NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

12 June 2012

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Chris Day, Professor Charles Harvey, Professor Steve Homans, Professor Tony Stevenson and Professor Nick Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor Simi Ali, Dr Peter Andras, Mr Charles Barry (Student Member), Dr Debbie Bevitt, Professor Alan Boddy, Mr Wayne Connolly, Professor Eric Cross, Mr Liam Dale (Education Officer), Ms Katy Hargreaves (Welfare and Equality Officer), Ms Jacqui Henderson, Dr Alton Horsfall, Ms Esta Innes (Welfare and Equality Officer elect), Dr David Kennedy, Ms Laura Perry (President, Students’ Union), Dr Neelam Srivastava, Professor Paul Watson, Mr Steve Williams and Dr Kirsten Wolff.

In attendance: Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Mrs Jeannette Strachan (Academic Registrar), and Mrs Sam Taylor (Administrative Officer).

M I N U T E S

96. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Vice-Chancellor declared an interest in relation to In-Course Assessment and Feedback [Minute 103, refers] as a Board member of the Quality Assurance Agency [QAA].

97. RETIRING MEMBERS

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the retiring members for their contribution to the work of Senate.

98. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 24 April 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed.

99. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

100. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

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

1. Deaths

Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.

Resolved that Senate record its deep regret and sympathy for the relatives concerned.
2. **George Brown Endowment Fund**

This endowment was created some years ago to fund educational activities within the University. Use of the fund requires approval of Council and Senate following a proposal by the Vice-Chancellor. A request has been received to use £30k p.a. of the fund to increase the number of vacation scholarships awarded by the University.

*Resolved that subject to the approval of Council, Senate approve the request to use £30k p.a. to increase the number of Vacation Research Scholarships, beginning academic year 2012-13.*

4. **Recruitment Campaign**

The University is to roll out a recruitment campaign in the coming months to attract top talent to Newcastle and to raise the profile of our research and teaching strengths. This will begin with high-profile adverts in the Times Higher and the Sunday Times for the Directors of the Newcastle University Business School (NUBS) and the Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability (NIReS) and will continue with a series of adverts highlighting more general opportunities at Newcastle.

5. **Newcastle University Students’ Union LATE (Learning and Teaching Excellence) Awards**

The first student-led Learning and Teaching Excellence Awards took place on 10 May 2012. These awards were run by the Students’ Union in partnership with the University to recognise all positive aspects of learning and teaching.

7. **International Student Barometer Autumn 2011: Headline Results**

Newcastle University participates in the International Student Barometer and the survey is issued to all current international and EU students. This year the University achieved a response rate of 58%, a significant improvement on last year’s response rate of 44% and ahead of the Russell Group and ISB overall averages. Newcastle achieved an overall satisfaction score of 91.4%. This places the University at 6th position out of the 12 participating Russell Group institutions, 17th out of the 55 participating UK institutions and 45th out of the 208 participating world institutions.

Newcastle ranked first within the Russell Group in three of the four key ISB elements: Arrival (88%), Learning (90.2%) and Living (91.4%). Newcastle also ranked first in a total of 23 specific areas this year, including learning technology, virtual learning, learning spaces, the library and quality lectures as well as careers advice, employability, registration, visa advice, cost of living and accommodation. Last year Newcastle achieved first place ranking in the Russell Group in just two areas.

8. **Late News**

**Xiamen University**

A delegation from Xiamen University and Xiamen Tan Kah Kee College, from the People’s Republic of China visited the University this week. The purpose of the visit was to explore opportunities for collaboration between the two universities in a similar way to the partnerships that Newcastle University has with Monash University and the University of Groningen. This follows the Vice-Chancellor’s successful visit to Xiamen in February 2012, during which time he signed an agreement with Xiamen for Newcastle University to establish a Confucius Institute.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Melanie Reed, Senior PR and Events Manager and the Courtyard Restaurant for the arrangements surrounding the visit.
Following the government’s Budget announcement of £100 million for research facilities, the HEFCE circulated a publication outlining its UK Research Partnership Investment Fund (UKRPIF), inviting universities to apply for between £10 million and £35 million per project. As part of their application, universities must be able to demonstrate that they can attract at least double the amount in private investment. Applications will be judged on the value for money and how much they build on existing strong research capability.

