of Council on 12 December 2005. Work was progressing on the identification of potential funding streams for the project.

4. There were four vanguard science/business initiatives being developed at the moment:
   - Molecular Engineering.
   - Ageing and Health
   - Energy and Environment
   - Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine

These developments represented some of the areas where the University could demonstrate research excellence and a global reputation, and where there were opportunities for translational research that would benefit the University, City and Region.

5. These were not stand alone projects, but interacted with each other as well as with a number of adjacent fields across the University. The analogy of these being considered to be “product lines” within the factory (ie the wider University vision) may be helpful in this context.

(d) **Planning permission**

Noted that:

1. The University had been experiencing some difficulties with its proposals for the Barras Bridge building. This building was intended to house the University’s Business School, Institute for Public Policy and Practice, provide an improved
range of student services and house the Executive Office. Considerable work had been undertaken on the design and the University had made strenuous efforts to meet various points raised during the planning process. As a result of these changes, the proposed net internal area of the building had been reduced from $12,000 \text{m}^2$ to $7,500 \text{m}^2$.

2. The University had appealed against a decision of the Development Control Committee not to permit its proposed scheme of an addition of 280 bedrooms at the Castle Leazes site. Again, the University felt that it has made important efforts to meet planning concerns. Its original proposal for 300 bedrooms had been supported by the officers in the Planning Department. The University had subsequently reduced the scheme to 280 when issues concerning light were raised but the Development Control Committee had suggested that the site could only be developed for 130 additional bedrooms. The public enquiry on this would be held on 21 & 22 March 2006.

3. The University was currently responding to a proposal from the City for a conservation area on the northern part of the City which would incorporate the University campus and the campus of the University of Northumbria. Such a conservation scheme would make the changes required with the introduction of Science City and some of the University’s own master planning proposals much more difficult to achieve. For example, under the proposed conservation area it might not be possible to demolish the current Museum of Antiquities as part of the changes for the Great North Museum. It was also suggested that it might not be possible to demolish the Boiler House either.

5. **REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD**

   Considered a Report from the meeting of Executive Board held on 12 July 2005.

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

   (a) **Governance of Research in the University**

   *Resolved that the following recommendations be approved:*

   (i) *That the committee structure for University research, as set out in Appendix A of Document D, be approved.*

   (ii) *That Professor P P Powrie be appointed Chair of the University’s Research Committee for two years from 1 August 2005.*

   (b) **University Research Centres: proposal for Centre for Rural Economy**

   *Resolved that a Centre for Rural Economy be established as a University Research Centre for a period of five years from 1 August 2005.*
6. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Considered a Report from meetings of University Teaching and Learning Committee held on 9 June, 14 September and 4 October 2005.

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

University Policy and Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning

After noting that:

1. The policy aimed to maintain an appropriate balance between academic standards and our competitiveness in the sector. Experiential learning was currently more popular in the post-1992 universities. The mechanism proposed by UTLC defined skills and knowledge over and above entry requirements to degree programmes which allowed for accreditation of this knowledge.

2. This should not be confused with “non standard” entry and would normally apply to certificated learning that was equivalent to parts of the course being applied for.

3. That normally within a three year programme, APL could be allowed for the 1st year, with the 2nd and 3rd years in attendance at Newcastle, ie the maximum APL would be one third of a programme.

4. There was concern about the possibility of double counting work towards two qualifications and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) agreed to keep this issue under review in light of experience with the new policy.

Resolved that the proposed policy for the Accreditation of Prior Learning be approved.

The remaining items in the Report were noted.

7. PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE

(Minute 39(e), 18.1.2005)

Reported that:

(a) The membership of the Working Group was as follows:

Members appointed by Council: Mr C J Hilton (Chairman)
Dr J C Appleby
Sir Leslie Elton
Mr P M Johnson

Members appointed by Senate: Dr H M Berry
Mr A M Wilton

(b) Council, at its meeting on 18 July 2005, had considered the Progress Report from the Working Group on Governance.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
(c) One of the recommendations from the Working Group, approved by Council, was that Senate should be asked to review its own effectiveness and that of its sub-committees and consideration could be given to asking former members of Senate to take part in the review as they might be able to provide constructive criticism based on their experience.

