NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

11 January 2011

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor C P Day, Professor C Harvey, Professor O R Hinton, Professor E Ritchie, Professor A C Stevenson and Professor N G Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor A J Adamson, Dr S Ali, Dr P E Andras, Dr J C Appleby, Dr D R Bell, Professor V G Bruce, Professor S J Bull, Professor J E Calvert, Professor I M Clarke, Ms E Collingham (Education Officer), Mr W Connolly, Professor E G N Cross, Mr T Delamere (President, Students' Union), Ms S Fears (Welfare and Equality Officer), Professor D Ford, Ms J Henderson, Professor J R Hentschke, Professor B H Hirst, Dr D J Kennedy, Professor J A Kirby, Mr J O’Sullivan (student member), Professor D Parker, Professor N J Reynolds, Ms S M Robson, Professor D J Roddy and Professor C P Rodgers.

In attendance: Dr J V Hogan (Registrar), Mr R C Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Mrs V S Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources), Mrs J Strachan (Academic Registrar) and Miss E M Niven (Administrative Officer).

MINUTES

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

33. MINUTES

Under item 24 point (iv) – Vice-Chancellor’s Business – The Browne Report – it was confirmed that 450 students from Newcastle and Northumbria Universities had travelled to participate in the march against the cuts to higher education rather than 350, as stated in the minutes.

Under item 29, point 5 – Item Submitted by a Member of Senate – it was clarified that this should read as follows:

‘Certain activities were replicated at different levels in the University or in all three faculties and it was proposed that it might be more efficient to centralise some of these. undertake such activities at one level only.’

Subject to the above amendments the Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 9 November 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed.

34. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Progress of business

Received a business tracking form.

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

35. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
(i) **Deaths**

Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.

*Resolved that Senate record its deep regret and sympathy for the relatives concerned.*

(ii) **New Year Honours 2011**

The Lord Bishop of Newcastle, the Right Reverend Martin Wharton, had been awarded a CBE for services to the Church of England and the community in the North East. Professor Graham Henderson, Vice-Chancellor of Teesside University, had also been awarded a CBE for his services to Higher Education. The Vice-Chancellor had written to congratulate both individuals.

(ii) **Science City**

The University had learnt that the £8m that was to be provided by the regional development agency, One North East, for the development of the Science Central site had not been approved by the Government. It was hoped that funding for future developments could be obtained from alternative sources such as the private sector and the coalition Government’s Regional Growth Fund.

Funding of £400,000 had been secured from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to enable the University, working with Durham University, to drill a geothermal borehole on the Science Central site. Professors Paul Younger, Dermot Roddy and David Manning were thanked and congratulated on the work they had done to secure this funding.

36. **FEES AND FUNDING** (Minute 25, 9.11.2010)

Received:

(i) An oral report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Chair of the Tuition Fees Task Group, on the timetable for determining the new fee levels and the current thinking from the Task Group, including the impact of the recent HEFCE and RCUK announcements.

(ii) Timetable for the fee setting process.

(iii) HEFCE and RCUK Budgets 2011/12.


[Circulated with the agenda as Documents C1 – C3. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. On 20 December, HEFCE had received a letter from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) confirming the grant announcement for 2011/12. The letter had confirmed a reduction in HEFCE’s budget of 4.3% when compared with the previous year.

2. Implications for Newcastle of HEFCE’s budget reduction included a claw back of approximately £0.6m for research and £1.6m for teaching during the current academic
year. In-year cuts had been anticipated and a contingency fund was available to cover these reductions.

3. The University would receive a letter from HEFCE confirming its grant allocation in March. A high-level estimate indicated that there would be a total reduction in the University’s budget of 0.8% between 2010/11 and 2011/12 which was worse than previously anticipated. It was intended to cut the budget for Central Services by 1.5% to allow faculty budgets to be maintained at 2010/11 levels.

4. It was not yet clear whether the 10,000 additional student numbers (ASNs) that the Government was to make available in Strategically Important and Vulnerable (SIV) subjects would be fully funded. The coalition Government’s intentions regarding the widening participation agenda and bursary scheme were also unclear.

5. The University hoped to be in a position to approve its new fee regime at the meeting of Council on 28 March. All aspects of the student offer, including contact hours and facilities, needed to be clearly defined and a group had been established, which included student representatives, which would make recommendations in relation to this. The Tuition Fee Task Group was focusing on determining a minimum expectation of contact hours but it was acknowledged that this should not lead to a downgrading of provision in terms of what was currently offered. Once clarity had been obtained in relation to the student offering at institutional, faculty and school level, this would be communicated as early as possible to allow schools sufficient time to focus on delivery.

