NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
SENATE
14 June 2011

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor E Ritchie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor S Cholerton, Professor C Harvey, Professor O R Hinton, 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 A V Boddy, Professor V G Bruce, Professor S J Bull, Professor J E Calvert, Mr W Connolly, Professor E G N Cross, Mr T Delamere (President, Students' Union), Ms S Fearn (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, Professor P A Lee, Professor F Myles, Professor N J Reynolds, Ms S M Robson, Professor D J Roddy, Professor C P Rodgers and Dr K Wolff.

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

Ms L Perry (President elect of the Students’ Union) attended the meeting as an observer.

Professor P Lee was not present for item 103.

M I N U T E S

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

85. RETIRING MEMBERS

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

86. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 12 April 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed.

87. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

Received a business tracking form.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
(ii) **Honorary Degrees : December 2011 (Minute 57(ii), 12.4.2011)**

Reported that one candidate had replied to say that she was unable to accept an Honorary Degree to mark the end of a year-long programme of events on the theme ‘Sustainability’.

Considered a report from the Honorary Degrees Committee.

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

*After a vote on the motion ‘that the recommendation in Document C be approved’, which was approved nem.con,*

**Resolved that the nomination made by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of an honorary degree in celebration of the University’s Sustainability Societal Challenge Theme, at a Congregation Ceremony to be held in December 2011, be approved.**

(iii) **Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE (Minute 66, 12.4.2011)**

Reported that following further consultation with the Heads of Academic Units within the Faculty, the Vice-Chancellor had approved the appointment of the following on the selection committee for the appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE on behalf of Senate:

Dr Heather Finlayson  
Dr Bryn Jones  
Professor Paul Watson

88. **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document D. 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) **Senate election results**

Reported that, following a ballot, the following had been elected to serve on Senate in the non-professorial constituency from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2014: Dr Debbie Bevitt, Dr Hugh Dauncey, Dr Catherine Exley, Dr Alton Horsfall and Dr Neelam Srivastava.

(iii) **EPSRC Framework Grouping**

It was agreed that the Faculty of SAgE should be congratulated on its achievements in terms of the amount of research income received which had resulted in the University being awarded Framework grouping status by the EPSRC, placing it in the top 12 institutions in the UK.
(iv) Medical Futures Innovation Awards

Colleagues within the Faculty of Medical Sciences and Science, Agriculture and Engineering, were shortlisted in two of eight categories in the annual Medical Futures Innovation Awards and have won in both categories.

Dr John Meechan, Senior Lecturer in Dentistry, was awarded the Dental and Oral Health Award for an invention aimed at reducing the pain of local anaesthetic injections used during dental procedures. Mr Chris Lawrence, Assistant Director of Engineering, in the Regional Centre for Innovation in Design (RCID) in SAgE, was responsible for designing the implementation of the idea that came from Dentistry.

Professor Janet Eyre, Professor of Paediatric Neuroscience in the Institute of Neuroscience, received the award for the best collaboration between University and Trust for her work using computer games for children and adults with a range of neurological disorders including cerebral palsy.

(v) Pay and Pensions

Reported that:

1. The negotiation process for the 2011 pay award was underway. The University and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) had made an offer of an increase of £100 on all points on the JNCHES pay spine but this had been rejected by the unions.

2. With regards to pensions, Sir Andrew Cubie, the independent chairman of the USS Joint Negotiating Committee, had exercised his casting vote to approve the proposed changes to the scheme. The implementation date had not yet been announced but was expected to be 1 October 2011. The University had been notified that the UCU intended to ballot its members on industrial action in relation to the changes to the pension scheme.

(vi) People and Planet Green League Exercise 2011

Reported that the University had been placed joint-63rd out of 142 institutions in the most recent Green League produced by People and Planet which ranked universities by their environment and ethical performance. This represented a significant improvement on the previous year’s performance in which the University had been ranked joint-104th out of 137 institutions.

(vii) NUMed Campus in Malaysia

The Vice-Chancellor provided Senate with an update on recent developments.

