NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

5 March 2013

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), Professor Ashley Adamson, Ms Eve Berwin (student member), Dr Heather Brown, Dr Tim Cheek, Professor Peter Clarke, Professor Steve Clifford, Mr Wayne Connolly, Dr Hugh Dauncey, Dr Joanna Elson, Dr Catherine Exley, Dr Alton Horsfall, Ms Esta Innes (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students’ Union), 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 and Professor Martha Young-Scholten.

In attendance: Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Mrs Veryan Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources) and Mrs Lizzie Taylor (Executive Officer (Governance)).

Apologies: Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Mr Robert Hull, Professor Julia Newton, and Dr Ole Pedersen.

MINUTES

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

54. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 15 January 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed.

55. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

(ii) Honorary Degrees [Minute 36(ii), 15.01.13]

Received an oral report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

Noted that:

1. The fourth individual approved by Senate as a candidate for an honorary degree at its meeting on 6 November 2012 is still to respond. Follow up enquiries have been made.
2. In the absence of a response from the final candidate, five honorary degrees will be awarded during the July Congregations period, including candidates who have been deferred from previous years.

56. 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. Science Central Developments

Consideration is being given to the activities which will be located on the Science Central site. It is proposed that the School of Computing Science will become the anchor tenant and that digital sciences will be an additional theme to be pursued, alongside the energy and transport themes. How the digital sciences can underpin other sustainability initiatives is also a key consideration. A relocation plan is currently being prepared by the School of Computing Science.

3. Postgraduate Open Day

Staff were thanked for their efforts in ensuring the postgraduate open day on 6 February 2013 was success, as evidenced by increasing numbers of postgraduate applications.

4. Times Higher Advertorial

Members of Senate received a copy of an advertorial which is to appear in a future issue of the Times Higher and the Chronicle of Higher Education. The aim of the advertorial is to improve the University’s global reputation.

It was noted that subjects linked to science and medicine dominate academic citations but there are other factors which influence the reputation of humanities subjects. It was noted that some analyses have be conducted in this area, the results of which can be made available to members of Senate.

5. TED Prize 2013

Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology, has won the prestigious TED Prize 2013. The TED Prize grants its winners $1m for ‘A wish that can inspire the world’. Professor Mitra’s wish is:

‘...to help design the future of learning by supporting children all over the world to tap into their innate sense of wonder and work together. Help me build the School in the Cloud, a learning lab in India, where children can embark on intellectual adventures by engaging and connecting with information and mentoring online. I also invite you, wherever you are, to create your own miniature child-driven learning environments and share your discoveries.’

Previous winners of the TED Prize include Bill Clinton, Jamie Oliver and Bono.
Senate recorded its congratulations to Professor Mitra.

6. **Association of Colleges (AoC) Gold Award for Further Education Alumni**

   Professor Day has been awarded an AoC Gold Award. These awards are given to people nominated by further education colleges that they attended, in this case Tynemouth Metropolitan 6th Form College, who have since gone on to achieve excellence in his or her chosen field. Professor Day will receive his award at a ceremony and reception at the House of Commons on 5 June.

   Senate recorded its congratulations to Professor Day.

7. **Shanghai Congregation Ceremony**

   A joint Congregations/Alumni event was held in Shanghai on 28 February 2013. Approximately 230 students graduated, the majority being postgraduate students. The event was well received by those who attended.

8. **Boat Club sets a new record**

   Senate recorded its congratulations to the Boat Club (NUBC) on having achieved their best ever performance at the British Universities and Colleges Sport Head held on 16 & 17 February 2013.

9. **New Academic Activity**

   The scoping exercise for an area of new academic activity is still ongoing. A report containing a number of scenarios will be presented to Executive Board at its meeting on 19 March 2013.

   It is expected that the main source of income would be student fees with the main costs being staff and facilities.

10. **Student Union Elections**

    Senate recorded its congratulations to Ms Eve Berwin, the current elected student representative on Senate, who has been elected as Education Officer for the 2013-14 academic year.

57. **FACULTY OF SCIENCE, AGRICULTURE AND ENGINEERING STRATEGIC PROGRESS REPORT**

    Considered the strategic progress report for the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering and a PowerPoint presentation from Professor Steve Homans, Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE, on behalf of Executive Board
    
    [Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
    [Copy of the slides filed in the Minute Book.]

    Noted that:

    1. To assist the faculty in achieving the obligations set out in the Student Charter, a set of values have been prepared to which all faculty staff are requested to subscribe. These values incorporate the areas of excellence, innovation, collaboration, respect, accountability and sustainability.
2. It would be helpful to gain the views of the Sabbatical Officers and student representatives to ensure appropriate arrangements are made to maintain student engagement with the main campus and the Students’ Union when more academic activity is moved to the Science Central site.

3. It is intended that the arrangements on the Science Central site will allow for a more open view of the research conducted by the schools based there which will have a direct impact upon the teaching students receive. It is also intended that the research conducted will lead to greater interactions with businesses based on the site which, in turn, will provide opportunities for students.

Resolved that Professor Homans be thanked for an informative presentation.

58. APPLICATION STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2013

Considered a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on the current position regarding undergraduate and postgraduate applications for 2013, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Tabled at the meeting as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The positive position in terms of application figures reported at previous meetings has been maintained. The emphasis is now on ensuring an appropriate number of undergraduate offers are made.

2. Whilst the numbers of ABB offers made has been maximised, the numbers of offers made to students who would take a place from the University’s core quota remains low. The number of core offers is expected to increase over the coming months; some courses have adopted a gathered field approach whilst others are awaiting the outcome of interviews or auditions. Approximately 5000 applications are awaiting decisions and the majority of these are for core offers. Any shortfall in the number of core students can be addressed as part of the Clearing process.

3. Figures for postgraduate applications remain strong with the number of offers made being up almost 24% on the same point in the previous year. The number of offers accepted by home research students is slightly down on the same point in the previous year (-4.2%).

59. APPOINTMENT OF PUBLIC ORATORS

Considered a report from Executive Board regarding the appointment of Public Orators.

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

Resolved that:

(i) Professor Helen Berry and Professor Vicki Bruce be reappointed as Public Orators from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2016, with Professor Berry designated as Senior Public Orator.

(ii) Members of Senate be requested to submit nominations for the office of Public Orator to the Vice-Chancellor by the 29 March 2013. An open invitation will also be circulated via the Registrar’s Friday circular.

(iii) Recommendations for a further appointment will be submitted to Senate in May.
60. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRES

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

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

Resolved that Senate approve:

(i) *The establishment of the University Research Centre for Synthetic Biology and Bioexploitation for a period of two years from 1.04.2013 to 31.03.2015.*

(ii) *The appointment of Professor Anil Wipat (Computing Science) and Professor Jeff Errington (ICaMB) as Co-Directors for the same period.*

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

Received a report from the meeting of ULTSEC held on 30 January 2013.

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

62. FEES SCHEDULE

Received the fees schedule for 2013-14 which has been endorsed by Executive Board.

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

Resolved that the Fees Schedule for 2013-14 be approved, subject to the agreement of Council.

63. DATES OF MEETINGS OF SENATE 2013-14

Noted that meetings of Senate would take place at 2pm on the following dates in 2013-2014:

- Tuesday 26 November 2013
- Tuesday 28 January 2014
- Tuesday 18 March 2014
- Monday 28 April 2014 (Joint meeting with Council)
- Tuesday 20 May 2014
- Tuesday 1 July 2014

64. SENATE DINNER

Noted that Senate Dinner would be held at 6.30pm for 7pm on Tuesday 26 November 2013.

65. 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 J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]