NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

2 March 2010

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor C Harvey, Professor O R Hinton, Professor E Ritchie, Professor A C Stevenson, Professor N G Wright and Professor P L Younger (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr S Ali, Dr P E Andras, Dr J C Appleby, Dr D R Bell, 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, Ms E Collingham (student member), Mr W Connolly, Professor E G N Cross, Professor D Ford, Ms A Georgiou (President, Union Society), 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, Professor D Parker, Professor N J Reynolds, Ms S M Robson, Professor D J Roddy, Professor A Tanaka, Professor P Watson and Dr K Wolff.

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

Professor V G Bruce was not in attendance for item 53.
Ms M E Donnelly (Head of Student Progress Service) attended for item 49.

M I N U T E S

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Dr John Appleby declared an interest in relation to item 48 as he was a member of the UCU and was involved in the discussion with management regarding the amendments to the Statutes.

Dr John Appleby also declared an interest in relation to item 50 as he was a governor of All Saints College.

45. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 12 January 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed.

46. 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 (Minute 36, 12.1.2010)

Reported that Mr Sean Scully had accepted the University's invitation to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters at the Congregation Ceremony to be held on 16 April 2010.
(iii) Review of University Governance (Minute 31, 12.1.2010)

Reported that the Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of Senate, had appointed Professor Vicki Bruce and Professor Charles Harvey as Senate’s representatives on the working group set up to conduct a review of the University’s governance arrangements. The Vice-Chancellor thanked those members of Senate who had volunteered to participate.

47. 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) University’s performance

Reported that the Chairman of Council, on behalf of Council, had formally congratulated the University and the academic community on its achievements during the past academic year which had seen it placed eighth in the country in terms of the income awarded by the UK Research Councils and second only to Imperial College for the value of award per FTE academic member of staff.

(iii) Stan Calvert Cup

The University has succeeded in winning the Calvert Cup against Northumbria University for the third year in succession. The event included 22 sports with the achievements of the Netball teams being particularly noteworthy. Senate congratulated the University’s sports teams on this achievement.

(iv) Higher Education mentoring champion

The Vice-Chancellor had been appointed as the Higher Education mentoring champion by Iain Wright, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for 14-19 Reform and Apprenticeships. Members of Senate were invited to submit ideas for mentoring opportunities to the Vice-Chancellor.

48. UNIVERSITY STATUTES

Received:

(i) An explanatory paper on the proposed Statute changes.

(ii) A paper from UCU.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Documents E & F. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

(iii) Comments from Academic Board on the proposed Statute changes.

[Circulated to members by email. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
Considered proposed changes to the University Statutes.
[Circulated with the Agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. Senate would be asked to consider and approve the proposed changes to the Statutes at
   its meeting on 15 June. However, it was being given the opportunity to discuss the
   proposed changes now, at this early stage in the process.

2. During discussions with the UCU, two main areas of concern had been identified with
   regards to the proposed changes, the changes to the size and constitution of Senate and
   the proposed amendments to Statue 57, which governed the discipline and dismissal of
   academic staff.

3. The proposed changes to the membership of Senate had been recommended by the
   Working Group on the Effectiveness of Senate and approved by Senate in 2006. As
   members of Senate were aware, a new review of the effectiveness of governance
   arrangements was underway. It was likely that the size and membership of the governing
   bodies would be reconsidered during this review.

4. Statute 57, otherwise known as the Model Statute, had been introduced during the late
   1980s when the government abolished academic tenure in British universities allowing
   institutions to remove staff for financial reasons as well as for ‘good cause’. They set out
   the procedures that governed the dismissal, discipline, capability, grievance and
   redundancy of academic staff. The House of Lords had required the government to add
   the reference to academic freedom in the preamble. The statutes proved complicated to
   enforce and did not meet current employment legislation or best practice.

5. Members of Senate were informed that if the proposed amendments were to be approved,
   the current procedures for dismissal, discipline, capability, grievance and redundancy of
   academic staff, as detailed under Statute 57, would apply until there had been a thorough
   process of consultation with UCU and any changes approved by Council.

6. The UCU’s view was that the membership of Senate should include a majority of elected
   members; this was considered to be the best arrangement to ensure that there was no in-
   built management majority and also to protect the position of academic staff. It was
   suggested that, if this idea was supported, consideration could be given to writing a
   statement to this effect into the Statutes to ensure this position was not undermined by
   future changes in the number of Pro-Vice-Chancellors and other non-elected members.

7. The University management did not have a strong view on the constitution of Senate and
   had agreed that it should be determined by Senate itself. If the members currently
   appointed by each faculty were also to be elected, this would lead to a majority of elected
   members, as requested by UCU. It was suggested the equal balance of professorial to
   non-professorial members of staff should be retained for elected members.

