NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

3 May 2016

Present: Professor Tony Stevenson (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, in the Chair), Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Chris Day, Professor Julie Sanders, Professor Nick Wright, Professor Phillip Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Mr Luke Allison (Welfare & Equality Officer, Students’ Union), Dr Phil Ansell, Dr John Appleby, Professor Paul Christensen, Mr Wayne Connolly, Professor Nicola Curtin, Mr Mike Davison, Dr Stuart Dawley, Mr Dominic Fearon, (President, Students’ Union), Dr Lindsey Ferrie, Dr Ruth Graham, Professor Nigel Harkness, Dr Joan Harvey, Professor Tom Joyce, Ms Abi Kelly, Dr Sara Maioli, Dr Lindsay Pennington, Mr Matthew Price (Education Officer, Students’ Union), Professor Klaus Schoefer and Dr Ruth Valentine.

In attendance: Mrs Lesley Braiden (Academic Registrar), Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Mrs Louise Edwards-Holland (Acting Director of Human Resources), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), and Mrs Lizzie Taylor (Executive Officer, Governance).

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Fitzgerald, Professor Neill Marshall and Mr Steve Williams.

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

71. MINUTES

(i) The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 8 March 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed.

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

(ii) The notes from the joint meeting of Council and Senate held on 11 April 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed.

[Circulated with a supplementary agenda as Document A.1. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

72. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

73. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

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

Noted:
1. Deaths

Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.

Senate was informed of the death of Lord Walton, former Dean of Medicine, on 21 April 2016. It was noted that Professor Nick Wright and Dr John Hogan would represent the University at Lord Walton's memorial service on Thursday 5 May.

*Resolved that Senate record its deep regret and sympathy for the relatives concerned.*

2. Durham University

At a recent meeting, Durham University’s Council had approved the move of two of its colleges and the Business School from its Stockton Campus. The future location of the School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health was yet to be determined and discussions were ongoing. The decision to move the School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health would have implications for the 200 medical students who undertook their first two years of study at Stockton before transferring to Newcastle to complete their studies. Senate would receive an update on any further developments at its next meeting.

3. Awards to Professor Harry Gilbert

The Vice-Chancellor’s business paper noted that Professor Harry Gilbert, Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences, had been awarded the Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences. In addition to this, it had been announced that he had been awarded the highly prestigious Fellowship of the Royal Society.

Senate recorded its congratulations to Professor Gilbert on these two significant awards.

4. QAA Higher Education Review

The QAA Higher Education Review had taken place during the week commencing 18 April and it was understood to have progressed well. The University expected to receive a letter providing an overview of key findings by Thursday 5 May. On behalf of Senate, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor thanked all those who had been involved in the process.

5. Complete University Guide

It was noted that Cambridge University had ranked top in 38 of the 70 subjects included in the Complete University Guide and it was suggested that Newcastle should review the results to determine whether it could learn from the approach adopted by Cambridge. It was noted that a report on the results had been prepared which could be shared with interested members of Senate.

6. Naming of Richardson Road Student Accommodation

Following concerns expressed by Senate and Council at the naming proposals for the Richardson Road student accommodation, a further proposal to name the accommodation blocks after local rivers was to be submitted to the next meeting of Council on 23 May 2016.
7. **HEFCE Recurrent Grant for 2016-17**

The University's core teaching and research grant was expected to increase by 2% year on year for 2016-17. There would be no increase in the non-core research grant. Student opportunity funding would decline and would be replaced by a fund to support outreach activities with schools to which the University would be required to bid for funding. Funding to support disabled students would increase by 288% for 2016-17, reflecting the University’s strong track record in attracting disabled students.

8. **Athena SWAN Award**

On 25 April 2016 the University had been informed that its application for an Athena SWAN silver institutional award had been successful. The University was one of only nine institutions that had received a silver award at an institutional level. The award would be presented at a ceremony at Sheffield University on 30 June 2016. Senate recorded its congratulations to Professor Judith Rankin, Dean of Diversity, and the team responsible for the submission.

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**SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 11 APRIL 2016**

Received the summary report from the meeting of Council on 11 April 2016.

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

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**FACULTY STRATEGIC PROGRESS REPORTS**

Received the strategic progress report and PowerPoint presentations from:

(i) The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, presented by Professor Julie Sanders, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Humanities and Social Sciences, on behalf of Executive Board.

(ii) The Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering, presented by Professor Phillip Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture and Engineering, on behalf of Executive Board

(iii) The Faculty of Medical Sciences, presented by Professor Chris Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document D-F. Copies filed in the Minute Book together with presentation slides.]

Noted that:

1. The KPIs for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences included a KPI ‘to develop an internationally recognised Business School – secure and maintain triple accreditation’. The appropriateness of including the triple accreditation as a KPI target was questioned since it was difficult to measure progress towards this target in between the accreditation awards. In response it was noted that it was an overall target from which many actions flowed but the intention was to ultimately absorb the Business School KPIs into the other areas of the Faculty’s business.

2. The HaSS KPI for the number of Doctorates graduated per academic FTE set a target of 0.21 students per academic but the Raising the Bar research expectations for the Faculty set the target as ‘1 per annum’ which suggested that a 500% increase in PhD completions was required and this would have logistical implications.
3. The MBA portfolio presented a risk for the Faculty as it was necessary to introduce new forms of delivery, such as online and blended learning, in order to maintain the Business School's EQUIS accreditation.

4. With regards to the KPIs for the Faculty of SAgE, a question was raised as to the appropriateness of the GPA KPI since it was not possible to measure progress towards this until an external result, in this case the REF results, became available. It was noted that the results of internal quality assessment (IQA) helped to inform progress in relation to this particular KPI in between REF cycles.

