NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
C O U R T
10 MAY 2013

Present: The Chancellor (in the Chair), Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Mrs Lesley Braiden, Councillor Joe Carlebach, Sir Peter Carr, Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Mr Alan Clarke, Mrs Jane Clubley, Professor Eric Cross, Sir Michael Darrington, Mrs Olivia Grant, Ms Fiona Hall, Mrs Jacqui Henderson, Councillor Mick Henry, Mr Jack Jeffery, Mr Peter Johnson, Mr Antony Jones, Professor Eileen Kaner, Lord Judd, Miss Florence Kirkby, Professor Patrick Lavery, Mr Richard Maudslay, Ms Claire Morgan, Lord Bishop of Newcastle, Mr Jonathan Parkinson, Ms Laura Perry, Baroness Quin, Sir George Russell, Professor Ella Ritchie, Mr Mark Scrimshaw, Mr Nigel Sherlock, Professor Tony Stevenson, Ms Vicky Wright and Ms Angela Woodburn.

In attendance: Mr Richard Dale, (Executive Director of Finance), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Professor Sugata Mitra (School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences) and Mrs Yvonne Lee (Executive Assistant).

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2012 were approved as a correct record.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document A]

2. **MEMBER NEWS**

Reported:

(a) That Mrs Fiona Hall, Mr Mark I’Anson and Miss Florence Kirkby were each awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List 2013.

(b) That Mr Greg Smith was awarded the Companion of the Order of the Bath in the New Year Honours List 2013.

(c) The death of Mrs Joan Sjovoll, Headteacher of Framwellgate School, Durham and former member of Court (from 2006-2009) and of Dr Herbert Loebl, former Honorary Life Member of Court (from 1971-2012).

The Chair welcomed Ms Fiona Hall to her first meeting of Court.

Resolved that:

(i) Court record its congratulations to Ms Hall, Mr I’Anson and Miss Kirkby.

(ii) Court record its sympathy to the relatives of Mrs Sjovoll and Dr Loebl.

3. **MEMBERSHIP OF COURT**

Reported that the terms of appointment of the following members of Court would end on 31 July 2013:
Resolved that:

Court record its appreciation for the service of retiring members.

4. **MEMBERSHIP OF COURT STEERING COMMITTEE**

Reported that:

(a) Sir Peter Carr’s term of appointment as Chair of Court Steering Committee will end on 31 July 2013. As agreed by Court at its meeting on 11 May 2012, Mr Richard Maudslay will take over as Chair of Court Steering Committee from 1 August 2013.

(b) The term of appointment of Mr Jack Jeffery as a member of Court Steering Committee will end on 31 July 2013.

(c) The terms of appointment of Sir Peter Carr and Mr Jack Jeffery on Council Nominations Committee will end on 31 July 2013.

(d) Mr Jack Jeffery’s term of appointment as Court’s appointed member on Honorary Degrees Committee will end on 31 July 2013. As agreed by Court at its meeting on 11 May 2012, Mr Richard Maudslay will take over as Court’s appointed member from 1 August 2013.

Resolved that:

(a) Sir Peter Carr and Mr Jack Jeffery be thanked for their service on Court Steering Committee and Nominations Committee.

(b) Mr Richard Maudslay be thanked for taking on the role of Chair of Court Steering Committee in addition to membership of Nominations Committee and Honorary Degrees Committee.

5. **REPORTS FROM COURT STEERING COMMITTEE**

Considered:

(a) First Report from Court Steering Committee

(b) Second Report from Court Steering Committee

(c) Third report from Court Steering Committee

[Circulated with the Agenda as Documents B-D]
(a) Lay Membership of Court

Resolved that:

(i) With thanks for their long and valuable service to Court, Sir Peter Carr, Lord Judd and Sir George Russell be made Honorary Life Members of Court with immediate effect.