6. It was proposed that the University should consider what arrangements it could put in place to mitigate the impact of the reduction in research funding for early career researchers. It was noted that, in most schools, quality-related research (QR) funding was used to pay salaries and it was suggested that consideration should be given to putting aside a small amount of this so that small grants could be made available. The possibility of establishing a centralised scheme for this purpose should be considered.

7. It was suggested that Senate should be presented with a number of different options for the new fee regime so that the merits and demerits of each option could be considered and a preferred option identified.

8. The Executive Director of Finance and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources would welcome the opportunity to attend School and Faculty Board meetings to receive feedback from across the University and to allow Schools a further opportunity to input into the fee setting process.

Resolved that there should be further discussions on the proposed fees and the implications of the higher fees at the joint meeting of Senate and Council to be held on 7 February and at the Heads of Unit Forum on 9 February.

37. REPORT FROM THE HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE (Minute 26, 9.11.2010)

(i) **Honorary Degrees : July 2011**

Reported that:

(a) The following had accepted the University’s invitation to be awarded the degrees shown at Congregation Ceremonies to be held in July 2011:

- David Almond DLitt
- Olivia Grant DCL
(b) Martha Nussbaum had accepted the University’s invitation to be awarded the degree of DCL. However, she was unable to attend a Congregation Ceremony in July 2011 or July 2012.

(c) In accordance with Senate Standing Order IX, ‘If anyone invited to accept an honorary degree is unable to accept it on the occasion proposed the only other occasion on which it may be awarded is the equivalent Congregation in the subsequent year’.

Considered a recommendation that Senate suspend Standing Order IX and agree that Martha Nussbaum be awarded the degree of DCL at a Congregation Ceremony to be held in July 2013.

After a vote on a motion ‘that Senate Standing Order IX be suspended’, which was approved nem.con,

Resolved that the degree of DCL be conferred on Martha Nussbaum at a Congregation Ceremony to be held in July 2013.

(ii) Honorary Degrees : December 2011

Considered a report from the Honorary Degrees Committee dated 4 January 2011.  [Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The Chancellor had expressed a preference for honorary degrees to be awarded during a selection of undergraduate and postgraduate ceremonies rather than at one specific ceremony. It was proposed to implement this arrangement during the July 2011 ceremonies and to review it prior to the December 2011 ceremonies. Members of Senate who wished to comment on this proposal were invited to contact the Registrar.

2. It was suggested that consideration should be given to awarding one of the candidates with a DSC rather than a DCL as had been proposed. It was agreed that this would be considered.

After a vote on a motion ‘that the list be approved’, which was approved nem.con,

Resolved that the nominations made by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of honorary degrees in celebration of the University’s Sustainability Societal Challenge Theme, at the Congregation Ceremonies to be held on 13 and 14 December 2011, be approved.

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

38. WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE (Minute 8, 5.10.2010)

Reported that:
(a) Council, at its meeting on 12 July 2010, had resolved that Executive Board be asked to give further consideration to comments made by Council and also to any comments subsequently made by Senate and that its response be submitted to Council in the new academic year.

(b) Senate, at its meeting on 5 October 2010, had resolved that Senate and Council’s views on the Report from the Working Group on Governance be considered and assimilated into a final report on actions to be taken to be presented to Senate and Council for information.

Considered a report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. In an amendment to Annex C of Appendix 2, it was suggested that the University/Union Society Partnership Committee should be renamed the University/Students’ Union Partnership Committee. This committee had been re-positioned as a committee of Council having previously been a sub-committee of Executive Board.

2. It was considered that Ethics Committee should fall under the remit of Executive Board but that members of both Senate and Council should be able to raise ethical matters as they were identified.

3. It was proposed that there should be no change made to the position of Executive Board at this time. Future versions of the Vice-Chancellor’s business paper to Senate and Council would include a list of items considered by Executive Board since the previous meeting.

4. The proposed new standing order confirming the primary duty of a Senator should not be constrained by the normal line management structures would apply to all academic members of Senate.

Resolved that:

(i) The proposals in Appendices 1 and 2 to Document E be approved for implementation with immediate effect, subject to any comments from Council.

