NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

12 January 2010

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, Professor N G Wright, Professor P L Younger (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr P E Andras, Dr J C Appleby, Professor A V Boddy, Professor V G Bruce, Ms E Budge (Education Officer), Professor S J Bull, Professor J E Calvert, Professor D I Clarke, Professor I M Clarke, Ms E Collingham (student member), Mr W Connolly, Professor E G N Cross, Professor D Ford, Ms J Henderson, Professor J R Hentschke, Professor B H Hirst, Dr D J Kennedy, Professor J A Kirby, Professor P A Lee, Professor J N S Matthews, Mr P S Mercer (Student Support Officer), Professor D Parker, Professor N J Reynolds, Ms S M Robson, Professor D J Roddy, Dr C L Rowe and Professor A Tanaka.

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

MINUTES

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

27. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 10 November 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed.

28. 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.]

29. 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) Queen’s Anniversary Prize

Senate recorded its congratulations to Professor Kirkwood and his colleagues in the Institute of Ageing and Health on the award of the Queen’s Anniversary Prize.
Senate 12 January 2010

(iii) **QAA Institutional Audit**

The recent QAA Institutional Audit had been completed successfully. The Vice-Chancellor had received a letter from the QAA which gave an early indication of the key findings of their draft report. The letter confirmed that confidence could be placed in the soundness of the University’s management of the academic standards and in the management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. Senate recorded its thanks to Professor Ritchie, staff within QuLT and colleagues in the academic units who had met with the audit panel.

(iv) **Pay negotiations**

Received an oral update on pay negotiations from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources.

Noted that:

1. After protracted negotiations, UCEA had advised that institutions should implement the final offer of a 0.5% increase on all points on the common pay spine. Both UNISON and UNITE held member ballots on the offer, which were accepted by majorities of 81.5% and 85% respectively. UCU did not hold a member ballot, but it formally advised UCEA that it ‘notes the conclusion of the 2009 pay round’. The increase would be applied to pay from 1 August 2009 and would be implemented in time for the January payment.

2. As part of the agreement, three working groups were to be set up to consider pay framework and data research, equality issues and sustainability issues. Senate would receive information on the working groups’ findings at future meetings.

(v) **University Sports 2008/09**

Senate recorded its congratulations to students on having achieved a top ten position in the British Universities and Colleges Sports League table.

30. **STRATEGIC PLANNING : THE FACULTIES’ PERSPECTIVE**

Reported that, as part of the University’s strategic planning process, each of the faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors had been asked to present an overview of their faculty plans to Senate, to include inter alia, significant faculty achievements, issues of financial sustainability and forward capital plans that may impact on the faculty and staffing trends. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE gave the first presentation to Senate at its meeting on 29 April 2008 and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences gave the second on 21 April 2009.

Received a presentation from Professor Charles Harvey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor HASS, on the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences’ Strategic Plan.

[A copy of the slides used by Professor Harvey in his presentation is filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences comprised a wide range of subject areas including the creative arts, social sciences and professional subjects such as business, architecture and planning. Results from the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) had identified that performance in teaching and research within the Faculty was variable. The Faculty had set itself the strategic aim of improving performance in all areas and a comprehensive strategy review had recently been completed as the first part of this process.

2. The Faculty had prepared its vision for the future, which included the development of a strong reputation, attractive courses and a strong flow of well-funded research projects. Teaching and research that was undertaken across subject boundaries would be encouraged. The Faculty would also seek to provide an environment which encouraged parity of esteem between teaching and research activities.
3. The staff:student ratios (SSR) within the Faculty were amongst the highest in the University. The SSR in the Business School had increased with the recent transfer of Marketing from the School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The Faculty intended to address high SSRs through the prioritisation of resources on the academic front line.

4. The Business School and the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences were the main postgraduate recruiters within the Faculty but the position of the School of Arts and Cultures had improved due to the recent transfer to it of the subject area of media.

5. In terms of its research performance, the Faculty had set itself the aim of achieving a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.7 in all subject areas.