(ii) The following members be re-appointed to serve on Court from 1 August 2013 until 31 July 2016, subject to their willingness to serve:

   Sir Michael Darrington
   Mr Daniel Goldman
   Councillor Mick Henry
   Mr Richard Maudslay

(iii) The following be appointed to serve on Court from 1 August 2013 until 31 July 2016, subject to their willingness to serve:

   Mr Andrew Davison, Partner, Muckle LLB
   Mr Colin Fitzpatrick, former Lay Member of Council and Chair of Audit Committee
   Ms Teresa Graham CBE, Honorary Fellow 2012
   Mr Peter Johnson, retiring Honorary Treasurer
   Dr Mike Laker, current Lay member of Audit Committee
   Mr Hector McDonald, Visiting Fellow, Faculty of Science, Agriculture & Engineering
   Councillor Sue Pearson, former Chief Executive, Age UK Newcastle and City Councilor
   Ms Kate Priestley, former Lay Member of Council
   Mr Bruce Shepherd, Managing Director, Shepherd Offshore
   Mr Nitin Shukla, Equality and Diversity Officer, Gateshead Council
   Mr Michael Stephenson OBE, Managing Director, Helena Biosciences
   Ms Hannah Underwood, Chief Executive, Keyfund
   Mr Rob Williamson, Chief Executive, Community Foundation

(b) Membership of Court Steering Committee and Nominations Committee

Resolved that:

Sir Michael Darrington and Ms Claire Morgan be appointed to serve on Court Steering Committee and as Court's appointed members on Nominations Committee from 1 August 2013 until 31 July 2016, subject to their willingness to serve.

(c) Honorary Fellowships of the University

Resolved that Honorary Fellowships be awarded to:

Mr Peter Johnson
Mr Barry Rowland
Dr Vanessa Hammond
6. **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

Received:

A report from the Vice-Chancellor on current issues within the University.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document E]

Noted that:

1. The recent change announced by the Government, whereby the UKBA will be split into two separate services – immigration and law enforcement, is an administrative change only. Students will still be part of the overall immigration figures and universities will still have attendance monitoring responsibilities. It was confirmed that this institution’s proposed attendance monitoring arrangements were approved by Senate this week.

2. The University’s success in the award of funding for the national centre for sub-sea and offshore engineering (the Neptune National Centre) is particularly welcome as it reconnects with the region’s maritime heritage. The Vice-Chancellor recorded his thanks to all those who had supported this initiative, which offers great potential for interdisciplinary research and fits well with the University’s sustainability aspirations. It was confirmed that Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, was the person with responsibility for overseeing the development of the Neptune National Centre and was closely involved with the project through his own academic research area. Progress would be regularly monitored by Council and Court would also receive an update on progress in due course.

3. The Vice-Chancellor is a member of the Board of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) as the HE representative. He will be interacting with his opposite numbers at Durham, Northumbria and Sunderland to ensure that HE interests are fed into all future discussions arising from the Economic Independent Review headed up by Lord Adonis.

4. In addition to the University’s current strong working relationships with both Newcastle and Gateshead Councils, we are currently developing a strategic partnership with Northumberland County Council, with an agreement to be signed soon.

5. Newcastle is the first UK university to have agreed a partnership with adidas, whereby the company will provide scholarships and sportswear for two of the University’s most talented athletes, as well as funding for improving coaching and support for the athletics Union. The ethical implications of engaging with large multinationals were raised and the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that this was a student-led initiative and that the University was impressed by the thorough due diligence and documented process carried out by the Students’ Union.

6. An update was requested on the case of fraud which had been reported to the last meeting of Court. It was confirmed that, further investigation of the case by the police has not been able to recover any more of the funds lost or track down the individuals involved. This case has energised the whole sector to share information and to put controls in place to protect institutions from this kind of fraud in the future. The University has had another attempt recently which was foiled by the controls put in place as a result of our recent experience.
7. Cybercrime of this nature is of growing concern to all large institutions with budgets similar to the size the University. We have academic expertise in this area through our Centre for Cybercrime and Computer Security which is located within the School of Computing Science.

8. The implications of the Government’s change to the rules regarding research funding were queried. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that in the REF an element of impact will be built in; i.e. impact on society, on the economy, on the population. The University is able to put forward examples such as our societal challenge themes and the Neptune Centre.

9. Only 4* and 3* gradings will be funded in future with research judged ‘of national renown’ no longer considered good enough to attract funding. In addition, after 2014, the size of a submission will be published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), so that institutions with a relatively small submission may not be considered research-intensive. The tactical aspects of submissions will be key in future.