(ii) That the following revisions (underlined) to the Senate Standing Orders be approved:

‘ROLE OF THE SENATOR

The primary duty of a Senator is to seek to ensure that, in conducting all its business, Senate acts in the best interests of the University as a whole. To that task a Senator brings a knowledge and experience of certain specific aspects of the work of the University; on occasion, in fulfilling that duty, there may be a need to represent the views of certain sections of the University - e.g. as a Chair reporting from a board or committee, or in transmitting to Senate strongly held views at the request of persons not on Senate.

Notwithstanding these obligations a Senator is not a representative and the primary duty of a Senator is as stated in the first sentence of this section.

In performing the duties of a Senator, members of academic staff must not be constrained by the normal line management structures from expressing an opinion or supporting or opposing a proposal.'
39. **REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**

Reported that Senate, at its meeting on 5 October 2010, in consideration of the item on Higher Education League Tables, had resolved that UTLC be requested to consider the points raised on entry tariffs and degree classifications and report to a future meeting of Senate.

Received a report from the meeting of UTLC held on 15 December 2010.

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

**Higher Education League Tables**

Noted that UTLC had yet to correlate degree classifications and entry tariffs and would present this to a future meeting of Senate.

Senate noted the remaining items in the report.

40. **STUDENTS’ UNION IMPACT REPORT**

Received a Students’ Union Impact Report from Mr Tom Delamere, President of the Union Society.

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

*Resolved that Senate record its thanks and congratulations to the sabbatical officers on having prepared a well-conceived and well-constructed report.*

41. **NEWCASTLE SCIENCE CITY**

Received a progress report from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that Council, at its meeting on 13 December 2010, had resolved that the Chairman of Council be granted delegated authority to sign off the final Science Central Masterplan should it become available prior to the meeting of Council on 7 February.

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

42. **SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Considered a report from Professor Oliver Hinton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE on behalf of Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. Council had authorised the Vice-Chancellor, on the advice of the Executive Director of Finance, to sign the proposed revised agreement between the University and the Singapore Institute of Technology, subject to any comments from Senate.

2. Document J contained a proposal to increase the number of degree programmes offered at the University’s campus in Singapore from 1 to 4. Once all programmes were operational there would be a total of 600 students taught across the 4 programmes.

3. The University’s profile in Singapore had increased significantly following the success of the marine engineering degree programmes.
4. To assist with the planning of future overseas operations, it was considered important for the University to document why it had chosen to pursue the activities in Singapore. Lost opportunity cost should also be considered.

5. Document J noted that Professor Ehsan Mesbahi was CEO of the University’s Singapore operation and also Chair of the governance board. It was suggested that, in the interests of good governance, these two roles should be separated. Senate was informed that revised governance structures were in the process of being prepared.

6. The importance of accreditation to the success of the University’s overseas operations was noted. Staff who were involved in delivering the programmes also had to possess an understanding of the culture of a British degree in order to provide students with the experience and standards of teaching they were expecting. This could be addressed during the recruitment process.

Resolved that Senate approve an extension of the existing collaborative teaching arrangements in Singapore from one subject area to four subject areas.

43. REPORT FROM THE JOINT SELECTION COMMITTEE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Reported that the Chairman of Council, acting on behalf of Council, and members of Senate who had been consulted by email, had approved the following recommendations in a report from the joint Selection Committee on the Appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching:

(i) That the title of the Pro-Vice-Chancellorship be changed from Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching, Learning and Student Experience to Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching.

(ii) That Professor Suzanne Cholerton be appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching from 1 February 2011 to 31 July 2016.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

44. DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

Reported that:

(a) Senate and Council had previously agreed that Professor Ella Ritchie be appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor from a date to be determined until 31 July 2014.

(b) The Chairman of Council, acting on behalf of Council, had approved a recommendation that the date of appointment should be from 1 February 2011 to 31 July 2014.

45. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE PUBLIC LECTURES COMMITTEE

Received the Annual Report from the Public Lectures Committee for 2009-10.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

46. SUSTAINABILITY : UPDATE ON LAUNCH YEAR ARRANGEMENTS

Received a report from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
47. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY REGULATIONS AND SENATE’S DELEGATION OF POWERS AND AUTHORITY : AMENDMENTS

Considered a report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that:

(i) The revised Delegation of Authority Regulations be approved, subject to the agreement of Council.

(ii) The revisions to Senate’s Delegation of Powers and Authority document be approved.

48. SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 13 December 2010, had approved the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document O. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

49. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 13 December 2010, had approved revisions to the Environmental Sustainability Policy.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

50. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY (AHEAD 2011)

Received the Annual Report of the University.
[Circulated with the agenda. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

51. 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 Q. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]