NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

24 April 2012

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor), Professor Steve Homans, Professor Tony Stevenson and Professor Nick Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor Ashley Adamson, Professor Simi Ali, Dr Peter Andras, Dr Debbie Bevitt, Professor Alan Boddy, Professor Ian Clarke, Mr Wayne Connolly, Dr Catherine Exley, Ms Jacqui Henderson, Dr Alton Horsfall, Professor John Kirby, Professor David Parker, Professor Nick Reynolds, Professor Chris Rodgers, Dr Candy Rowe, 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 Veryan Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources), and Mrs Sam Taylor (Administrative Officer).

M I N U T E S

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Vice-Chancellor declared an interest as the Co-Chair of the Equality Challenge Unit (Minute 85).

82. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 28 February 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed.

83. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

84. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report. [Circulated with the agenda as Document B. 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) Viscount Ridley

Senate received a report on the death of Viscount Ridley, former Chancellor of the University from 1989 to 31 December 1998.
Senate, 24 April 2012

Resolved that Senate record its gratitude for the service of Viscount Ridley as a former Chancellor of the University, and its deep regret and sympathy for the relatives concerned.

(iii) Undergraduate recruitment for September 2012

Received an oral update from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

Received the summary UCAS information report dated 16 April 2012.

[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that although there remained a good deal of uncertainty following the introduction of the AAB+ system, it appeared that the University would make its overall student numbers but there would be some shortfall in some subject areas.

Resolved that Senate will receive an updated report at its next meeting.

(iv) HEFCE grant allocation for 2012/13

Received an oral update from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance, on behalf of Executive Board.

After noting that:

(a) The net impact on teaching funding was a year on year reduction of 19.6% from £60.3m to £48.5m. This was £0.6m better than the five year forecast approved by Council at its meeting on 24 October 2011.

(b) The net impact on research funding was a year on year increase of 0.6% from £34.6m to £34.8m. This was exactly in line with the five year forecast approved by Council at its meeting on 24 October 2011.

(c) Announcements to date are broadly in line with expectations and slightly better than the October 2011 forecast. The funding made available for PGT and Erasmus was a welcome recognition of the significant risks in those areas. The withdrawal of QR funding for 2-star research was not a surprise and would be taken into account in the 2012/13 budget build for the University.

(v) Expansion of the Russell Group

The Russell Group board had invited four more members to join the group all of whom have accepted; Durham, Exeter, Queen Mary and York universities.

(vi) Late News

Canoe Club

Congratulations to the Newcastle University Canoe Club who were crowned British Universities & College Sport (BUCS) White Water Racing Canoe Champions gaining 159 BUCS points after an outstanding team effort in which the club achieved 11 top 3 finishes and 24 top 10 finishes.

Boat Club
Congratulations to the Boat Club, who gained 36 BUCS points and 6 medals at the British Universities & College Sport (BUCS) Small Boats Head in October 2011. NUBC then finished top of the medal table with 9 medals and 100 BUCS points (4 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze) at the BUCS Head in February 2012. This was followed up with a 7th place finish for the Men’s 1st VIII and 12th place for the Women’s VIII in the Head of the River Races on the Thames in March 2012. These are the highest ever finishes for the NUBC crews at this event.

DriveLAB

There had been widespread coverage over recent days for our work in the DriveLAB involving some of our older volunteers working with the transport team to find ways of helping people drive safely for longer. Working with the press office, the team appeared live on national BBC Breakfast, Radio 4 Today programme, and BBC World Service, were featured in most UK national and regional newspapers including the Independent and Telegraph and in appeared media around the world such as the Times of India, the Globe and Mail, in Canada, the Washington Post and the French Tribune.

As a result, research lead Professor Phil Blythe had been approached by Roger Ramsden, Chief Executive of Saga Services Ltd to discuss how some of the research results could be taken forward in a practical or indeed a commercial manner.

(vii) Early warnings

A recent report in the Times newspaper featured a group of 16 first year students, studying either history or politics from 11 different universities (including Newcastle University), eight of which were Russell Group universities. The report focussed on student value for money for the tuition received.

It is imperative that Newcastle University demonstrates consistency and good value for money in the delivery of Teaching and Learning, including contact time, assessment turnaround times, and class sizes.

85. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK - CODE OF PRACTICE AND UCU COMMENTS

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

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

Received a report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. The Code of Practice document had been developed based on the fair and transparent selection of staff and to ensure these principles were adopted at each stage of the process when preparing REF submissions.

2. The Code of Practice had been developed by the REF Steering Group in conjunction with HR, and had also been considered by the following:
Senate, 24 April 2012

(i) URC/REF Steering Group meetings  
(ii) Staff Committee  
(iii) Diversity Committee  
(iv) UCU JNC meeting  
(v) Faculty meetings including Faculty Executive Boards, and Faculty Research Strategy Groups.