(viii) Realignment of Deans’ roles in the Faculty of Medical Sciences

Reported that in order to align the Dean roles in Medical Sciences as closely as possible with those of the cross-cutting Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Professor Michael Whitaker (current Dean of Development) would take on the role of Dean of Research and Innovation aligned to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation. Professor Whitaker’s term as Dean of Development was due to end in July 2013 but would be extended in his new role until July 2014 in order to cover the final submission date for the REF in November 2013.
Resolved that Senate approve the following recommendations, subject to the agreement of Council:

(i) The change in the title of the post of Dean of Research to Dean of Research and Innovation.

(ii) The appointment of Professor M J Whitaker to the post of Dean of Research and Innovation with immediate effect to 31 July 2014.

(iii) The disestablishment of the post of Dean of Development with immediate effect.

(ix) University Technical College

The University had been approached by Newcastle College to be the lead co-sponsor of a new University Technical College alongside the Centre of Life. The University was in negotiations with Newcastle College over this proposal.

(x) Queen’s Birthday Honours List 2011

The following individuals had received Honours in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List 2011:

Ms Mary Coyle, MBE
Professor Peter Stone, OBE

Senate noted with pleasure the awards to Ms Coyle and Professor Stone.

89. THE NEWCASTLE OFFER

Considered 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.]

After noting that:

1. An extensive consultation on the Newcastle ‘offer’ had taken place with the University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee, Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees and academic units. Document E sought to set down the core requirements of the student experience at Newcastle and to establish the minimum level of provision which all students could expect to receive. The offer was based on existing activities and commitments included in strategy documents but did not include all the activities that were undertaken across the University.

2. It was essential for the University to be able to deliver its offer consistently but it was necessary to be realistic about the pace of change. It would be possible to offer some aspects of the offer from September 2011 but others would require a longer period of implementation.

3. In Appendix 1, the first bullet of point 2 stated that: ‘Students will learn about current research in their discipline area.’ It was noted that this bullet had been amended as a result of previous discussions but it was considered that the current wording had been weakened too much.
4. Points 11 and 12 of Appendix 1 made reference to the intention to expand the use of the ReCap lecture capture service. It was suggested that lecturers should be allowed some control over when this service was used and have the ability to disable it as required in order to protect students. It had been identified that there were a number of policy and guidance issues surrounding the use of ReCap and a steering group had been set up to consider these.

5. It was suggested that many other universities would be preparing similar documents and it was important to set out the distinctive aspects of the University’s offer. It was noted that much of the differentiation would be added at subject level and the Marketing and Communications Directorate was working with subject units to ensure that key aspects were portrayed clearly in marketing materials.

6. Document E was considered to provide a clear statement of the minimum thresholds that all schools were expected to meet. It was noted that not all schools were satisfying these requirements at the present time.

7. Point 5 noted that students could expect to receive ‘timely and useful feedback for all assessments (including examinations)...’ It was considered that the provision of individual feedback for all examinations would be difficult and time consuming. It was clarified that it would not be necessary to provide individual feedback for all examinations but academic units should be encouraged to use a variety of methods to ensure students received some form of feedback for each examination taken.

8. The inclusion of a minimum contact time of 9 hours per week was welcomed but it was suggested that the document should explain that this was the minimum which students could expect to receive. Consideration should be given to how the messages in the document could be communicated effectively to students and their parents.

9. It was suggested that the University should set out what it meant by ‘good learning and teaching, good facilities and services’ as noted at the bottom of page 1. The document made no reference to the employability of students, group sizes for teaching and the fact that students could expect to be taught by academics rather than teaching assistants and it was suggested that these statements would be useful additions.

Resolved that the Newcastle ‘offer’, as detailed in Appendix 1 to Document E, be approved.

90. POSTGRADUATE TUITION FEES (Minute 59, 12.4.2011)

Reported that Senate, at its meeting on 12 April 2011, had resolved that the Tuition Fees Task Group be asked to give further consideration to the tuition fees to be implemented for home postgraduate taught students from 2012 onwards and to present its conclusions at the meeting of Senate on 14 June 2011.