8. The UCU welcomed the revised wording to the Statute concerning the appointment of
   Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

9. Clarification was requested concerning the student representatives on Senate and Council
   (as noted under new Statutes 19 and 26(1)(b)).

10. Regarding the proposed changes to Statute 57, the UCU had welcomed the changes
    which had been made to the proposed revisions concerning academic freedom since
    discussions had commenced. References to academic freedom had been added to new
Statutes 3(4) and 23(9) and the reference contained within the new version of the Model Statute had been strengthened. Under Statute 23(9) the framework of conditions of employment had been linked to academic freedom at the UCU’s request. It was accepted that the notion of academic freedom would always remain a matter of interpretation.

11. It was the UCU’s position that the protection afforded by the current wording of the Model Statute should be retained as it was considered that local procedures could be subject to abuse by a future, less benign management. It was considered that it would be helpful for members of Senate to be presented with the local procedures that would replace the dismissal, discipline, capability, grievance and redundancy procedures as stated in Statute 57 so they were aware of what was intended to replace the Statute.

12. Some staff had expressed concern that the new procedures could allow the University to close a department without a discussion taking place at Senate.

Resolved that the proposed changes to the Statutes, including the changes to the Model Statute, be supported in principle subject to further consideration of a number of detailed points made during the meeting and further discussions with UCU, with a view to bringing a final version of the proposed changes to the meeting of Senate in June.

49. TIMETABLING

Considered a report from Professor Ella Ritchie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning on behalf of Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. The University was reaching a crisis point in relation to its timetable. It had not been possible to timetable over 1000 first choice optional modules during the current academic year and this had impacted on the student experience. Whilst the University acknowledged the importance of providing students with a choice, in many cases students were being offered with a false choice as it was not possible to realise the combination of modules they requested.

2. A set of principles and action points had been prepared to address the problem. An implementation plan had been discussed at UTLC.

3. For first year students in particular, a reduction in the options available was considered to be beneficial. In many cases the vast array of choices available could lead to confusion and limiting choice could lead to students selecting more suitable options.

4. The principle that Wednesday afternoons should continue to be kept free for extra-curricular activities was welcomed, as was the aim of providing the timetable as early as possible in the preceding year. Additional suggested principles included the provision of a lunch hour and a maximum limit on the number of consecutive teaching hours.

5. The principle that the needs of a minority of students should not drive the timetable was welcomed.

6. Where it was agreed to offer only a small number of pathways in a particular subject, further information was requested regarding the implications for degree programme regulations as it could be necessary to rewrite them to reflect the reduction in choice. Consideration was being given to the resource provision in QuiLT to ensure it was able to assist academic units with the potential implications of the proposed action plan.
7. The availability of modules such as Students into Schools and those which involved community service could significantly increase the numbers of pathways available. These options complicated the scheduling of modules as they required students to be away from the campus for a full morning or afternoon or, in some cases, for a full day. If these module choices were permitted, the placement and student would need to negotiate a suitable pattern of attendance, taking into account the student's other commitments.

8. Reducing module choices for students could bring additional benefits. An example was given where students had been provided with a wider choice of modules in order to reduce class sizes but this had led to problems for some students due to conflicting deadlines.

Resolved that Senate approve the principles and actions set out in Document G.

50. ALL SAINTS CHALLENGE TRUST

Considered a report from Professor Ella Ritchie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning on behalf of Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. The government had introduced the concept of National Challenge Trust Schools with the aim of improving standards at under-performing schools. The University had been approached by Alasdair Smith, an advisor to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and had been asked to support All Saints College (ASC) becoming a National Challenge Trust School.

2. The University's relationship with ASC had existed since the College's formation in 2002 when the University had agreed to enter into a governance partnership with the City Council and the Church of England. Representatives from the University were included on the College's governing body.

3. Participation in the National Challenge Trust initiative would require a change to the legal structure of the College. The University as lead partner, together with the City Council, the Church of England, Newcastle College and Kenton and Sacred Heart High School would be required to form a charitable trust.

4. Staff within the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences (ECLS) had been consulted and were supportive of the proposal. ECLS was cautiously optimistic about the potential of the relationship with a number of staff from the College being identified as potential candidates for the Master of Education. The College had also expressed an interest in the University's leadership development programmes.

5. The proposal was considered to present a good opportunity for the University to demonstrate its willingness to engage with the local community which would be viewed favourably by the City Council, the Diocese and the DCFS.

Resolved that the proposal that the University should participate in the National Challenge Trust initiative at All Saints College be approved, subject to the agreement of Council.
51. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY**

Considered the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy that would be submitted to Council for approval at its meeting on 29 March 2010.

