NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

2 October 2012

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), Dr Debbie Bevitt, Dr Heather Brown, Dr Tim Cheek, Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Professor Peter Clarke, Professor Steve Clifford, Mr Wayne Connolly, Dr Hugh Dauncey, Dr Joanna Elson, Dr Catherine Exley, Mr Robert Hull (lay member of Council), Dr Alton Horsfall, Ms Esta Innes (Welfare and Education Officer, Students' Union), Mr Luke Neal (student member), Professor Julia Newton, Dr Ole Pedersen, Ms Laura Perry (President, Students' Union), Professor Paul Seedhouse, Dr Neelam Srivastava, Ms Rachael Thornton (Education Officer, Students' Union), Mr Steve Williams, Dr Tony Young, Professor Martha Young-Scholten.

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

M I N U T E S

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

2. WELCOME

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the new members to their first meeting of Senate.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 12 June 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

(ii) Honorary Degrees: December 2012 (Minute 118, 12.06.12)

Reported that Shami Chakrabarti, W.G. (Garry) Runciman and Rakesh Mittal have accepted the University's invitation to be awarded the degree of DCL in celebration of the University's Social Renewal Societal Challenge theme, at a Congregation Ceremony to be held on 4 December 2012. Sunil Mittal has accepted but is unable to attend. The Honorary degree will be awarded in absentia and accepted on his behalf by Rakesh Mittal.
5. 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. Late News

(a) Comprehensive Spending Review

At its meeting on 12 June, the Vice-Chancellor advised Senate of the possibility of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) being brought forward which could lead to further financial cuts for the higher education sector. Recent developments suggest that there is unlikely to be a CSR in the short term.

(b) Promise Scholarships

The University has awarded 20 full-fee Promise Scholarships, worth £9,000 per year to students of high ability, from low income backgrounds and who have met specific criteria.

(c) Pay Bargaining

Discussions between the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and the trade unions ended without agreement in September. UCEA had made a final offer of 1% on all points on the common pay spine and a number of joint working proposals. The offer was rejected by the trade unions who had demanded an increase of 7% on all points, in addition to the ‘Living Wage’ and work on equal pay. The three HE trade unions, UCU, UNISON and Unite are balloting their members on strike action. These ballots commenced at various dates during weeks commencing 10 and 17 of September and will end between 2 and 10 October 2012. Further information is available on the HR web page:

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/about/news/item/national-pay-negotiations-trade-unions-ballot-their-members-on-industrial-action

(d) Loyola Agreement

The University has recently established a science-focused study abroad centre in conjunction with Loyola University, Maryland, USA. The centre’s science focus will strengthen Loyola’s existing humanities-based Newcastle programme, which began in 1997. Its aim is to attract more science students, both to Loyola and to the programme itself. Initially, the center, which has its administrative base in the International Office in King’s Gate, will accommodate more than 50 students. A launch event took place on 21 September to mark the centre’s official opening.
6. UNDERGRADUATE RECRUITMENT

(i) Undergraduate Admissions 2012 Entry

Received a summary report of undergraduate admissions for 2012 entry from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. 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.

(ii) Undergraduate Admissions and Target/Quota Management from 2013

Received a report outlining the principles underpinning the strategy for the management of Home Undergraduate admissions for 2013 entry from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

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7. STUDENT ATTENDANCE MONITORING

Considered a paper on the University’s arrangements for student attendance monitoring from Dr John Hogan, Registrar, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The attendance monitoring policy provided as an appendix to Document E was approved by ULTSEC in March 2012. It sets out the requirement to monitor the attendance of all students, both home and international. The monitoring of attendance of international students is now of critical importance due to requirements introduced by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) and in light of recent action taken against London Metropolitan University.

2. The University’s policy sets out the requirement for all taught students to be monitored for a minimum of two academic sessions per week during term time. It is acknowledged that this will lead to a significant increase in administration for some Schools and that there will be some practical difficulties to overcome, however, the University has no option but to comply with UKBA’s requirements. Failure to comply could result in the University losing its ‘Highly Trusted Sponsor’ status which would mean it could no longer recruit international students.

3. Document E sets out the interim procedures for attendance monitoring that are to be followed for the 2012-13 academic year. From 2013-14 onwards it is anticipated that a systems-based solution will be implemented.

4. Whilst the University is required to report to UKBA on the attendance of international students only, there are considered to be legitimate reasons for the student experience for all students to be treated equally. It is understood that the majority of Higher Education Institutions are following similar arrangements to those at Newcastle and maintaining the need for the equal treatment of students.
5. The monitoring of small groups is the preferred arrangement but the lack of small group teaching on some courses means that this will not always be possible. It was suggested that the volume of students on some courses would result in the new attendance monitoring procedures having a negative impact on the student experience and this should be balanced against the desire to treat all students equally.