Newcastle University has submitted an application, which is currently at the ‘expression of interest’ stage of the process.

Syria
The University currently has 32 Syrian students who are studying PG taught or research degrees. This is a worrying time for the students due to the current troubles in Syria. Support has been put into place for the students who have financial or visa difficulties and guidance has been given to staff members on how to support students who feel the effects of unstable international conditions. The situation is being monitored and the University is in close contact with UUK.

9. Early Warnings

Comprehensive Spending Review
It is possible that the Comprehensive Spending Review may be brought forward, and may lead to further financial cuts with higher education.

101. SENATE ELECTION PROCESS

Received an oral report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board.

After noting that:

1. After a ballot, the following members of staff had been elected to serve on Senate in the non-professorial constituency from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2015:

   Dr Heather Brown, Institute of Health and Society
   Dr Tim Cheek, Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences
   Dr Joanna Elson, Institute of Genetic Medicine
   Dr Ole Pedersen, Newcastle Law School
   Dr Tony Young, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

2. Following the annual Senate election process, only six nominations were received for the nine vacancies within the professorial category. In order to reduce the risk of such a high number of vacancies occurring at any one time in the future, Senate is asked to approve the recommendation that the outstanding three vacancies from the 2011-12 election process are carried over into the 2012-13 election process.

   Resolved that Senate approve the recommendation to carry over the outstanding three vacancies within the professorial category into the 2012-13 election process.

102. OBLIGATIONS ON SCHOOLS: MONITORING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Considered a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on behalf of Executive Board
Noted that:

1. A compliance visit was undertaken by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) on 24 January 2012. During the visit the UKBA staff examined many records of international students studying at the University and they also interviewed some students. During the audit they raised a concern around attendance monitoring of international students. We should have a “Record of absence/attendance, this may be kept either electronically or manually”. Our current policy is that ‘Academic units should establish attendance monitoring arrangements for ALL students.’ However for many Schools attendance monitoring consists of monthly census checks. During their visit the UKBA staff were clear that monthly census checks were not sufficient and that we needed to be able to demonstrate that international students were engaging with their academic programme.

2. A subsequent meeting between UKBA and universities across the sector established that the changes to the requirements for attendance monitoring had been introduced in September 2011, but had not been effectively conveyed to the sector.

3. Executive Board agreed that the University should develop attendance monitoring systems which are able to demonstrate that students are engaging with their programme and the Academic Registrar has established a cross institution working group to develop this.

4. The official results of our UKBA audit are awaited. However, we have had verbal feedback from our compliance manager. The compliance manager was reassured that we are taking the issue of attendance monitoring seriously and that we will be compliant by September 2012.

5. The student members of Senate raised concerns about the possible use of biometric monitoring which they feel will not be well received by the students.

103. OBLIGATIONS ON SCHOOLS: IN-COURSE ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Received a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on behalf of Executive Board.

Noted that:

1. Internal Audit undertook a review of the return of In-course Assessments in the period, July to October 2011. The review examined the processes within each Academic Unit and looked at what supporting documentation is in place to provide evidence of the issue, receipt and return of in-course assessments. Senate, at its meeting on 24 April 2012, noted that Internal Audit had undertaken a review of the work process for the four week turnaround commitment, and in view of its findings, asked that an action plan from the University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee (UTLSEC) be brought to the next meeting.

2. The commitment to a four week turnaround time has hitherto been interpreted as being four term-time weeks. UTLSEC undertook a consultation with the faculties and is recommending that the current policy position be clarified in the interests of students, so that feedback on in-course assessment is provided in 20 working days (i.e. excluding closure periods and bank holidays). It is recognised that this will prove challenging in some areas of the University, but that this is the most equitable and supportive approach for students.
3. UTLSEC has also agreed revisions to the Submission of Work policy, for implementation from September 2012. In order to manage the workload for Academic Units, they have focused upon a core set of steps all Academic Units will be expected to have in place in 2012/13:

4. Appendix point 8 should be amended to read: We are committed to providing quality feedback on examinations. Feedback and provisional marks on examinations must be returned to students at the start of the next academic term/semester. At minimum, generic feedback must be issued to cohorts within this deadline. In addition individual feedback can be provided to students on request after Exam Boards have met. Feedback must be provided to those students who are re-sitting exams at least 4 weeks before their resits to inform their preparation.