6. The Faculty’s financial position was strong, but it was largely dependent on income generated by its teaching activities. The Faculty needed to increase the number of staff submitted into the Research Excellence Framework and it had set itself the target of 85% participation. Recruitment and promotion criteria were being prepared to support this objective.

7. The Faculty would address criticisms about the lack of contact time on some courses, which had emerged out of the most recent NSS. In future all schools within the Faculty would be expected to achieve an overall satisfaction rating of 90%+ in the NSS.

8. The relocation of the Business School to the new building on the Downings site was required before the aim of achieving triple accreditation could be realised.

9. The Faculty intended to continue with its planned strategy, despite the current difficult financial climate. In order for it to succeed, however, it was necessary to establish a consistent and coherent academic model.

10. The need to reinforce the emphasis on subject areas was acknowledged as was the need for a co-ordinated approach. It was necessary to improve the visibility of some subject areas on the University’s website.

31. REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

Considered recommendations in a paper from Dr John Hogan, Registrar, which had been approved by Council at its meeting on 7 December 2009.

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

After noting that:

1. The Governance Review would be a joint review of both Council and Senate.

2. Council had appointed Mr Mark I'Anson, Deputy-Chairman of Council, to Chair the working group.

3. Professor Tony Stevenson had been appointed as the Pro-Vice-Chancellor on the group.

4. Council had invited expressions of interest from members of Council who were interested in serving on the group. Members of Senate who were interested in serving on the group were asked to contact the Vice-Chancellor by 29 January 2010. The Vice-Chancellor requested delegation of authority from Senate to nominate two individuals to serve on the group.

Resolved that:

(i) A joint working group of Senate and Council be set up to conduct a review of the University’s governance arrangements with the intention of reporting in the autumn of 2010.

(ii) The membership of the working group should be:

A Deputy Chair of Council (in the Chair)
Senate 12 January 2010

A Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Three lay members of Council
One academic member of Council
Two members appointed by Senate

(iii) Members of Senate who were interested in serving on the working group should contact the Vice-Chancellor by 29 January 2010.

(iv) The Vice-Chancellor be granted delegated authority to appoint the two Senate-appointed members on behalf of Senate.

32. REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY’S PERFORMANCE

Considered a report from Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. Document E was produced from largely historical data (2007/08) but, in future, more forward looking data would be used, where it was available.

2. The institutions included in the comparator group had recently been amended. The group was considered to be particularly competitive.

3. Newcastle’s staff:student ratio (SSR) was noted as being one of the highest in the comparator group and its position had deteriorated slightly between 2006/07 and 2007/08 (figure 4).

4. The University spend on staff costs as a percentage of total income was the lowest in the comparator group which demonstrated that it was succeeding in controlling staff costs (figure 5).

5. Figure 19 displayed the percentage of first degree graduates who were in work and/or study six months after graduation. It was suggested that a more appropriate measure would be the percentage of first degree graduates who were in graduate level employment six months after graduation. It was agreed that this measure would be used in future versions of the document.

6. The inclusion of an Executive Summary at the start of the document was suggested.

7. It was not possible to include overhead recovery rates in the document as this information was regarded as commercially sensitive and was not available for the comparator universities. Newcastle University’s overhead recovery rates had previously been considered to be amongst the highest but its position had changed recently following a review of the implementation of full economic costing.

8. In contrast to the figures on page 16, more recent data had revealed that Newcastle was second only to Imperial College for the income received from Research Council grants per full-time equivalent (FTE) academic member of staff during the 2008/09 academic year. The University was also in 8th place overall for the total amount awarded by the Research Councils which demonstrated that it had significantly improved its position in recent years.

9. A number of the measures used in the document were determined by the size of the institutions. It was suggested that future versions of the document should include only those measures which the University was able to influence.

33. BUDGET

Reported that one of the recommendations of the Working Group on Governance, which had been approved by Council, was that Senate and Council should receive a report, at least annually, on the extent to which the budget allocations matched the institutional strategy.
Received an oral report from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance, on the income flows to the University and how they were allocated.

[A copy of the slides used by Mr Dale in his presentation are filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Income which the University received from HEFCE and from tuition fees was distributed throughout the institution via the Resource Allocation Model (RAM). Where a premium fee was charged, this income was allocated to the academic unit which offered the programme.

