NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

3 October 2017

Present: The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor David Burn, Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Julie Sanders, Professor Nick Wright, Professor Phillip Wright, (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr Phil Ansell, Professor Caroline Austin, Professor Paul Christensen, Miss Sarah Craggs (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students' Union), Professor Nicola Curtin, Mr Mike Davison, Dr Lindsey Ferrie, Dr Emma Foster, Dr Stacy Gillis, Professor Nigel Harkness, Dr Joan Harvey, Professor Peter Jorgensen, Dr Phillip Lord, Dr Nick Megoran, Professor Patrick Olivier, Professor Jane Pollard, Mr George (Ronnie) Reid (President, Students' Union), Professor Klaus Schoefer, Professor Chris Seal, Professor Jackie Leach Scully and Mr Rowan South (Education Officer, Students' Union).

In attendance: Mrs Lesley Braiden (Academic Registrar), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Ms Abi Kelly (Executive Director of Corporate Affairs), Mrs Judith Whitaker (Executive Director of HR) and Miss Janice Trewick (Executive Officer, Governance).

Apologies: Mr Richard Dale, Professor Richard Davies, Dr Ruth Graham, Dr Helen Jarvis, Dr Andrew Pike and Professor Brian Walker.

MINUTES

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

2. MINUTES

That minutes of the meeting of Senate on 27 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed.

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

3. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor and President’s report. Highlights of this report are discussed below.

[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.

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

2. NU London

A small working group chaired by Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Internationalisation and involving Professor Julie Sanders, Pro-Vice-
Chancellor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mrs Judith Whitaker, Executive Director of Human Resources, Mr Jeff McIntosh, Lay member of Council, Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance and Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching had been established to consider the future strategy for NU London. The group will be seeking input from specific colleagues with relevant expertise and also liaising with INTO (IUP) during the process. The group aims to report on their findings by the end of the year. Following the departure of Professor Mark O’Thomas over the summer, Mr Adrian Euler, from the Business School, had been appointed as Interim Dean of Academic Affairs for Newcastle University London until further notice.

3. Forward Prize

Sinéad Morrissey has won the prestigious Forward Prize for her collection On Balance. The Director of Newcastle University’s Centre for Literary Arts was presented with the award for Best Collection at a ceremony at London’s Royal Festival Hall on Thursday 21 September 2017.

4. Teaching Excellence Framework

The University’s Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) outcome is deemed to be ‘valid’ by the Department for Education for three years from its award. Consequently there is no reason for the University to enter TEF until 2019-20.

The University would not be participating in the pilots for subject-level TEF assessment taking place during 2017-18.

5. Public Orator

Dr Phil Ansell had agreed to serve as the Senate representative on the committee for the appointment of a Public Orator.

6. Brexit Update

It was noted that Northumbria University were offering an enhanced package to EU staff seeking the right to live permanently in the UK. As the situation around Brexit is constantly changing the University would be keeping the situation under review.

7. King George VI Prayer Space

It was noted that the University is working closely with the Students’ Union to manage the on-going expectations of both students and staff members.

8. Reports from Committees of Senate

University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (ULTSEC) – Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning & Teaching

ULTSEC had approved the revised Virtual Learning Experience (VLE) threshold standard, which outlined a number of core requirements expected for Blackboard modules.

ULTSEC had considered the current arrangements for personal tutoring and had agreed that for 2017-18 the requirement would remain for personal tutors to record their initial meeting with new students in ePortfolio. This would ensure that the initial meeting had
taken place. All further meetings would no longer be required to be recorded within the ePortfolio system.

**University Research Committee (URC) – Professor Caroline Austin on behalf of Professor Brian Walker, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources**

Professor Walker had now taken up post and will over the next few months be focusing on developing the University’s Research Strategy and developing the work packages which would underpin it.

A number of celebrating success events had been planned. An event will be held in January 2018 to celebrate the Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences for Professors David Burn, Derek Mann and Brian Walker.

At its meeting in June 2017 URC had noted the concern around the number of PhD students who were supervising undergraduate students. Senate noted that Faculty of Medical Sciences are currently reviewing their process for allocation of undergraduate projects to research groups.

**University Engagement Committee (UEC) – Dr Joan Harvey, on behalf of Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Internationalisation**

A working group had been established with representation from all faculties and relevant teams from Professional Services to co-ordinate the offer for the Great Exhibition of the North.

**University Internationalisation Committee (UIC) – Professor Nigel Harkness on behalf of Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Internationalisation**

UIC had established a INTO Newcastle Recruitment and Marketing Group which would be chaired by Professor Richard Davies. The group will provide a formal alignment between INTO and the University and would mirror the approach of INTO Academic Group and would report to the Joint Venture Board.

