NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

15 January 2013

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Chris Day, Professor Charles Harvey, Professor Steve Homans, Professor Tony Stevenson and Professor Nick Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor Ashley Adamson, Ms Eve Berwin (student member), Dr Heather Brown, Dr Tim Cheek, Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Professor Peter Clarke, Mr Wayne Connolly, Dr Joanna Elson, Dr Catherine Exley, Mr Robert Hull (lay member of Council), Ms Esta Innes (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students’ Union), Professor Julia Newton, Dr Ole Pedersen, Ms Laura Perry (President, Students’ Union), Professor Paul Seedhouse, Ms Rachael Thornton (Education Officer, Students’ Union), Mr Steve Williams, Dr Tony Young.

In attendance: Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Mrs Veryan Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources), Mrs Jeannette Strachan (Academic Registrar) and Mrs Lizzie Taylor (Executive Officer (Governance)).

Apologies: Dr Debbie Bevitt, Professor Steve Clifford, Dr Hugh Dauncey, Dr Alton Horsfall, and Professor Martha Young-Scholten

Mr Simon Gerry, Chief Executive of the Students’ Union attended for item 41.

Professor Day, Professor Harvey and Professor Wright were not present for item 52.

M I N U T E S

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

35. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 6 November 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed.

36. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

(ii) Honorary Degrees [Minute 27, 06.11.12]

Received an oral report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

Noted that:
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1. The four nominees approved at the meeting of Senate on 6 November 2012 have been contacted and invited to accept an honorary degree. Three of the nominees have accepted and a reply is awaited from the fourth.

2. The three honorary degrees that have been accepted so far will be awarded as part of the July 2013 Congregation ceremonies. In addition two other nominees, Dorothy Bishop and Martha Nussbaum, who deferred their honorary degrees from July 2012, have opted to receive their awards in July 2013.

3. The Honorary Degree Committee agreed that from July 2012, honorary degrees will be awarded on just one day so that, at the group dinner, all recipients will have received their awards. However, due to the availability of recipients and the fact that there are five (and possibly six recipients) this year, this will probably need to be extended to over two days.

4. The intention, as always, is to allocate the ceremonies by matching Honorary Graduates with related subject areas with a maximum of two honorary degrees awarded per ceremony.

(iii) ReCap [Minute 28, 06.11.12]

At its meeting on 6 November 2012, Senate resolved that a report on the proportion of students with access to ReCap and how this learning resource is used should be prepared and circulated to members of Senate.

Received a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching.

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

Noted that:

1. The report shows that 30% of timetabled lectures have been recorded since August 2012. One of the limitations to further expansion in the use of ReCap is that not all venues have the facility installed. Plans are in place to enable 40 more venues in 2013/14.

2. Usage across the academic units varies considerably. 15 units use the facility on an opt-out basis whereby all teaching in enabled venues is scheduled to be recorded and staff need to un-book a lecture slot if they do not want to be recorded.

37. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor's report.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. 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. **UKBA and student attendance monitoring**

The Registrar, the Academic Registrar, the Head of Student Progress and the Education Officer, Students’ Union met with UKBA officers in Sheffield on 17 December. Discussions focussed on a number of compliance areas including the English language requirements for students in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and Mauritius and the attendance monitoring arrangements for non-EU students.

On English language requirements, UKBA officers noted that the policy is in the process of being reviewed but would take some time to change.

With regards to attendance monitoring, the UKBA agreed that the University could move from two attendance checks per week to one, with immediate effect. Alternative methods of monitoring student attendance other than through weekly checks were discussed. The possibility of introducing a dashboard of student engagement which monitors interactions with Blackboard, ePortfolio and library usage together with a monthly attendance check with a designated individual or via small group teaching, was raised.

It was noted that student representatives would prefer to see an engagement monitoring system introduced rather than an attendance monitoring system.

UKBA is to conduct a visit to the University in February to discuss the proposal and this will be followed by a further visit to see the system in action.

3. **Newcastle City Council Budget Proposals 2013-16**

The £90m of budget cuts the City Council plans to make by 2016 has been increased to £100m. The Council has proposed to cut its entire budget for arts and cultural activities. This will have implications for the Great North Museum, Northern Stage and Seven Stories, three organisations with which the University has research and teaching links. The University has proposed, and the City Council has agreed, to use the savings arising from its Shared Services initiative towards mitigating the cuts.

4. **New Academic Activity**

The scoping exercise for new academic activity is underway. The report that will be produced as a result of this exercise is expected to be available before Easter.

5. **Drug Warning for Students**

Six people were taken to hospital recently after taking what was suspected to be a dangerous hallucinogenic drug called 2CB. Four of them are Newcastle University students. The University and the Students’ Union are taking step to raise awareness of this drug amongst the student community. An article written by Northumbria Police is to appear in a future edition of the Courier and messages have been put out via social media.

6. **NIReS Director Appointed**

A new Director for the Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability (NIReS) has been appointed. Professor Phil Taylor, who is currently Professor of Renewable Energy at Durham University, is expected to take up his post at the end of April. An announcement will be made in due course.
7. **Rankings and Reputation Special Interest Group**

   It is hoped that the first feedback from the Rankings and Reputation SIG will be available in time for the March meeting of Senate.

38. **NEW JOINT VENTURE WITH INTO**

   Received a proposal for a new joint venture with INTO, from Professor Ella Ritchie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of Executive Board.
   