2. 52.8% of the University’s income was spent on staff costs and approximately 46% was spent on non-staff costs. A deduction was made from each faculty budget, to pay for the Professional Support Services. Deductions were also made for strategic funds and surpluses.

3. 2009/10 was the first year when all three faculties were expected to generate a surplus.

4. The income which the University had received from international student tuition fees had increased considerably in recent years and this was expected to continue.

5. The University was in a comfortable position in terms of the Universities UK Security Index but there remained further scope for growth in terms of the University’s non-core income.

6. The University had traditionally struggled to achieve strong reserves and several more years of surpluses would be required to ensure its reserves base was adequate. The amount of income the University received from research had declined between 2003/04 and 2006/07 but its performance in this area had improved significantly in recent years.

7. The Government had recently announced significant cuts to the Higher Education budget. The University had undertaken modelling of various scenarios and had identified a budget which would allow it to maintain its surpluses despite the anticipated cuts. At this stage, while no guarantees could be given, there were expected to be no academic staff cuts and the University would instead focus on reducing non-pay costs. A number of areas had been identified where efficiencies and process improvements could be made.

8. The University was considered to be in a strong position to face the future reductions in central funding but it would be important to maintain the academic base and to spend funds in a manner which supported the University’s strategy.

34. UPDATE ON HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCES

Received a paper from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance.

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

Noted that:

1. In December 2009, Lord Mandelson had announced that there would be a cut of £83 million in the funding previously allocated to HEFCE for the 2010/11 academic year. HEFCE had chosen to remove the historic building grant which it allocated to institutions as a means of addressing this reduction in its budget and this would impact on the funding which the University received.

2. The University anticipated receiving an adequate budget settlement for the 2010/11 academic year but there was more uncertainty around the allocation for 2011/12 which would not be clarified until after the election.

3. Institutions had been sent a clear message that they must not exceed recruitment targets for home students. Institutions were to be fined £3,700 for every student they took on above the limit set by the Government in autumn 2009.
4. It was likely that the Government would expect the 1% pay cap for public services to be applied to Higher Education.

5. The sector was being encouraged to consider the possibility of introducing two year programmes though foundation and fast track degrees. It was noted that the University did not plan to follow this suggestion due to its commitment to research-led education. Staff required time in which to conduct their research and increasing the undergraduate teaching year to potentially 45 weeks, which would be the inevitable consequence of the introduction of two year programmes, would limit the time in which this research could be undertaken.

6. A three year programme was considered to provide more adequate opportunities for student development. The Bologna Agreement, to which the University had signed up, also considered three years to be the optimal length for a degree programme.

7. A move to two year programmes would necessitate changes to the whole of the University’s infrastructure.

8. Income from the Higher Education Innovation Fund continued to increase and a review of how the University had used this funding in the past was requested.

9. A potential reduction in funding from the Research Councils had been considered but the financial impact was viewed as being less significant than a reduction in funding from HEFCE. It was noted that the University currently occupied a competitive position in terms of the funding it received from the Research Councils and it would be important for this to be maintained.

Resolved that Executive Board should give consideration to the suggestion that the Vice-Chancellor should, at a suitable time, write to staff to inform them of the University’s current financial position and also to invite suggestions on how savings could be made in areas of non-pay expenditure.

35. PUBLIC ORATOR AND PUBLIC ORATOR DESIGNATE

Reported that:

(a) The appointment of Professor Paul Younger as Public Orator will end on 31 July 2010.

(b) The appointment of Professor Patrick Chinnery as Public Orator-designate will also end on 31 July 2010.

(c) Senate Standing Order XI stated that: ‘The Public Orator and the Public Orator-designate (when such an appointment is required) shall be appointed by Senate after considering a report of a Committee. The Public Orator and Public Orator-designate shall hold office for three years’.

Resolved that:

(i) Professor Patrick Chinnery be appointed as Public Orator from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2013.

(ii) Members of Senate be requested to submit nominations for the office of Public Orator-designate to the Vice-Chancellor by 29 January 2010.

(iii) Executive Board should be the Committee to make a recommendation to Senate for the appointment of the Public Orator-designate.