Considered a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching and Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of the Tuition Fees Task Group.

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

After noting that:

1. A proposal had been made at the previous meeting of Senate that the home postgraduate taught fee from September 2012 should be £5,500. Senate had resolved
that the Tuition Fees Task Group should give this proposal further consideration and also obtain the views of the three faculties.

2. The Tuition Fees Task Group had considered the financial support that was offered to home postgraduate taught (PGT) students and had established that 50% of PGT income was paid as fee reductions. It was suggested that more should be done to publicise the fee reductions that were available. The group had also considered the possibility of increasing the discount for Newcastle graduates to 20% and recommended this approach.

3. The group had considered the implications of the PGT fee for programmes where masters students studied alongside students on the final year of an undergraduate masters programme. Were a fee of £5,500 to be implemented for such programmes, there would be a significant imbalance in the fees paid by the two groups, but this would not occur until 2015/16 when the final year undergraduate students would be paying £9,000. Unlike PGT students, the undergraduate students would have access to student loans and would not be required to pay the fee upfront which could negate some of the impact of having to pay a higher fee.

4. The Tuition Fee Task Group proposed that a minimum fee of £5,500 should be introduced for PGT home students from September 2012. This fee would be subject to review in subsequent years and schools and faculties would retain the ability to charge premium fees where necessary, subject to the approval of the Student Finance Committee. The three faculties had expressed support for this proposal.

5. It was suggested that for the purpose of the alumni discount it would be necessary to clarify which completed undergraduate courses would entitle graduates to a 20% reduction on a postgraduate course.

6. Information on fee levels for 2012 should be publicised as early as possible to assist current undergraduates with their future plans. It was also considered helpful for sponsors if indicative fees for future years could be provided.

Resolved that recommendations 1-5 in Document F be approved for submission to Council.

91. PROJECT 2012

Received:

(i) 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.]

(ii) An extract from the draft Council Minutes of 6 June 2011 on Council’s discussion of this item.
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that Document G provided limited details of the improvements that would be made to the estate as part of the project. This information had been included in the budget paper that had been presented to Council and it was agreed that it would be made available to Senate at a future meeting.
92. **NEWCASTLE INTO LONDON**

‘Commercial in confidence’ minute, filed in the Minute Book.

93. **EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY**

Received:

(i) A report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

(ii) An extract from the draft Council Minutes of 6 June 2011 on Council’s discussion of this item.

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

Noted that:

1. Where management was seen to have taken action in response to the results from previous surveys there was evidence to suggest that this led to more positive responses to future surveys. For this reason Heads of Units had been encouraged to develop action plans at unit level. There were also a number of actions that would be taken at University level. Examples of unit action plans could be made available to members of Senate on request.

2. In terms of the number of staff reporting experience of stress, a number of ‘hot spots’ had been identified across the University. Further analysis of the responses was to be undertaken to identify possible causes and solutions.

3. Work would be done to improve the flow of information across the University and feedback on the actions taken would be requested.

4. A number of units intended to re-launch the PDR process with a view to increasing participation. A new facility was now available in SAP to allow PDR completion to be recorded and reported on.

5. The Equality and Diversity Team was investigating the higher than average scores for discrimination in a number of schools. It was noted that this could include the perception of being discriminated against because of job level or staff category.

6. The University had benchmarked its results against a number of other comparable universities. Where results were compared with those from previous surveys, workload and bureaucracy and coping with change had been identified as two areas which had received a higher number of negative responses.

94. **BUDGET**

Reported that one of the recommendations of the previous Working Group on Governance, which was 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. The budget for 2011/12 included a reduction in the HEFCE grant of 7.8% in cash terms which represented a 12% reduction in real terms. 2011/12 would be the first year in which income from student fees would exceed the income received from the funding council.

2. The budget for ‘other operating expenses’ in 2011/12 would increase by 6.1% which included the additional funding to be provided for Project 2012.