(d) The Working Group, at its meeting on 28 September 2005, had resolved that Senate’s attention should be drawn to the possibility of the introduction of an effectiveness appraisal mechanism for members of Senate.

Received an extract from Council Minutes of 18 July 2005 on Council’s discussion of this item.

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

Considered:

(a) Senate’s review of its effectiveness.

(b) Whether the Working Group membership needed to be augmented.

After noting that:

1. Professor Stevenson, Pro-Vice Chancellor Planning and Resources, had been added to the Group to provide additional Executive input.

2. There had been no fundamental changes to Senate during restructuring and this was a timely opportunity to review what Senate does and the contribution it makes, with an emphasis on focus and role.

Resolved that:

(i) Senate wished to set up its own group to review its effectiveness, rather than augment the Council Working Group.

(ii) A fixed term Working Group of Senate should be established to carry out this task.

(iii) The Registrar would write to members of Senate outlining the process by which this group would be set up.

8. REPORT FROM THE HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

Considered recommendations from the Honorary Degrees Committee that Senate approve the lists of proposed honorary graduands and the honorary degrees for which they would be presented at the congregation ceremony to be held on 5 May 2006 and the joint congregation ceremony to be held with the University of Northumbria to commemorate the centenary of the RVI on 7 June 2006.

[Report circulated with the Supplementary Agenda as Document Q. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
After a vote on a motion ‘that the lists be approved’, which was approved nem.con,

Resolved that:

(i) The nominations made by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of honorary degrees on 5 May 2006 be approved.

(ii) The nominations made by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of honorary degrees at a joint congregation with the University of Northumbria on 7 June 2006 be approved.

(iii) The suggestion of holding a special Honorary Degrees Ceremony during 2006/07 to recognise contributions to World Peace/Poverty was agreed in principle, on the understanding that one or more of the recommendations from the Honorary Degrees Committee might be individuals who were still active in party politics and Senate would be willing to consider such individuals on the basis of their contributions to this theme.

[Note: Senators were reminded of the continued confidential classification of the report until further notice.]

9. STRATEGIC CASES FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF REPLACEMENT CHAIRS IN THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 10 October 2005, had resolved that proposals for replacement Chairs and Statutory Committees for the David Dale Chair of Economics and the Chair/Readership in Financial Economics be approved subject, where necessary, to the agreement of Senate.

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

Considered the above matter.

Resolved that the proposals for replacement Chairs and Statutory Committees for the David Dale Chair of Economics and the Chair/Readership in Financial Economics be approved.

10. FEES SUB-COMMITTEE

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 23 May 2005, had resolved that the revised terms of reference and membership of the Fees Sub-Committee be approved, subject to any comments from Senate.

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

Considered the proposed revised terms of reference and membership of the Fees Sub-Committee.

Resolved that the revised terms of reference and membership of the Fees Sub-Committee be approved.
11. **CORPORATE PLANNING STATEMENT**

   Reported that Council, at its meeting on 18 July 2005, had resolved that the Corporate Planning Statement be approved for submission to HEFCE.
   [Circulated with the Agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

12. **STATUTES**
    (Minute 75, 6.7.2004)

   Reported that the Privy Council had approved the amendments to the University Statutes.

13. **MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE**

   Reported that the Union Society had appointed Mr Tareq Mohammed El Menabawey (MBBS Stage 2) as the student member on Senate for 2005-06.

   Received a list showing the membership of Senate for 2005-06.
   [Circulated with the Agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

   *The Chairman welcomed new staff and student members to their first meeting of Senate.*

14. **DATES OF MEETINGS 2005-06**
    (Minute 67, 26.4.2005)

   Reported that an additional meeting of Senate had been scheduled in the Business Diary (if required) at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 25 July 2006 for the consideration of UTLC business.

