NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

JOINT MEETING OF SENATE AND COUNCIL

6 February 2012

Present: Mr Mark I’Anson (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Chris Day, Professor Charles Harvey, Professor Steve Homans, Professor Tony Stevenson and Professor Nick Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor Ashley Adamson, Professor Simi Ali, Dr Peter Andras, Mr Charles Barry (Student member), Dr Debbie Bevitt, Professor Alan Boddy, Mr Neil Braithwaite, Professor Vicki Bruce, Professor Ian Clarke, Mr Wayne Connolly, Professor Eric Cross, Mr Liam Dale (Education Officer), Dr Hugh Dauncey, Dr Catherine Exley, Ms Katy Hargreaves (Welfare and Equality Officer), Ms Jacqui Henderson, Dr Alton Horsfall, Mr Robert Hull, Mr Peter Johnson, Professor John Kirby, Professor Pete Lee, Mr Jeff McIntosh, Professor David Manning, Mrs Heidi Mottram, Professor David Parker, Ms Laura Perry (President, Students’ Union), Mr Simon Pleydell, Mrs Kate Priestley, Professor Chris Rodgers, Dr Neelam Srivastava, Mr Ian Shott, Mr Paul Walker, Mr Steve Williams and Dr Kirsten Wolff.

In attendance: Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Mrs Veryan Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources), Dr John Terry (Head of International office), Mrs Lesley Braiden (Director of Marketing and Communications), and Mrs Sam Taylor (Administrative Officer).

M I N U T E S

CM 56 STUDENT RECRUITMENT
SM 63

Received a PowerPoint presentation from Professor Ella Ritchie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching.

[A copy of the slides used in the presentation is filed in the Minute Book.]
Joint meeting of Council and Senate  
6 February 2012

Feedback from the Group Discussion

- **Q.1a What would be the optimum balance in student numbers:**
  - between undergraduate and postgraduate students?
  - between Home (UK / EU) and International?
  - between the three faculties?

- **Balance of students:**
  PGR: Maximise the quality of students, focus on quality and research objectives to recruit high level growth.
  PGT: Consider and maintain the numbers to balance with the UG offer. Recognise cross subsidy from UG, PG and international students to home.
- **Review the information school by school of home versus international student numbers.**
- **Guard against courses with a high percentage of international students and where English is not the first language.**
- **Focus on diversity.**
- **Develop international students from a wider range of countries.**
- **Between the three faculties:**
  Balance between schools, focus on AAB recruitment, and focus on high reputation, widening participation issues.
- **A good balanced medium, no allowance to permit the postgraduate numbers to decline.**
- **Ideally a small increase in PG.**
- **Extend vocational studies that are currently offered.**
- **Credit accumulation and offer PG study that is necessary for employment in the sector.**
- **Identify if there is PG continuance from the UG offer.**
- **Labour market influences the number of PG; when the labour market is buoyant there is a tendency for people to go straight into employment.**
- **Difficult to predict the longevity of the study period, £9,000 fee paying students may be less inclined to continue with study.**
- **Alternative growth in CPD and top up opportunities.**
- **Diversity is important for the student experience, but at subject level this could be polarised.**
- **Ideally an even spread of international and home students would be preferable but this is not always achievable.**
- **Consider aggressive marketing with other cities who may be offering a more appealing lifestyle.**

**Q.1 b What is the optimum overall size of the University (bearing in mind our international delivery)?**

- **Increase only in a sustainable and managed way, existing overseas operations can be developed and used with the potential to increase the international offer in a measured way.**
- **There is some scope for increasing the size of the university in the UK if we can do so without changing the nature of what we do.**
- **Focus on quality rather than quantity.**
- **Increase through part-time and mature student market.**
- **Be aware of the ‘core provider’ role.**
An increase in students requires an increase in services within the university, including housing and support services.

Q.2 In the context of international recruitment, what is more important for the University: overall numbers of international students, or country diversity?