3. The impact of the University’s efficiency activities would begin to be witnessed in 2011/12. Significant efficiencies had been achieved in the Professional Support Services and the Registrar and his support team should be congratulated on this.

4. Staff costs had been maintained at 53.3% and 52.9% of income in 2009/10 and 2010/11 respectively. This was considered to be a good short-term position and as a result of this approach the University had not been required to implement cost-cutting measures. It was expected that spending on staff as a percentage of income would increase to 54.5% in 2011/12 which reflected the continued investment in the student experience.

5. The proportion of the student population that was postgraduate was expected to reach 30% in 2011/12 and the proportion of international students was expected to exceed 20% which showed that the University was achieving its strategic objectives.

6. All three faculties had achieved a surplus for the third year running and all academic units within SAgE were now achieving surpluses. In future, all academic units would be expected to grow non-core income. It was noted that 1.5% of the University’s income now came from students taught overseas.

7. A slow recovery had been witnessed in the number of home PGR students which was welcomed since PGR students provided a source of talent for the University’s future academic base.

8. Restructures had taken place within ISS and the Business Development Directorate, which was to be relaunched as Research and Enterprise Services, which had helped to generate efficiencies.

9. Research Councils UK had recently published its response to the Wakeham Review. One outcome from this was the establishment of efficiency groupings. The University had worked to improve its research process efficiency which had resulted in it being placed in the most efficient group.

95. CO-OPTED MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE

Reported that Senate, at its meeting on 19 June 2007, had resolved that from 2007-08 only professors should be eligible to be elected in the professorial constituency of Senate and that the Librarian and holders of other posts whose remit was essential for the successful academic work of the University (who had previously been specified by Senate as being equivalent to professors for this purpose), and who were not already included in the Senate electorate, should be considered by Senate as potential candidates for co-option as members of Senate.

[The Senate electorate comprised the academic staff of the University.]
Considered whether to co-opt any person whose remit was essential for the successful academic work of the University, who was not already included in the Senate electorate, as a member of Senate.

[The maximum number of co-opted members was three. Ms Jacqui Henderson and Mr Wayne Connolly were already members in this category.]

Resolved that members of Senate should submit any suggestions for co-opted membership of Senate to the Vice-Chancellor.

96. 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 O. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

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

Received a report from the meetings of UTLSEC held on 13 April and 25 May 2011.

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

98. MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE

Reported that the following had been appointed Sabbatical Officers of the Students’ Union for 2011-12 and would be members of Senate for the same period:

President Ms Laura Perry
Education Officer Mr Liam Dale
Welfare and Equality Officer Ms Katy Hargreaves

99. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES

Considered a report containing recommendations for the appointment/re-appointment of Chairs and members of University committees.

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

Resolved that the recommendations in Document Q be approved.

100. APPOINTMENTS TO CHAIRS AND READERSHIPS

Received a report from Executive Board on appointments to Chairs and Readerships.

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

101. CONGREGATION CEREMONIES

Reported that:

(a) Congregation ceremonies would be held on 12, 13 and 14 December 2011 in the King’s Hall, Armstrong Building.

(b) Congregation ceremonies following the end of the Summer Term 2012 would be held on:
102. 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 S. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

RESERVED BUSINESS

103. REPORT FROM THE SAgE FACULTY APPOINTMENT BOARD

Considered a report from the SAgE Faculty Appointment Board.

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

Resolved that the recommendation in Document M be approved, subject to the agreement of Council.

[Note: The Chair of Council, acting in accordance with agreed procedures, had subsequently approved the recommendation on behalf of Council.]

104. REPORT FROM FACULTY PROMOTIONS COMMITTEES

Considered a consolidated report from Faculty Promotions Committees.

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

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

[Note: The Chair of Council, acting in accordance with agreed procedures, had subsequently approved the recommendations on behalf of Council.]

105. 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 proposals from the Vice-Chancellor, following consultation with the faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on the following from 1 October 2011:

Professor A R Appleyard
Professor M J Downie
Professor P N Jones
Professor S K Shrivastava