15. **CONGREGATION CEREMONIES : DECEMBER 2005**

   Reported that eight Congregation ceremonies would be held on 7 & 8 December 2005 for the conferment of initial and higher degrees.
   [Details circulated with the Agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

16. **CONGREGATION DATES : JULY 2006**

   Reported that congregation ceremonies following the end of the Summer Term 2006 would be held on the following dates:

   - Tuesday, 11 July    
   - Wednesday, 12 July (all day)
   - Thursday, 13 July  
   - Friday, 14 July    
   - Saturday, 15 July (am)
17. **SEMESTERS AND TERM DATES 2005-06 & 2006-07**

Reported that in accordance with recommendations approved by Senate in respect of the academic year structure, the dates of terms and semesters for 2005-2007 were as follows:

**Academic Year 2005-06**

- **Autumn**: Monday 26 September - Friday 16 December 2005
- **Spring**: Monday 9 January - Friday 24 March 2006
- **Summer**: Monday 24 April - Friday 16 June 2006
- **Semester 1**: Monday 26 September 2005 - Friday 27 January 2006
- **Semester 2**: Monday 30 January 2006 - Friday 16 June 2006

**Academic Year 2006-07**

- **Autumn**: Monday 25 September - Friday 15 December 2006
- **Spring**: Monday 8 January - Friday 23 March 2007
- **Summer**: Monday 23 April - Friday 15 June 2007
- **Semester 1**: Monday 25 September 2006 - Friday 26 January 2007
- **Semester 2**: Monday 29 January - Friday 15 June 2007

18. **JOINT COURT/COUNCIL/SENATE LUNCH**

Reported that it had been decided that there was no longer any need to hold the joint lunch, traditionally held prior to the last meeting of Council before Christmas, in view of the various other lunches and dinners which would be taking place in future, particularly the Honorary Fellowships Dinner, to which all members of Court, Council and Senate were invited.

19. **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 N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
PART C: RESERVED BUSINESS

[Note: The Chairman requested that the student members should not be required to withdraw for the reserved business items. The issue of reserved business was currently being reviewed by the Working Group on Governance.]

20. THE VICE-CHANCELLORSHIP

Received an extract from Council Minutes of 10 October 2005 on Council’s discussion of this item.

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

Considered a paper from the Registrar.

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

After noting that:

1. The confidential nature of the discussion was emphasised.

2. The proposed appointment procedure for Senate nominees was the same as that followed on the last occasion.

3. Nominees do not necessarily have to be current members of Senate.

4. The importance of Senate’s role in this process was emphasised alongside the requirements of the Senate nominees, i.e., absolute discretion, a thorough knowledge of the University and of the characteristics and experience required for the new Vice-Chancellor. Nominees would also have a significant role to play in relation to recruitment of the candidates and there would be a substantial time commitment over the coming six to nine months.

5. The current Vice-Chancellor’s term of office would end in September 2007 and the intention was to identify his successor by June 2006. Professor Edwards would however continue to play a full role until his retirement date.

Resolved that the proposed process for the appointment of four Senate nominees be agreed.

21. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS - TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 31(4))

Resolved that the title of ‘Professor Emeritus’ be conferred on the following from the dates shown:

Professor M A Hughes, School of Biomedical Sciences, from 1.1.2006

Professor N J Young, School of Mathematics & Statistics, from 1.10.2005
22. **PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR (SAgE) UNDER Statute 43**  
(Minute 85, 7.6.2005)

Reported that the Chairman of Council, on behalf of Council, had approved a recommendation that Professor O R Hinton be appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering) under Statute 43 from 1 October 2005 until 31 July 2010.

23. **PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR (HASS) UNDER Statute 43**  
(Minute 56, 8.3.2005)

Reported that the Chairman of Council, on behalf of Council, had approved a recommendation that Professor C B Riordan be appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities and Social Sciences) under Statute 43 from 1 August 2005 until 31 July 2010.