ACADEMIC BOARD

Report by the Vice-Chancellor
18 May 2011
Overview

• Coalition Government comes to power:
  – Introduces “Age of Austerity” to reduce deficit.
  – Swingeing cuts to public sector bodies following CSR
  – Market orientation to HE

• Browne Report delivered

• Parliament adopts proposals for a radical new dispensation on fees and funding from September 2012
  – HEFCE Teaching Grant to be cut by ca. 80%
  – Student fees (income-contingent, retrospective) to rise to max £9K

• ONE Northeast abolished.

• “Local Enterprise Partnerships” introduced
Financial sustainability

- Newcastle starts from a good position
  - Strong surplus in 2009-10 and good forecast for 2010-11
  - Healthy cash balances

- But we have not yet weathered the storm
  - 10% cut in Funding Council grants next year (3% cut in core funding and 40% cut in capital and specific grants)
  - Concerns on border controls and Research Council capital funds
  - Disruptive change to our financial model in September 2012

- Newcastle priorities remain:
  - Protect core academic resources and student experience
  - Grow non regulated income: international students, EU research and commercial income
  - Non pay efficiencies through centralised procurement
  - Process efficiencies

- Prepare for the new dispensation starting Sept 2012
Learning and Teaching

- Significant investment in student experience (Project 2012)
- UG Fee decision for Sept 2012. (PG fees still under consideration)
- Access Agreement submitted to OFFA
- NSS satisfaction score of 87% maintained
- Increase of 20% in international students entering in September 2010
Research

• Research income on par with previous years, showing a slight increase
• Decline in Research Council awards 2009/10 - Newcastle provisionally ranked 22\textsuperscript{nd} by value of awards
• EU award value rose from £7.02M to £13.35M
• Funding from UK Government Departments and other bodies rose by 11%
• ESRC Doctoral Training Centre (with Durham)
• (New) Newcastle admitted as one of 12 EPSRC Framework Agreement Universities
Engagement

- Launch year of “Sustainability” Societal Challenge Theme
- NIReS formally launched November 2010
- Drilling of 2km borehole on the Science Central site
- Outline planning applications approved
  - Science Central approved
  - Campus for Ageing and Vitality
- Approval for ONE to sell its share of Science Central land to the University and the City Council jointly
- Identification of “Social Renewal” as the 3rd Societal Challenge Theme (Launch year 2012)
- Appointment of an interim Director of Public Relations
Estate

- Construction of the NUMed Campus in Malaysia now complete. Official opening 1 Nov 2011
- Business School building to open to students in September 2011
- Baddiley-Clark building officially opened
- Students’ Union refurbishment underway
- Claremont Gateway landscaping to commence
- New Student Forum for Sept 2012
- Armstrong refurbishment planned
Business School
Baddiley-Clark Building
Students’ Union
Student Forum before removal of Museum of Antiquities
Student Forum after removal of Museum of Antiquities
Claremont Gateway Landscaping

Extent of Tegular blocks

- Replaced security kiosk / welcome point, with low level curved wall in front. Potentially replaced with new building in future phase.
- Taxi waiting / pick up point and drop off - JNR vehicles
- Planters and removable bollard(s) to stop vehicles past this point, allowing free access for pedestrians
- Landscaping will extend up to Arches as part of King's Quad project, including Northern Stage entrance
- Signage wall reading 'Welcome to Newcastle University'
- Relocated existing planters
- Line of tactile paving to provide a sense of awareness for the visually impaired on single surface
- VIP drop off (when required via bollard opening)

Planting added to lawn area. Taller shrubs towards the rear

Eldon Place junction realigned. Curve retained in part to allow access to Northern Stage long vehicles (taken from vehicle tracking exercise)

Car park maintained - accessed off Eldon Place

Enlarged lawn area, possibly edged with low level walls

Transition zone - Stretcher bond to south, herringbone bond to north
Claremont Gateway Landscaping
Environmental Sustainability

- Revised Carbon Management Plan: commitment to reduce CO² emissions by 43% by 2020 against 2005/06 baseline (depending upon the government meeting its commitments to increase the volume of green energy available)
- Silver Eco Campus status achieved
- Recycling rate for 2009/10 – 93%
- Proportion of staff travelling to work by car reduced from 40% in 2004 to 22% in 2010
- University participating in 6 month trial of 2 electric cars – 2 electric car charging points installed on campus.
Other

- NE Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) established
  - VC appointed as HE representative on the Board
- Statutes approved by the Privy Council in March 2011
- Revised employment procedures for discipline, grievance, capability and redundancy approved by Council
- Executive Board
  - Prof Ella Ritchie appointed DVC
  - Prof Suzanne Cholerton appointed PVC(L&T)
  - Prof Oliver Hinton to retire as PVC SAgE, Dec 2011
Questions

1. **Dr Joanne Smith Finley (SML)** “What are the University’s plans for strategic investment in language-based area studies and, in particular, in areas of increasing national importance such as East Asian Studies and Arabic Studies?”

2. **Dr Martin Dusinberre (History)** “What does the University estimate to be the cost of an undergraduate degree in the humanities at Newcastle, and how will they justify this cost to students paying £9000?”
Questions

3. **Prof Colin Brooks (ICaMB)** “Would the Vice-Chancellor agree that the majority of academic staff are overwhelmed by excessive workloads, and that if there is to be an improvement in the "student experience" there needs to be a substantial increase in the number of academic staff so as to reduce individual workloads and increase the staff:student ratio?”

4. **Prof Barry Gills (GPS)** “Given the University's stated reserve of some £160 million, will the University now adopt an official policy of reducing staff-student ratios, prioritising those that are above the national average? If not, why not?”

5. **Dr Naomi Standen (History)** “A few years ago the University required that workload models be developed to measure and compare the amount of work requested of individual members of staff. The VC recently insisted that all academic workloads be returned as 100% exactly, which can only be done by distorting what individual members of staff actually do. Please can he explain the purpose of this time-consuming exercise in falsification.”
Responses

• Staff Opinion Survey 2010:
  “I find my current workload too much and I am struggling to cope”

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<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>27.3%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
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• Cash Balances
  – Balance Sheet shows ca. £150m. Of that:
    • Pension Liability ca. £30m
    • Forward Commitment Capital Development ca. £80m
    • Current Cash reserve ca. £40m (about 10% of budget)
Thank you to all staff and students for the successes enjoyed by the University