- Due to the number of Chinese students, some classes are overwhelmingly Chinese in attendance which does not give the students the experience of international learning.
- Each faculty has different issues.
- Create a culturally diverse university for the long term.
- The percentage of students should be a slow growth.
- Strategic intent on international recruitment, a 15 year plan to deliver.
- The UG and PG markets are very different.
- Surprising absences on where students come from.
- Focus on Emerging Middle Class (EMC) countries.
- Use scholarships to attract students from other countries.
- Diversity is paramount, over the number of students.
- Although diversity is important, it may be the false choice, as Newcastle is not unique in its situation. Two thirds of the comparator groups are in the same position as Newcastle with regard to the high population of Chinese students.
- The Business School appears to be the main source of imbalance.
- HaSS Faculty are enjoying a rise in US students, whilst SAgE appear more evenly balanced within the international student base.
- Increase the diversity by reviewing the skill base and research needs.
- Review what each department needs, look at variations on programmes that are more marketable to international students.
- Review what the students want.
- Develop our portfolio.
- Grow the student numbers and increase diversity.

Q.3a As markets for high-ability UK undergraduate students become increasingly less regulated, which subject areas should we seek to grow?

- Maintain the business model, research informed teaching. Teaching should not be grown at the expense of research.
- Listen to the market, where sustained growth can be sought.
- Grow where we have the capacity to do so.
- What type of University are we: traditional or civic – this will drive the courses.
- Flexibility and agility of portfolios and people.
- Space and staffing implications.
- Track sustainable market trends.

Q.3b Should we be introducing any new subjects?

- Yes, but organic growth to ensure synergy with research.
- Yes, but determine what is the core image.
- Explore possibilities of collaboration.
Q.3c To what extent should the University explore different modes of delivery?

- Subjects which have been disparate.
- E-learning unit.
- Open University type programmes.
- Further Education college links.

Q.3d What would be the academic, delivery, student experience and reputational implications of so doing?

- Enhance employability through accreditation and collaboration with employers.
- Dedicated resource and investment.

Q.3e How do we factor our widening participation responsibilities into these considerations?

- Affirming the business model.
- Different modes of delivery.
- Jobs in the university with part time study.
- Regional and City partnerships.

Q4. How important is it for the University to have a strong and vibrant postgraduate profile?

- Very important for the ‘academic and intellectual health’ of the University.
- Important as an intangible benefit for the image and reputation of the University as research intensive and research led.
- While PGR is a net cost to the university, PGT contributes directly to the bottom line.
- PGT is facing a ‘black hole of uncertainty’ over fees and funding.
- Doctoral Training Centres increasingly important in maintaining advantage in attracting PGRs and associated funding.
- Important to maintain a broad academic base with the postgraduate provision across all disciplines, but the spread should not necessarily be uniform.
- Tangible benefit for funding.
- Research students contributing to the REF.
- PGR collaboration.
- PGT moving onto PGR.
- Could PG 20% discount to be applied across the Russell Group?
- Diversity of International students.
- Collaborate with top international universities.
- Scholarships to encourage students.
- Influence decision of students by research profiles and the level of fees.

Q.4 How can we achieve sustainable postgraduate growth?

- Postgraduate provision does need to grow – current proportion of 25% of students should increase.
- Targets are useful but not necessarily appropriate to be specific about figures – aim for Russell Group median.
• More appropriate to focus on selective areas of ‘useful’ activity, e.g. societal challenge themes.
• Look for new methods of funding research, with more emphasis on business funding.
• Aim to convert more Newcastle Undergraduate to Postgraduate study.
• Diversify the international market.
• How are we articulating the 2012 PG offer?
• Target scholarships to create diversity.
• Use Alumni links to help recruit students in the future.
• Review mature students, distance learning, joint NU PhD programmes with Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.
• Part-time provision to boost numbers.
• NHS links.
• Sustainability of PGT and PGR.
• Cross faculty PG programmes.