3. Comments received from UCU on the first draft of the REF Code of Practice had been considered and most of the comments raised had been included or adapted into the document.

4. Training would be given to all members of staff who would be involved with the decision-making process for the REF submission.

5. An amendment to the document would include clarification that the process of election for the REF would not, in itself, be used for promotional purposes, but to maximise the REF result.

Resolved that Senate approve the Research Excellence Framework Code of Practice for submission to HEFCE.

86. VISION 2021 UPDATE – PAPER VERSION

Received the draft version of the Vision 2021 update document.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document E. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The content of the document would still be subject to small editorial changes and a review of the images and photographs used would be undertaken.

2. Any further comments from members of Senate should be made to Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources.

Resolved that Senate approve the Vision 2021 Update.

87. PROJECT 2012 : SCORECARD

Received the March 2012 Project 2012 scorecard from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

88. JOINT MEETING WITH COUNCIL (MINUTE 65, 28.02.2012)

Received a report from Professor Ella Ritchie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Executive Board.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document G. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. The debate highlighted the crucial importance of a strategic approach to student recruitment, at a time when markets are both highly competitive and potentially volatile.
2. The key outcomes and recommendations from the meeting were considered to be appropriate and well thought through.

3. The following recommendations would be put into place to address the issues:

   (i) An Executive Board Working Group would be established, which was approved by Council at its meeting 26 March 2012.

   (ii) Make better use of Alumni to support the recruitment process.

   (iii) Comprehensive training and support would be provided for staff responsible for the delivery of student recruitment activity.

   (iv) The ‘PGT offer’ would be developed further to enhance the attractiveness of the provision.

   (v) The University would bid for research council Doctoral Training Centres (DTC) or equivalent, alone, or in collaboration with partner institutions, to enhance the quality of PGR students.

Resolved that the key outcomes and recommendations will form part of the annual review of the Teaching and Learning strategy and will be reported to a future meeting of Senate.

89. ANNUAL REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Received the annual report from University Research Committee for 2010-11.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Reported that the Working Group on Governance recommended that Executive Board should ensure that at least once a year Council and Senate receive overview reports on the key strategies within Vision 2021, in addition to the current reports on Finance.

After noting that:

1. The number of research grant applications had increased by 6% in 2010/11 compared to last year to 1487, and the value of applications had increased by 2%.

2. The number of grants awarded had increased by 35% with an increase in value of 14% to £92m. This value was the best ever achieved by the University and Senate wished to record its congratulations on this success.

3. Awards reported by the Research Councils, and analysed by the Times Higher Education had placed Newcastle University in 13th position by value of new awards.

4. The development of an integrated end to end research project process, which included the advancement of the MyProjects system, and a replacement to the current pFACT system, was now complete after a successful pilot period and full implementation would now be introduced.

5. Cultural changes in terms of data curation, storage and transparency would be an expectation from funders to ensure that the University had a provision for long-term storage of data and associated records. This would involve a significant proportion of funds from research grants.
6. There appeared to be increasing expectations researchers would make publicly available their research data and this could prove a major cultural change in some disciplines.

7. A review of the Impact Case Studies, as a REF component, would be necessary to gain clarification of the rules applied and support would be offered to units of assessment where necessary.

90. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE, INCLUDING PROPOSAL FOR DISESTABLISHMENT OF ACADEMIC AUDIT COMMITTEE

Considered a report from the meeting of UTLSEC on 7 March 2012.

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

Noted that Internal Audit had undertaken a review of the four week turnaround commitment on student assessed work process. Its findings had demonstrated that the University had weak systems to monitor this commitment, and there were inconsistencies within the process.

Resolved that:

(a) An action plan from UTLSEC following the report from Internal Audit will be presented to Senate at its meeting 12 June 2012.

(b) Senate approve the disestablishment of Academic Audit Committee with immediate effect.

91. BUSINESS CASE : MClinRes MALAYSIA

Considered the Business Case: MClinRes Malaysia which had been endorsed by Executive Board

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

Resolved that Senate approve the proposal to offer the Masters in Clinical Research (MClinRes) in Malaysia at the NUMed Campus, subject to the agreement of Council.

92. NORTHUMBRIAN UNIVERSITIES MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (NUMEC)

Considered the amendment to the constitution of NUMEC, subject to the approval of Durham University:

Delete: ‘A Pro-Chair appointed jointly by the Senates of the Universities of Newcastle and Durham in consultation with NUMEC’.

Resolved that Senate approve the amendment to the constitution of NUMEC with immediate effect, subject to the approval of Durham University.

93. SENATE DINNER

Reported that the Senate Dinner would be held at 7 for 7.30 pm on Tuesday 6 November 2012.
94. **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 26 March 2012, approved one new policy, as detailed below:

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

Estate Biodiversity Policy (new). The policy is available on the University’s website at: [https://my.ncl.ac.uk/staff/policies/](https://my.ncl.ac.uk/staff/policies/)

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