36. REPORT FROM THE HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE (Minute 10, 10.11.2009)

Reported that:

(a) The following had accepted the University’s invitation to be awarded the degrees shown at the Congregation Ceremony to be held on Friday, 16 April 2010:
Professor Andrew Hamnett  Doctor of Civil Law
Dame Emma Kirkby  Doctor of Music
Ms Anne Stevenson  Doctor of Letters

[Note: The award of an honorary degree to Dame Emma Kirkby had been deferred from 2009.]

(b) A reply was awaited from one other nominee. The Vice-Chancellor had acted on behalf of Senate and agreed to a change in the category of degree to be offered to this person from a Doctor of Civil Law to a Doctor of Letters as it was felt that this was more appropriate.

Considered a report from the Honorary Degrees Committee.
[Circulated with the Agenda as Document G. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Senate Standing Orders

Resolved that Senate approve the following amendments to Senate Standing Order IX relating to Honorary Degrees, indicated by bold italics and strikethrough:

1. Once each year the Registrar shall draw the attention of all members of Academic Board, Court, Council and the Alumni Consultative Group to the terms under which names for honorary degrees may be submitted. Nominations shall be submitted by a date to be in October, determined by the Registrar.

Special Honorary Degrees Ceremony : 6 December 2010

Resolved that:

(i) A special Honorary Degree Ceremony be held on 6 December 2010 as part of the Changing Age initiative.

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

(ii) The recommendation from the Honorary Degrees Committee that Senate approve the list of proposed honorary graduands and the honorary degrees for which they would be presented at the Ceremony to be held on 6 December 2010 be approved.

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

37. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY (AHEAD 2010)

Received the Annual Report of the University for 2008/09.
[Circulated with the Agenda. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

38. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Considered a report from the meeting of University Teaching and Learning Committee held on 25 November 2009.
[Circulate with the Agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Academic Year Dates

Resolved that:

(i) The 2010/11 and 2011/12 academic year dates remain as previously approved by Senate, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year 2010/11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn: Monday 27 September 2010 - Friday 17 December 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring: Monday 10 January 2011 - Friday 1 April 2011</td>
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7
The academic year dates for 2012/13 – 2014/15 be approved, as follows:

**Academic Year 2012/13**
- **Autumn:** Monday 24 September 2012 - Friday 14 December 2012
- **Spring:** Monday 7 January 2013 - Friday 15 March 2013
- **Summer:** Monday 28 January 2013 - Friday 14 June 2013

**Academic Year 2013-2014**
- **Autumn:** Monday 23 September 2013 - Friday 13 December 2013
- **Spring:** Monday 6 January 2014 - Friday 28 March 2014
- **Summer:** Monday 28 April 2014 - Friday 13 June 2014
- **SEMESTER 1:** Monday 23 September 2013 - Friday 24 January 2014
- **SEMESTER 2:** Monday 27 January 2014 - Friday 13 June 2014

**Note Easter Sunday falls on 20 April 2014**

**Academic Year 2014/15**
- **Autumn:** Monday 22 September 2014 - Friday 12 December 2014
- **Spring:** Monday 5 January 2015 - Friday 13 March 2015
- **Summer:** Monday 13 April 2015 - Friday 12 June 2015
- **SEMESTER 1:** Monday 22 September 2014 - Friday 23 January 2015
- **SEMESTER 2:** Monday 26 September 2014 - Friday 12 June 2015

The remaining items in the report were noted.

39. **PRINCIPLES OF COMMERCIALISATION**

- Reported that Council, at its meeting on 7 December 2009, had approved recommendations in a report from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board.

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

40. **REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY/UNION SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

- Received a report from the University/Union Society Partnership Committee.

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

41. **ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE PUBLIC LECTURES COMMITTEE**

- Received the Annual Report from the Public Lectures Committee for 2008/09.

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

Senate noted the high quality of the public lectures programme which had been offered during 2008/09.

*Resolved that Senate record its thanks to the Public Lectures Committee and, in particular, to Mr Jerry Patterson who had stepped down as Chairman on 31 July 2009.*

42. **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 M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

43. 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.]