A Student Mobility Working Group had been established which would be chaired by Mr Alex Metcalfe. In light of the challenges associated with Brexit, this group would focus on Student Mobility both strategically and operationally. The Student Mobility Working Group would report to both UIC and ULTSEC.

A number of projects will be undertaken to address streamlining of conversion activities.

An external study had taken place to examine students’ understanding of TEF, with 3,000 international students from 192 countries taking part. Around 80% of students thought that TEF related to both UG and PG and that TEF was noted as more important to international students than rankings in the decision making process.

UIC had considered the proposal for scholarship schemes for 2018 entry. Partial scholarships will be assessed as part of the admissions process and consideration would be given to specific programmes, with a view to recruiting to undersubscribed programmes. Major scholarships will be awarded to exceptional students and there would be an independent application for this.
4. SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 10 JULY 2017

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 10 July 2017. [Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

5. SPORT STRATEGY

Received the Sport Strategy from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching and Dr Phil Ansell, Dean of Sport. [Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The Sport Strategy had been updated following comments received at Senate in June 2017 and now included a Sport Action Plan for 2017-19.

2. The Action Plan reflected that during the initial operational period a number a major development works would be in progress, namely Park View Student Village, Sport Centre and Cochrane Park. It is envisaged that these projects would have an impact on the overall targets identified by the Action Plan.

3. The Sport Strategy Group would be established and would work with the Students’ Union to ensure that all sporting activities are inclusive. The Students’ Union and the Athletic Union undertake a lot of work to encourage people to try out new sporting activities. The Athletic Union provide funding for those students taking part in sporting activities representing the University.

4. The gym membership for the Sport Centre could be seen as prohibitive for some and this had been acknowledged and a review of the membership pricing structure would be undertaken.

5. The University timetable policy states that teaching for undergraduate students should not be scheduled after 13:00 on Wednesday to allow for participation in sporting activities. However, the policy does not apply to INTO Newcastle students.

6. It was felt that nutrition should be included in the policy as this is an area that needs addressing around the campus as there are a number of vending machines which provide unhealthy food and drink.

Resolved that the policy be submitted to Council.

6. ESTATE STRATEGIC PROGRESS REPORT

Received the Estate Strategic Progress Report 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 report provided an update on projects including those in design and under construction and provided the strategic direction of the estate, estate performance and identified key issues.

2. The report highlighted the work done on the effective utilisation of space and the number of initiatives involved in achieving the reduction in net internal area per student
FTE. There is a demand for large teaching spaces and also for individual and collective student space.

3. Overall the estate is expensive and a number of buildings are nearing their end of life span. The Estate Strategic Capital Planning Committee oversee the planning for the estate with input from Faculties.

4. The repairs to the cladding on King’s Gate are currently underway. The original cladding would be replaced, this would be carried out under the builders’ liability and at no additional cost to the University.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY REPORT**

Received the Environmental Sustainability Strategy Dr John Hogan, Registrar, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The 2016 staff travel survey had revealed a further reduction in staff single-occupancy car journeys to work with over 75% of staff now travelling to work by public transport, walking or cycling.

2. The Newcastle City Council would be announcing their bike scheme in due course and this would be considered by Senate as it was noted that travelling between buildings around the campus had become more complex.

3. There continues to be investment into new technologies to improve reductions and provide cost savings.

4. An area for further work would be around food waste around the campus and the use of the anaerobic digester could be done more effectively.

8. **HUMAN RESOURCES PROGRESS REPORT**

Received the Human Resources Strategic Progress Report from Mrs Judith Whittaker, Executive Director of Human Resources, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The Strategic Progress report provided an update on the actions taken noting that there is a time lag since the employee engagement survey.

2. The draft People Strategy is currently under development and consultations had taken place with Faculties and Trade Unions. It is envisaged that the People Strategy would be aspirational.

3. Since appointment the Vice-Chancellor had been responding to the results of the Engagement Survey and addressing areas around communication, fairness and trust. It was noted that more feedback on the actions taken could be provided to staff.

4. The People Strategy should include language that is understandable and there should be a focus on health and safety, and wellbeing.
Senate, 3 October 2017

5. The HR dashboard identified would assist managers with online solutions for a range of management processes such as PDR, reporting of sickness and would provide a tool to provide data to assist managers.

9. LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Received:

(a) An introductory report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board, setting out the background to and purpose of Documents J, K and L.