Subject to the amendment noted above being incorporated into the paper, and the minor changes to the wording, Senate approve the Return of In-Course Assessments document.

104. OBLIGATIONS ON SCHOOLS: STUDENT CHARTER 2012-13

Received a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted:

1. In January 2011 a report was received by the Minister of State for Universities and Science, the Rt. Hon David Willetts MP from the Student Charter Group. The group was co-chaired by Janet Beer (Vice-Chancellor, Oxford Brookes) and Aaron Porter (NUS President) and membership included the Vice-Chancellor. The recommendation from this group was that each HEI should have a high level, succinct Student Charter drawn up in consultation with students which sets out the mutual expectations of universities and students.

2. Although the University already had a Student Charter, the document was reviewed in light of the recommendations of the national group. A University working group was convened with representation from the faculties, Student Progress Services and the Students’ Union. The University Working Group considered the language of the Student Charter in detail and also took account of the ‘Newcastle Offer’ and other Project 2012 commitments. Additional considerations included the need for the Charter to apply to all students, regardless of the type of programme or the campus of study. An overarching Student Charter with relevant appendices is proposed

Resolved that Senate approve the Student Charter and appendices, subject to some minor amendments to the wording of the document as outlined at the meeting.

105. SUMMARY OF THE NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY ACCESS AGREEMENT SUBMISSION FOR 2013 ENTRY

Received a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) requires submission of an annual Access Agreement. Universities have the opportunity to review and revise their plans in the light of changes
since the submission of the 2012 Agreement. This paper summarises for information the provisions of Newcastle University's 2013 Access Agreement, submitted to OFFA by the deadline of 31 May.

2. The student financial support scheme has been revised to place greater emphasis on bursaries rather than fee discounts. Feedback from the student members was that the balance between a fee waiver and a cash bursary, in allowing them the choice, has been positively received by the students. The Vice-Chancellor was thanked by the student members for this revision.

3. The President of the Students’ Union wished to record the Union’s continuing opposition to higher fees.

106. UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT FOR SEPTEMBER 2012

Considered a report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

The following minute is classified as ‘commercial in confidence’ and its contents should not be disclosed to any person who is not a member of Senate.

107. OVERVIEW REPORT ON IT AND RESOURCES

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

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

Noted that:

1. A core function of ISS is to support and maintain a large number of systems and services that are critical to the day-to-day running of the University. Dependence on IT continues to grow, with a general trend towards a larger number of IT systems, with more users, handling more data. This will become apparent with the necessity for systems to support the data for the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF). Stability of systems remains an area of strength, with availability of over 98.5% across core systems.

2. The National Student Survey (NSS) results for question 17 (“I have been able to access general IT resources I needed to”) were disappointing in 2011 dropping to 82%, which was a continuation of the decline seen over recent years. However the International Student Barometer (ISB) is exceptionally positive, with Newcastle leading the Russell Group participants (and ranking in the top 10 across all UK participants) in many technology-related areas.

3. A key focus for ISS leading up to the academic year commencing September 2012 is Project 2012 and improvements to support the student experience as part of the Newcastle Offer.

4. A series of workshops have been offered to University staff over the coming months as part of the Digital Campus Programme to enhance the University’s mission in teaching, research and engagement. This will enable staff and students to improve the way they use technology and enhance the skills of individuals, as well as improving the competitive position of the University.
5. The intention is to deliver a University model for IT, providing core and local services to a consistent standard, whilst recognising the requirement for flexible support for research and the need to maintain good local services.

108. OVERVIEW REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ESTATE SUPPORT SERVICE

Considered a report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The report outlines a positive story of continuous performance improvement.

2. Although there is a net increase in space of 16,229 m², having added five buildings and one site from those figures reported in 2011, this should decrease again by July 2013.

3. Through investment over the past decade, we have addressed our legacy of backlog maintenance and inappropriate space. We have uplifted building condition above our peer group median and continue to invest in functional suitability through new build and refurbishment as well as shedding the poorest space through divestment and demolition.