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

After noting that:

1. The Strategy sought to avoid confusion between the environmental sustainability of the University’s infrastructure and its sustainability research. It was suggested that the title of the document should be changed to the ‘Strategy for Environmental Sustainability in Operations’ to reflect this.

2. The University had requested the views of students and, once received, their comments would be incorporated.

3. It was noted that business travel was not currently included as part of the University’s carbon footprint but it would be measured in future. It was important to raise awareness of this issue with staff and to encourage changes in behaviour.

4. It was suggested that the University should seek to engage with the City Council to improve the continuity of cycle routes. The University operated a Bicycle Users Group and it was suggested that this group should be asked to liaise with the City Council to request improvements.

5. It was important to understand how the University’s heating and lighting systems worked together as an experiment elsewhere to reduce lighting levels in one building had led to an increased need for heating. Sub-meters were to be installed in most buildings across campus to improve the measurement of energy needs.

6. The City Council was keen to take advantage of the expertise the University could offer to improve the sustainability of the city. It was important for the University to be seen to be putting its research into practice before seeking to advise others.

Resolved that Senate endorse the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy for submission to Council.

52. **SENATE STANDING ORDERS**

Considered the following amendment to Senate Standing Order XI regarding the appointment of Public Orators, indicated by bold italic and strikethrough:

The Public Orators and the Public Orator designate (when such appointment is required) shall be appointed by Senate after considering a report of a Committee. One of the Public Orators shall be designated as the Senior Public Orator who shall have responsibility for allocating the duties across the year. The Public Orators and Public Orator designate shall hold office for three years.

Resolved that the above amendment to Senate Standing Order XI be approved.

53. **PUBLIC ORATORS** (Minute 35, 12.1.2010)

Considered a recommendation from Executive Board that Dr Helen Berry and Professor Vicki Bruce be appointed as Public Orators from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2013.
Resolved that:

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

(ii) Dr Helen Berry and Professor Vicki Bruce be appointed as Public Orators from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2013.

54. GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC ESTATE

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 8 February 2010, had endorsed the guidelines and direction of travel for the development of the academic estate in a report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board and Estate Committee.

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

Noted that:

1. The principle had been established that the estate strategy should be derived from the academic strategy.

2. Point (v) on page 2 of Document K stated that it was necessary to determine the future academic direction of Computing Science in order to decide whether or not it should be co-located with Mathematics and Statistics in the Herschel Building. It was noted that the main reason for the re-location of Computing Science was need to provide better accommodation and to enable maintenance work to take place in Claremont Tower.

3. It had been proposed that the former Bishop’s residence at the end of Kensington Terrace could be converted into apartments for visiting staff.

4. It would be useful for the University to establish a minimal acceptable standard for accommodation and to prepare a policy detailing what action would be taken if teaching or living accommodation fell below this standard.

5. The importance of co-ordination when planning estate developments was emphasised. The University should take care to ensure that the correct groups were consulted whenever capital developments were being considered.

55. REPORT FROM REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE

Received an Annual Report from Redundancy Committee.

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

Senate recorded its thanks to members of Redundancy Committee for their work.

56. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Considered a report from the meeting of UTLC held on 27 January 2010.

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

UTLC membership and terms of reference

Resolved that the proposed amendments to the membership and terms of reference of UTLC as set out in Appendix I to Document M be approved.
Senate noted the remaining items in the report.

57. **SENATE’S DELEGATION OF POWERS AND AUTHORITY**

Considered a proposed amendment to Senate’s delegation of powers and authority document, as follows:

delete: Approval of changes to University regulations and associated procedures deemed to be minor that raise no significant issues of academic policy. (to UTLC)

substitute: Approval of changes to University regulations and associated procedures that raise no substantive issues of academic precedent or principle. (to UTLC)

Resolved that the above amendment be approved.

58. **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 N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

59. **RIDDLE MEMORIAL LECTURES COMMITTEE**

Considered a recommendation that the Rev Catherine Lack be appointed as a member of the Riddell Memorial Lectures Committee with immediate effect to 31 July 2011, in place of Professor J S Hillier.

Resolved that the above recommendation be approved.

60. **DATES OF MEETINGS 2010-11**

Reported that Senate would meet at 2 pm on the following dates in 2010-11:

- 5 October 2010
- 9 November 2010
- 11 January 2011
- 1 March 2011
- 19 April 2011
- 14 June 2011

61. **SENATE DINNER**

Reported that Senate Dinner would be held at 7 for 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 9 November 2010.

62. **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 O. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
RESERVED BUSINESS

63. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 31(4))

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 31(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 Professor Barbara Durkacz from 1 February 2010.