(b) A report on the implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy presented by Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

(c) A report on the assurance of the student academic experience, student outcomes and degree standards from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

(d) A mapping document setting out how the University meets the European Standards and Guidelines.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents H-L. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Since 2016-17 HEFCE had discharged its statutory duty relating to academic quality through a revised operating model for Quality Assessment which requires governing bodies to provide an annual assurance to HEFCE each December on the quality of the student academic experience, student outcomes and standards of awards.

2. In October 2016 Council agreed to provide HEFCE with an assurance relating to academic quality and standards. HEFCE confirmed in April 2017 that the University had met national requirements for academic quality and standards.

3. The overall indicator for learning and teaching performance in 2015-16 was Amber-Green. During 2016-17 the University obtained a Gold Award in Year Two of the TEF, the highest grade obtainable and a strong endorsement of the quality of the undergraduate education the University provides to students. However, there are a number of areas where performance during 2016-17 had declined (most notably the National Student Survey and graduate destinations), and other areas where the KPI targets in the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy are not being achieved.

4. Additionally the external environment for learning, teaching and the student experience remains turbulent. Alongside increasing competition, the last two years have witnessed very significant change to the external regulatory environment with the introduction of TEF, the Higher Education and Research Act and the complete overhaul of the external quality assurance system.

5. The external regulatory environment will change very significantly again in the next 12 months with the establishment of the Office for Students (OfS), and the development and introduction of the OfS’s new regulatory framework for higher education in England.
6. The overall indicator therefore remains Amber-Green.

7. The new Education Strategy would have a focus on Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and a TEL roadmap is being developed. It was acknowledged that students value TEL tools such as BlackBoard, ReCap and ePortfolio. The TEL roadmap would allow for staff to upskill their own skills to utilise the technologies. It is envisaged that the Education Strategy would prepare students for challenges and real life.

Resolved that, based on the information provided in Documents J, K & L, a recommendation be made to Council that assurance could be given to HEFCE regarding the University’s student academic experience, student outcomes and degree standards.

10. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS 2017

Received a report on the National Student Survey Results 2017 from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. In 2017 substantial changes were introduced to the NSS survey questionnaire, including nine amended questions, ten new questions and three new sections. The University’s overall satisfaction had declined from 90% in 2016 to 88% in 2017.

2. Academic units would be considering their results and addressing areas of concern and ensuring that students had been provided with feedback on the key actions taken.

3. The recent Directors and Heads of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (DELT) Forum had included a session on the Student Voice and included a range of presentations on good practice from across the University.

11. UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS FOR 2017 ENTRY

Received a report on undergraduate admissions for 2017 from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The actual registered home and EU students was 5273 which is lower than reported in Document N however at this stage in the recruitment cycle this is normal.

2. In some subject areas grades had to be dropped below ABB in order to fill places across programmes. Targets for widening participation had been achieved.

3. It was important to acknowledge the support received from staff across the University who had contributed to the success of the admissions cycle.

12. 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 and President following consultation with the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:

Professor Tony Stevenson with effect from 1 October 2017.
Professor Allan Colver with effect from 1 October 2017.
Professor Helen McConachie with effect from 1 October 2017.
Professor Sandra Edwards with effect from 1 October 2017.

13. REPORT FROM HONORARY DEGREE COMMITTEE

Considered a report from the Honorary Degrees Committee.

Resolved that the nominations made by the Honorary Degree Committee for the award of honorary degrees in July 2018 be approved.

[Note: Senators were reminded of the continued confidential classification of the report until further notice.]

14. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEE OF SENATE

The following meetings of Senate committees have taken place and the minutes from each committee are provided for information:

(a) University Research Committee: 26 June 2017, 24 July 2017
(b) University Internationalisation Committee: 15 June 2017, 20 July 2017 and Annual Report
(c) University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee: 7 June 2017, 5 July 2017

[Resolved with the agenda as Document Q-S. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

15. SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

Received the business schedule for meetings of Senate and Council in 2017-18.

[Resolved with the agenda as Document T. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

16. MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE

Reported that the individuals elected to the 5 vacancies in the non-Professorial constituency in the 2017 Senate election are:

Dr Stacy Gillis, School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics
Dr Helen Jarvis, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology
Dr Phillip Lord, School of Computing Science
Dr Nick Megoran, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology
Dr Andrew Pike, School of Chemistry

The membership of Senate for 2017-18 was circulated as document U.

[Resolved with the agenda as Document U. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
17. **DELIGATION OF POWER AND AUTHORITY**

Received Senate’s delegation of power and authority document.

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

18. **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 W. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]