4. Work on our Coherent Campus initiative continues with current projects including the creation of the Student Forum and transforming King’s Road into a pedestrian-priority shared surface with no through traffic.

5. In 2008/09 the increasing cost of utilities was a major element of estate running costs. Energy consumption was kept to a 0.5% increase in 2008/09, the opening of new buildings during 2009/10 partly resulted in energy consumption increasing by 7.5%. Notwithstanding this increase in energy consumption, improving contract prices saw overall energy costs for the non-residential estate fall from £6.35m to £5.13m.

6. Newcastle University has been named the greenest university in the North-East, placed 26th position out of 145 institutions in the People & Planet Green League. The award recognised the efforts made to make sustainability an everyday part of Campus life. Currently 93% of general waste is recycled, and carbon emissions are down by 1,000 tonnes and water usage has been reduced by 4% despite a growth in the Estate. Professor Tony Stevenson will be presented with the award at a special graduation event in London in June 2012.

109. OVERVIEW REPORT ON LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Received the Annual report from the University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee (UTLSEC) for 2010-11, from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on behalf of Executive Board.

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

110. SUSTAINABILITY LAUNCH YEAR REPORT

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

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

111. INCOME FLOWS TO THE UNIVERSITY AND HOW THEY ARE ALLOCATED.
Received a PowerPoint presentation from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance on behalf of Executive Board.
   [Copy of the slides used in the presentation filed in the Minute Book.]

112. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE.

Considered a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on behalf of Executive Board.
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

   Resolved that the recommendations for items 1 – 3b, in Document M be approved.

113. SENATE APPOINTED CHAIRS AND MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES.

Considered a report containing recommendations for the appointment/re-appointment of Chairs and members of University committees.
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

   Resolved that the recommendations in Document P be approved.

114. APPOINTMENTS TO CHAIRS AND READERSHIPS

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

115. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Received a report from Professor Vicki Bruce, Chair of Equality and Diversity Committee
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document R. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

116. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRES

Considered a report from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, on behalf of Executive Board.
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document S. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

   Resolved that Senate approve the following recommendations:

1. The establishment of two new University Research Centres for three years from 01.08.2012 to 31.07.2015 and the appointment of their Directors for the same period.

   Research Centre for Integrated Research into Musculoskeletal Ageing (CIMA) with Professor Tim Cawston as Director.

   ARUK Tissue Engineering Centre for Osteoarthritis, with Professor Andrew McCaskie as Director.

2. The re-approval of the following University Research Centres for a further three years from 01.08.2012 to 31.07.2015 and the reappointment of their Directors for the same period.

   The Centre for the Literary Arts (NCLA)
   The Centre for Research in Linguistics & Language (CRiLLS)
The Centre for Brain Ageing and Vitality
The nanoLab Research Centre
Newcastle Cancer Centre
The Centre for Behaviour and Evolution

3. The re-approval of the following University Research Centres for one year from 01.08.2012 to 31.07.2013 and the reappointment of their Directors for the same period.

The Centre for Earth Systems Engineering Research (CESER)
The Centre for Integrated Systems Biology of Ageing and Nutrition (CISBAN)

117. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF A STUDENT

Considered a report from Student Wellbeing Service
[Circulated with the agenda as Document T. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that the procedures in Document T be approved.

118. HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

Considered a report Honorary Degrees Committee
[Circulated with the agenda as Document U. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that the recommendations in Document U be approved.

119. ETHICAL POLICY AND ESCALATION PROCESS

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

Resolved that Senate approve the recommendations in the report.

120. EQUAL PAY REVIEW

Received a report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document W. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

121. 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 Chair of Council on behalf of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairs.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document X. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

RESERVED BUSINESS

122. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 29(4))

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 29(4), Senate may accord the title of Professor Emeritus on professors retiring from the University.
Considered a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor, following consultation with the faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on the following from 1 October 2012:

Professor T Anderson
Professor P Davis
Professor O Hinton

123. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY PROMOTIONS COMMITTEES

Considered a report from University and Faculty Promotions Committees.

Resolved that the recommendations in Document N be approved, subject to the agreement of Council.