6. The section of the policy which considers periods without structured classes, states that ‘check-in’ arrangements are required only for international students. It was considered that, in these circumstances, international and home students would not be treated equally. Furthermore, the policy states that ‘the greater need to react promptly to international student absence makes it reasonable to have signature lists that group international students separately’ and this arrangement could also lead to divisions between international and home students.

7. It was suggested that the University should be open about the pressure being put on international students and, instead, focus its attention on this group rather than on all students. In response to this it was argued that focusing attendance monitoring arrangements solely on international students could imply that the attendance of home student is not important, which is not the case. It was noted that the current version of the policy lacks a clear statement on the consequences of non-attendance by home students.

8. The email template provided in the appendix to the policy does not include a message of support or a suggestion as to where students can obtain assistance should they find themselves in difficulty and it was proposed that a reference to the Student Wellbeing Service should be added.

9. It was suggested that if students were to receive more frequent emails from the University, the impact of such emails could be lessened and they could become more inclined to ignore them. It was proposed that the first email regarding poor attendance could be sent from a student’s personal tutor who is more likely to be aware of an individual student’s situation.

10. The policy for student attendance monitoring arrangements states that it should be reviewed at intervals of approximately 3 years but it was proposed that reviews should take place more frequently.

11. Members of Senate were asked to emphasise the importance of the observance of the new policy amongst the wider University community and to make colleagues aware of the consequences of the University’s failure to comply.

12. The University is continuing to lobby the Government on its immigration policies via a number of routes and is making a number of strategic and technical arguments. The ultimate aim is to convince the Government that international students should be removed from immigration figures since the majority are temporary visitors to the UK who do not remain following completion of their studies.

Resolved that the wording of the email templates to be sent to students in the event of non-attendance should be discussed further with the Sabbatical Officers and the student representative.

8. **NEW STRATEGIES**

Received a presentation on the Engagement Strategy and Public Relations Strategy from Professor Ella Richie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Ms Abi Kelly, Director of Public Relations
on behalf of Executive Board. The strategies were presented to Senate for information following their approval by Council at its meeting on 10 September 2012.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents F & G. Copies of the documents and slides from the presentation filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Strategic Object 5 in the Engagement Strategy states that it is intended to ‘consolidate and sustain a number of key relationships and strategic partnerships, based on the principles of co-inquiry mutual benefit shared learning.’ The work of the Student Community Action Group (SCAN) is referred to in this section but it was proposed that this should be expanded further to include the whole of the Students’ Union.

2. The PR Strategy includes the aim of increasing the use of the website and social media in corporate positioning as one of its strategic objectives. This is an area where the Students’ Union demonstrates strong performance and there is scope for further coordination of activities in this area.

3. The risks associated with the use of social media were acknowledged but the University would not seek to restrict staff and students’ use of the medium since it is being increasingly used by journalists to highlight innovative research and publications. Guidelines are available on appropriate use and the PR team can provide training to staff, if desired.

Resolved that Senate endorse the Engagement Strategy and the Public Relations Strategy.

9. VISION 2021: INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND KPIS

(i) Draft Institutional Strategic Objectives and KPIs

Received a report on Vision 2021: Institutional Strategic Objectives and KPIs, outlining the new process for Council and including the specific KPI report for the Faculty of Medical Sciences as the first worked example, from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that the Institutional Strategic Objectives and KPIs document has been prepared at the request of Council, which is its main recipient but it is presented to Senate for information.

(ii) Faculty of Medical Sciences Key Performance Indicators

Received a PowerPoint Presentation from Professor Chris Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Faculty of Medical Sciences, accompanied by the relevant set of KPIs, reporting on progress against targets and associated risks.

[Copy of the slides filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that Professor Day be thanked for an informative presentation.

10. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY: 2012 RESULTS

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

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

1. The University has maintained its overall satisfaction rate at 89% for the second year running which places it in 14th position in its comparator group. This represents a decline from 10th place last year. The University is placed tenth when ranked alongside other Russell Group and 1994 Group institutions, a fall of one place from 2011.

2. It is important to note that in terms of overall satisfaction rates, only 3 percentage points separate the top 20 institutions.

3. Assessment and Feedback remains the lowest scoring area, although performance has been improving gradually over the years (from 52% in 2006 to 67% in 2012). Schools which have achieved a score of less than 60% on any aspect of Assessment and Feedback will be required to produce an action plan for this area, working in conjunction with its student body, by 30 November 2012.