10. The Chair of Council confirmed the role of Council in the oversight of large projects. We already have clear measurements of success such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Risk Assessments to ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide meaningful reports easily.

11. In response to a request for the context of the trend of student applications e.g. any changes in the pattern of social or geographical background, or in the type of degree chosen, it was confirmed that our applications are above the national average. It has been noted that both parents and students are gravitating towards degrees which have a professional qualification attached, with a slight drop in classical subjects. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning & Teaching, reports to Executive Board weekly on this issue followed by reports to Senate and Council to ensure that the ever-changing picture is monitored closely.

12. The Students’ Union had found that 2012 entrants had shown a huge demand for extra-curricular activities such as sports, societies and volunteering opportunities.

Resolved that members wished to put on record their appreciation for the strong and impressive performance of the University and that academic and administrative staff should be formally thanked for their contributions to the successes reported to Court today.

7. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S QUESTIONS

Received from Mark Scrimshaw:

Request for an update on how the City Council cuts will impact on the University (Great North Museum, Northern Stage etc).

Noted that:

1. Following fierce debate within the City when the Council announced its initial severe cut in cultural support, the Culture Fund has been created. This mechanism allows previous recipients of grants and new applicants to bid for a total of £600K, which represents 50% of the former total fund available.

2. The three cultural institutions the University has a particular interest in are the Great North Museum, Northern Stage and Seven Stories. With regard to the Great North Museum, this is not only a free public facility but also a teaching and research venue for our Museum Studies students.
3. The University and the City Council have been collaborating over a shared services initiative and an agreement has been reached whereby any savings made will be used to offset reduced funding.

4. Cultural institutions are facing financial challenges from a number of directions. For example the Culture Fund has half the amount but is open to a higher number of applicants. Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums are facing budget challenges and constraints, particularly in view of Sunderland’s withdrawal. Arts Council funds have also been reduced.

5. The possibility of securing matched funding along the lines of the recent successful support for the Lyric Hammersmith was raised. It was confirmed that the City and the University are already looking at opportunities in this area. The Arts Council Catalyst Fund support for the Hatton Gallery was an example of this.

8. **THE UNIVERSITY’S JOINT VENTURE WITH INTO**

Received:

A presentation on the above from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources. The slides from this presentation are attached to the Minutes for information. 

**Appendix 1**

Noted that:

1. A number of issues in 2004 lead to our agreement with INTO. In particular, there was room for growth in terms of our overseas student income.

2. INTO was one of a number of Foundation pathway providers which approached the University. The INTO model was attractive to the University in view of the example of their agreement with the University of East Anglia, which has been followed by agreements with a number of other UK universities. In addition, this type of joint venture allows the institution to determine the academic aspects of the initiative.

3. The JV provides Foundation pathways in a number of subject areas together with English Language training.

4. There has been gradual expansion in the numbers since the Centre opened and it is already full.

5. We have a diverse country profile in terms of our INTO recruitment and the numbers of academic and support staff are growing.

6. In response to the significant diversity present on campus as a result of the INTO agreement, the Students’ Union has initiated buddy schemes to enhance the integration of overseas students into the University and the City.

7. Internationalisation is now a crucial and indispensible part of what universities do and while our campuses in Singapore and Malaysia represent Internationalisation abroad, the INTO agreement represents Internationalisation at home.

8. In response to a query regarding recruitment from the African Continent and India it was confirmed that there is a growing demand from the African middle classes for higher education which is not offered in their home countries. However, this is not an easy area due to the instability of certain countries, but we already have some small initiatives in place in Ghana. With regard to India the University accepts that we are late starters in this market and recruitment from India has
been affected by the UKBA changes. Expansion of this market will be part of our future strategic thinking.

9. Agreements such as this have enormous potential benefits for the University as students who graduate become ambassadors for us when they return home.

10. Consideration of international student recruitment often concentrates heavily on the financial contribution to UK institutions, while there are also societal benefits in that 'world-class' universities need to have an international community to be considered truly world-class'. In addition, international staff and student exchange builds good networks and can have reputational gain.