5. Further discussions were to take place at Executive Board about the appropriateness and number of the KPIs within the Faculty of SAgE.

6. The Faculty of Medical Sciences operated within a particularly competitive environment and this help to avoid complacency. It was suggested that the Faculty should attempt to respond to the economic problems currently being experienced by the NHS by focusing on low cost healthcare solutions. It was noted that health economics was a factor in some grant applications and further consideration could be given to this. The possibility of including the aim to improve efficiencies for the NHS in the Faculty’s mission statement could also be considered.

7. An explanation of the reasoning behind a KPI target of a net surplus of 0% for Medical Sciences was requested. It was noted that it was always the intention initially, with the introduction of the new fees regime in 2012, to have a break even target since much of the Faculty's research and teaching activity was cross-subsidised by the other two faculties.

8. There was a lack of social space within Medical Sciences for undergraduate students and this was to be addressed.

Resolved that the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors be thanked for their informative presentations.

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

Received a report from the meeting of ULTSEC held on 2 March 2016.

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

Noted that:

1. Following the meeting on 2 March 2016, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching had taken Chair’s action to overturn the decision made by ULTSEC to allow students observing Ramadan to automatically defer their Semester 2 examinations until the August exam period should they so wish. This decision had been made following discussions with colleagues at the University’s branch campuses in Singapore and Malaysia. Students would have the option of following the Personal Extemating Circumstances (PEC) procedure should they feel their performance had been impaired as a result of their observance of Ramadan.

2. A consultation on the use of discretion in determining degree classifications for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students was underway. The outcome of this consultation would be reported to Senate once available.
Resolved that further guidance on the use of the Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) procedure for students observing Ramadan should be prepared for staff and students to refer to during the summer examinations period.

77. ACCESS AGREEMENT 2017-18

Received the Access Agreement 2017-18 from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The approval of the annual Access Agreement by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) was a requirement for institutions that wished to charge a Home undergraduate fee above the basic £6,000 level.

2. In its Access Agreement, the University was required to demonstrate how it intended to respond to the Government’s requirements and new targets set by OFFA. It was also required to provide evidence that students had been consulted. A statement of partnership from the Students’ Union was included to demonstrate this and the sabbatical officers were thanked for their contribution.

3. Provision had been made in the Access Agreement for the allocation of the additional funding that the University was to receive to enhance support for disabled students.

78. RESEARCH & CONSULTANCY POLICIES

Received:

(i) Policy for Consultancy & Other External Professional Work, presented by Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, on behalf of Executive Board.

(ii) Research Misconduct Policy presented by Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The Policy for Consultancy & Other External Professional Work sought to achieve an appropriate balance between allowing staff a degree of freedom whilst also ensuring the University received appropriate recompense for consultancy work undertaken in its name and/or using its facilities.

2. The policy would be monitored via the annual declaration of interest procedure but staff were to be reminded that permission from their Head of Unit must be obtained before any consultancy work was undertaken.

3. It was suggested that staff should be reminded of the value and additional protection afforded to them by the University’s indemnity insurance policy when consultancy work was undertaken in the University’s name.
Senate, 3 May 2016

4. It was recommended that the Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct should include links to the relevant disciplinary policies that would be invoked should a complaint be upheld.

Resolved that, subject to the amendment noted under point 4 above, the Policy for Consultancy & Other External Professional Work and the Research Misconduct Policy be approved.

79. REPORT FROM HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

Received an oral report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of Honorary Degrees Committee:

Noted that:

1. Professor Chris Brink was due to retire from the University on 31 December 2016 after nine and a half years of service as the University’s Vice-Chancellor. It had been the custom to award previous Vice-Chancellors with an honorary degree in the year following their retirement (2008 – Christopher Edwards, 2001 – James Wright, 1991 – Laurence Martin) and it was proposed that this convention be continued by awarding an Honorary Doctor of Civil Law (DCL) to Professor Brink.

2. The Vice-Chancellor would return to South Africa soon after his retirement and it was proposed that his honorary degree should be awarded during the winter congregation ceremonies that were to take place from 6-8 December 2016.

Resolved that Senate approve the recommendation that an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law (DCL) be awarded to Professor Chris Brink, Vice-Chancellor, in December 2016.

[Members of Senate were reminded of the continued confidentiality of this item.]

80. 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-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

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

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on Professor Erica Haimes with effect from 1 September 2016.

81. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF POSSIBLE DISRUPTION TO EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS ARISING FROM AN EMERGENCY SITUATION

Received the procedures to be followed in the event of a possible disruption to examinations and assessments arising as a result of a UCU ballot on strike action.

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

Noted that:

1. The UCU was in the process of balloting its members on industrial action regarding “Proposed changes to performance management (Raising the Bar)”. Should the ballot
result in strike action or action short of a strike being undertaken, this could cause disruption to the examinations and assessment period.

2. Document N set out the provision for alternative assessment arrangements to be followed in emergency circumstances, in the event that a University-wide emergency was declared by Senate.

Resolved that Senate approve the use of the emergency procedures, as set out in Document N, in the event that the UCU ballot results in industrial action that impacts on the examination and assessment period.

82. VICE-CHANCELLORSHIP

Received an oral report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

Noted that:

1. The selection committee had met on 29 April 2016 to consider the longlist of candidates for the Vice-Chancellorship. Interviews were planned for the end of June.

2. A recommendation would be made to a joint meeting of Council and Senate at 2pm on 11 July 2016. Members of Senate were asked to note the date and time of this additional meeting.

83. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY PROMOTIONS COMMITTEES

Considered a consolidated report from the University and Faculty Promotions Committees.

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

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

84. 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.]