4. Responses to the questions relating to Learning Resources were the areas where the most significant improvements were witnessed. The question concerning library resources and services saw the satisfaction response rate increase from 85% in 2011 to 90% in 2012. Access to IT saw an increase of 4% on last year’s score at 86%.

5. Satisfaction with the Students’ Union was a question posed for the first time. At 76%, the Students’ Union has performed well in comparison with the sector average of 66%. This result was achieved despite the student cohort surveyed having experienced a year during which the Students’ Union building was closed for refurbishment. The Students’ Union is hoping to improve on this score in future years.

11. PROJECT 2012 SCORECARD

Received the latest Project 2012 Scorecard 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.]

Noted that:

1. Project 2012 was designed to prepare the University for the new higher education environment that is expected to emerge following the increase in tuition fees and also for the Research Excellence Framework in 2014.

2. Assessment and Feedback is rated as amber on the scorecard due to the results from the National Student Survey (NSS).

3. Project 2012 will conclude at the end of the current calendar year.

12. REPORT FROM LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meetings of ULTSEC held on 18 July and 13 September 2012.

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

Noted that:

1. Following the disestablishment of the Student Opinion Steering Group, it is proposed that the terms of reference for ULTSEC should be amended to reflect the committee’s responsibility for representation of the student voice. Senate was requested to approve the following amendment to item 3(a)(i) of the terms of reference:
‘To act as a proactive and strategic body for all matters relating to learning, teaching and the student experience, including CPD, research degree provision, quality enhancement and the sharing of good practice, working with faculties, services and the Students’ Union as necessary and advising, as appropriate, Executive Board and Senate.’

2. In a change to the amendment noted under point 3(g) of the terms of reference attached as Appendix I, it was requested that Senate approve the following:

‘To act on recommendations from Academic Audit Committee that relate to learning, teaching and the student experience.’

Resolved that the above changes to the terms of reference of the University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee be approved.

13. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRES: APPROVALS

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

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

Resolved that Senate approve the establishment of two new University Research Centres, and the appointment of their Directors, as follows:

- The Mitochondrial Research Centre for a period of three years from 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2015, with Professor Doug Turnbull as Director for the same period.

- The E.G. West Centre for the Study of Market Solutions in Education for a period of two years from 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2014, with Professor James Tooley as Director.

14. SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Received a report from Professor Ella Richie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

An extract from the draft Council Minutes of 10 September 2012 on Council’s discussion of this item.

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

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15. SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS FOR 2012-13

Received the business schedule for meetings of Senate and Council in 2012-13. If members have any comments to make on the list of Senate items, or wish to submit any additional items, they are asked to write to Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
16. **MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE**

Reported that:

(a) The Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of Senate, has approved the appointment of Mr Wayne Connolly to continue as a co-opted member of Senate from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2015.

(b) Mr Luke Neal (BA Hons Politics and History, Stage 2) has been elected by the Students’ Union to serve on Senate for 2012-13.

(c) The Chair of Council has approved the appointment of Mr Robert Hull as Council’s representative on Senate from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

Received the membership of Senate for 2012-13.

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

17. **ANNUAL REPORT FROM GREAT NORTH MUSEUM BOARD**

Received the annual report from the Great North Museum Board

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

18. **DELEGATION OF POWERS AND AUTHORITY**

Received Senate’s delegation of powers and authority document.

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

19. **REPORTED BUSINESS**

(i) **Reported Business Paper**

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 T. Copy filed in the Minute Book. ]

(ii) **Deanships in the Faculty of Medical Sciences**

Noted that:

1. At its meeting on 25 September 2012, Executive Board received a proposal from the Faculty of Medical Sciences Executive Board for the amendment of the job description for the Dean of Clinical Medicine and the establishment of a new post of Dean of Translational Research. This proposal has arisen following the appointment of the current Dean of Clinical Medicine, Professor Alastair Burt, to the post of Dean of Medicine in Adelaide, and the recognition that the remit of the post has grown in recent years and now cannot be fulfilled adequately by one person.

2. Medical Sciences Faculty Executive Board agreed the proposal at its meeting on 19 September 2012. Executive Board agreed the proposal at its meeting on 25 September. The proposal was approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate on 28 September.
3. Job descriptions for the two posts are available on request from the Medical Sciences Faculty Office.

RESERVED BUSINESS

20. 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 the following the dates shown:

Professor David Parker, from 1 October 2012
Professor Elaine Perry, from 1 October 2012
Professor Tom Strachan, from 1 November 2012