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

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

39. **UNIVERSITY SPORTS CENTRE**

   Considered a proposal for an extension to the University Sports Centre from Professor Charles Harvey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor HaSS, on behalf of Executive Board.
   
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document E. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

   Noted that:

   1. The opportunity has arisen to expand the capacity of the University Sports Centre at the same time that the development of Richardson Road student accommodation is progressed.

   2. The University’s sport teams have achieved good results in recent years and an expansion in the facilities available is considered necessary in order to maintain this and to meet increasing demand from students.

   3. Council has granted approval to instruct architects to progress to RIBA Stage D design for the extension of the Sports Centre at the same time as they produce a Stage D design for the replacement of student residential accommodation at Richardson Road.

   4. The Athletics Union Officer was not consulted when the document proposing the Sports Centre expansion was prepared but it was noted that the student body was supportive of the proposal. The Athletics Union Officer would like to be involved in the consultations over the proposed design for the extension.

   5. There is considered to be an opportunity for the University and the Centre for Physical Recreation and Sport (CPRS) to work more closely with the Students Union, of which the Athletics Union is part, in relation to sports activities.

40. **APPLICATION STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2013**

   Considered two reports from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on the current position regarding undergraduate and postgraduate applications for 2013, on behalf of Executive Board.
   
   [Tabled at the meeting as Documents F1 and F2. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

   Noted that:

   1. Application statistics from UCAS as at 14 January 2013 show that applications to Newcastle are up by 9.5% on 2012 whilst those for the University’s main competitors and
for the country as a whole are down (by 1.2% and 5.2% respectively). The University now needs to focus on converting the increased number of applications into increased registrations.

2. Across the 23 subject groups which the University offers, only 5 have seen a decline in applications, compared with 23 out of 26 subject groups nationally.

3. The School of Marine Science and Technology is the main area of concern as, overall, it has seen a decline of 12%. Particularly focussed efforts are being made to encourage conversions in this school.

4. An increased number of offers have been made compared to 2012. All cases where selectors have wished to reject applicants who would not take a place from the core quota are being considered by senior staff.

5. In terms of postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students, applications have increased across the three faculties when compared to the position on 1 January 2012. Both offers and accepted offers are also up on the same point in the previous year. Unlike undergraduate applicants, postgraduate applicants are not limited in the number of institutions to which they can apply and there is no limit on the number of offers they can accept. There is, therefore, a high rate of attrition between the number of postgraduate offers made and the number of students who actually register. It was noted that on some courses, the introduction of deposits has helped to reduce attrition rates.

6. Document F2 details the activities the University is undertaking to maximise conversion rates. The University is making offers to as many students as possible. Efforts are being made to build relationships with applicants via messages sent centrally and also via tailored messages sent by individual academic units.

7. The importance of providing high quality Post Application Open Days was emphasised. Where possible, alternative interactions are provided to students who are unable to attend the open days. The importance of appropriate follow-up after an open day was noted.

8. The increase in undergraduate applications to the Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials subject group was considered to be particularly notable at 67%. This school has performed well in the National Student Survey (NSS) in recent years and NSS results are becoming increasingly important for informing student choices.

9. Customer Relationship Management interactions are kept under review to ensure the University achieves an appropriate balance and does not bombard applicants with unwanted messages.

41. STUDENTS’ UNION IMPACT REPORT 2011-12

Received the Students’ Union Impact Report 2011-12 and a presentation from the President, Ms Laura Perry and Mr Simon Gerry, Chief Executive of the Students’ Union.

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

Resolved that Ms Perry and Mr Gerry be thanked for their informative presentation.

42. PROJECT 2012

Considered the final report on Project 2012 from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

1. In terms of the Teaching and Learning aspects of Project 2012, all areas which were mandated externally for students entering Higher Education under the new fee regime have been delivered upon. A number of other aspects of the Project will continue into 2013 as they have a longer timescale for their delivery.

2. As noted in a recent report to Audit Committee, Senate has ultimate responsibility for the University’s submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

43. INTO ANNUAL REPORT

Received the INTO Annual 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.]

44. ANNUAL REPORT FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE

Received the Annual Report from Ethics Committee for 2011-12 from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources, which has been endorsed by Executive Board.

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

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

Received a report from the meetings of ULTSEC held on 15 November and 13 December 2012.

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

46. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY (PROFILE AND ANNUAL REVIEW 2013)

Received the annual report of the University (Profile and Annual Review 2013).

[Tabled at the meeting. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

47. ANNUAL REPORT FROM PUBLIC LECTURES COMMITTEE

Received the annual report from Public Lectures Committee.

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

48. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY REGULATIONS

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

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

Resolved that the revised Delegation of Authority Regulations be approved.
49. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Received a report from Professor Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources, on behalf of Executive Board, including progress reports and KPIs for the following:

(i) Internationalisation Strategy: KPIs
(ii) Engagement Strategy: KPIs
(iii) Finance Strategy: progress report and KPIs

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

50. 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 Q. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
RESERVED BUSINESS

51. 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 relevant faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on Professor Jim Edwardson from 1 January 2013.

52. RE-APPOINTMENT OF PRO-VICE-CHANCELLORS

Reported that Senate Standing Order X stated that ‘The Vice-Chancellor may recommend to Senate and Council the re-appointment of an existing Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the period of the re-appointment.’

Considered recommendations in a paper from the Vice-Chancellor.

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

Resolved that the recommendations in Document L be approved.