11. In response to a point suggesting that agreements such as this are preferable to overseas campuses, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that overseas campuses are our response to changes in recruitment patterns. Other countries are investing heavily in their higher education sectors so that studying closer to home will be an attractive proposition in future. Overseas campuses enable students to access UK higher education in their own areas.

Resolved that:

(i) Professor Stevenson be thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

(ii) Support for Professor Stevenson and the team involved in setting up this successful agreement should be placed on record.

9. TED WISH PRIZE – PROFESSOR SUGATA MITRA

Reported:

That Professor Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology in the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences, has been named the 2013 TED Prize Winner. The professor of educational technology, who has used the slums of India to show that children, irrespective of who or where they are, can learn freely using computers, has become the first $1m prize winner in TED prize’s eight-year history. The TED Prize grants its winner $1m for ‘A wish that can inspire the world’. Professor Mitra’s ‘wish’ is:

“to help design the future of learning by supporting children all over the world to tap into their innate sense of wonder and work together. Help me build the School in the Cloud, a learning lab in India, where children can embark on intellectual adventures by engaging and connecting with information and mentoring online. I also invite the global community to create their own miniature child-driven learning environments and share their discoveries.”

Received:

A presentation from Professor Mitra on his award winning work.

Noted that:

1. Professor Mitra’s prize was the culmination of 14 years of work and a number of experiments looking at computerised learning opportunities for children in areas without teachers.

2. For instance the ‘hole in the wall’ experiment saw a computer sited in a densely populated area in New Delhi where local children learned to browse unsupervised in 3 hours.
3. A computer was used in Hyderabad to improve the accents of Indian children speaking English as they were taught not by a teacher with an accent but by a computer programme with Received Pronunciation.

4. Professor Mitra has a ‘Granny-cloud’ in operation whereby volunteers give lessons to Indian children which are beamed over Skype. It was noted that this could give value not only to the children but to the lives of isolated elderly people who get involved in this way.

5. These methods could be used in the UK with clouds of mediators as part of a curriculum based on specific questions being given to a group of students as part of a self-organised assessment system.

6. These methods could also be applicable in the university environment where students could be set the same kind of thought-based experiments.

7. Teachers could be trained to convert the subjects of lessons into a couple of big questions for the pupils to consider.

8. In addition to the support and attention Professor Mitra is receiving for the overseas applications of his work, it was important that interest was shown by local authorities and the Government in the UK.

9. Professor Mitra confirmed that teachers who have studied his methods are enthusiastic about it and one OFSTED Report mentioned experiments in the School as having had a beneficial change on the children.

Resolved that Professor Mitra be congratulated on his success and thanked for his presentation to Court. This presentation will be placed on the Court website for the information of members.

10. HONORARY DEGREES

Reported:

That Honorary Degrees Committee invites nominations in writing for the following year's Congregations. Any member of Court, Council, the Alumni Consultative Group and Academic Board may make a nomination, and support for nominees for honorary degrees should be sought only from these bodies. Where several members make a joint nomination, one should be shown as the nominator and the others as supporters.

Principles for the award of Honorary Degrees outlines the criteria for awarding honorary degrees and should be consulted before making a nomination.

[Circulated with the Agendas as Document F]

The committee welcomes nominees from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Nominations for 2014 will close on 31 July 2013. To make a nomination please complete an Honorary Degree Nomination Form.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document G]
Noted that:

Maintaining the confidentiality of nominations was paramount so that prospective honourees are only approached once a definite decision on the conferment of awards has been made by Senate.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The President of the Students’ Union, who was attending her last meeting of Court, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve and attend such interesting and informative meetings.

It was noted that this would be the last meeting of Mrs Jane Clubley, Director of Development, who was retiring from the University at the end of July. Mrs Clubley was thanked for her service on Court.

12. MEETINGS 2013-14

Reported:

(a) That meetings of Court in the forthcoming academic year will be held on:

   Tuesday 15 October 2013 at 1030
   Friday 9 May 2014 at 1030

(b) That Court Steering Committee has agreed that a presentation on the University’s Internationalisation activities should be the main item on the agenda for the October meeting.

(c) That this year’s Honorary Fellowship Awards Dinner will be held on Monday 14 October 2013.