NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

6 November 2012

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor Chris Day, Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Suzanne Cholerton, 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 Debbie Bevitt, Dr Heather Brown, Dr Tim Cheek, Professor Peter Clarke, Professor Steve Clifford, Mr Wayne Connolly, Dr Hugh Dauncey, Dr Catherine Exley, Mr Robert Hull (lay member of Council), Dr Alton Horsfall, Ms Esta Innes (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students’ Union), Professor Julia Newton, Dr Ole Pedersen, Ms Laura Perry (President, Students’ Union), Professor Paul Seedhouse, Ms Rachael Thornton (Education Officer, Students’ Union), Mr Steve Williams, Dr Tony Young, 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), Mrs Lizzie Taylor (Executive Officer (Governance)).

Mrs Julie Bullimore (HR Adviser (Policy and Projects)) attended for item 25.

Apologies: Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Dr Joanna Elson and Dr Neelam Srivastava.

MINUTES

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

22. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 2 October 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed.

23. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

(ii) Membership of Senate [Minute 16, 02.10.12]

Reported that, following a second election at the Students’ Union Council, Ms Eve Berwin has replaced Mr Luke Neal as the Student Representative on Senate for 2012-13.

Ms Berwin was welcomed to her first meeting of Senate.
Senate, 6 November 2012

24. 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. Priorities for 2012-13

The Vice-Chancellor has written to each Head of School to remind them that student recruitment and the REF should be the main priorities for 2012-13.

3. Xiamen University

A delegation from the University has recently visited Xiamen University with the intention of developing a similar relationship to that which has been established with the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

4. Merzbarn Wall

An application has been made to the University’s Endowment Group (UEG) to fund the renovation to the Merzbarn Wall in the Hatton Gallery. The UEG has identified the George Brown Endowment fund from the General Investment Pool as the most appropriate source of funding for this renovation. Releasing income from this fund requires the approval of Council and Senate following a proposal by the Vice-Chancellor. The estimated cost of the renovations is £30k.

Resolved that Senate approve the release of £30k from the George Brown Endowment to fund the renovation of the Merzbarn Wall.

5. Rankings and Reputation SIG

The Vice-Chancellor has established a Rankings and Reputation Special Interest Group with the aim of determining how the University can improve its international reputation and its position in international league tables.


Almost 15,000 visitors attended the Visit Day which took place on 29th September 2012. Members of Senate and those involved in the Visit Days were reminded of the importance of planning appropriately for the event and of ensuring that presentations to prospective students and their parents are of a consistently high standard.

7. Milburn Report

On 18th October 2012, Alan Milburn’s Social Mobility Report was published. The report recommends that instead of offering scholarships and bursaries, universities should use the money to engage with schools and to provide a form of financial support to pupils to replace the Educational Maintenance Allowance. It is not yet known how many of Mr
Milburn’s recommendations will be adopted since many of them contradict current Government policy.

8. **Singapore Graduation Ceremony**

A delegation from the University has visited the campus in Singapore to attend the graduation ceremony. A visit to the NUMed campus in Malaysia was also undertaken.

9. **Hurricane Sandy**

It has been confirmed that no students or members of staff have been directly affected by Hurricane Sandy.

10. **New Academic Activity**

The University is scoping the viability of potential areas of new academic activity.

25. **REF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY BRIEFING**

Received a briefing on equality and diversity issues related to the Research Excellence Framework from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, and Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources.

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

Members of Senate were asked to familiarise themselves with the Code of Practice on the Fair and Transparent Selection of Staff for Submission to the REF 2014 (available at [http://tinyurl.com/czz6qu7](http://tinyurl.com/czz6qu7)) in advance of the meeting.

Noted that:

1. The University is required to ensure that all staff who have decision making responsibilities in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) have received appropriate equality and diversity training. This is to ensure that awareness of equality and diversity issues is embedded throughout the decision making process.

2. Where staff wish to apply for a reduction in research outputs due to personal circumstances, it is important to obtain the necessary evidence to demonstrate that these circumstances applied. Forms to assist with this process are available on the REF website ([http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ref/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ref/)).

26. **QAA MID-CYCLE FOLLOW-UP**

Considered the University’s submission for the QAA mid-cycle follow-up as detailed in the report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. Following the QAA Institutional Audit which took place in 2009, the University is required to submit a mid-cycle follow-up report to demonstrate that appropriate progress has been made in relation to the audit recommendations.
2. The follow-up report follows a template supplied by QAA and reports on actions taken in response to the recommendations and areas highlighted for consideration, major strategic changes and changes in collaborative arrangements since the audit.

3. The report presented to Senate is work in progress and further changes may be made, prior to its submission. Members of Senate are invited to submit suggestions of changes to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching.

Resolved that Senate approve the briefing in principle and also grant permission to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching to sign off the briefing paper on behalf of the institution following final editing.

27. REPORTS FROM HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

Considered a report from the Honorary Degrees Committee.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document E. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After a vote on a motion ‘that the list be approved’, which was approved nem.con,

Resolved that the nominations made by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of Honorary Degrees in July 2013 be approved.

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

Considered a second report from the Honorary Degrees Committee.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that the report proposed that, to help demonstrate the University’s ongoing commitment to the Societal Challenge themes, it should continue to award honorary degrees closely associated with the themes as part of the December degree ceremonies working on the basis of one per theme.

Resolved that the above proposal from Honorary Degrees Committee be approved.

28. PROJECT 2012 SCORECARD

Considered 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 G. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Document G is the last scorecard for Project 2012 to be submitted to Senate. A full report on the outcomes of the project will be presented to Senate in early 2013.

2. In terms of the Learning and Teaching aspects of the project, the Key Information Sets (KIS) project was completed at the beginning of October. Early feedback suggests that the KIS data is not yet a major source of information for prospective students.

3. An upgrade to ncl+ took place over the summer. Following a review, over 12,000 curricular and co-curricular opportunities have been identified which are designed to help students develop their skills portfolio.
4. Draft principles and good practice guidelines for peer mentoring have been developed and refined. It has been identified that peer mentoring is a good method of encouraging student retention.

5. 15 subject areas are now using Recap on an opt-out basis. In the last QAA institutional audit, the use of systems such as Recap was encouraged, and, in the next institutional review such usage will be considered. There is considered to be a momentum within schools and institutes which will encourage more widespread use of the system, although resistance remains in some areas. Action is being taken to resolve individual concerns and a policy on copyright has been developed. It is acknowledged that some lectures are not appropriate for recording. Recap is considered to be a particularly useful tool for students whose first language is not English and also for those with learning difficulties. The lack of comprehensive use of the system is considered to raise equality issues and it could be suggested that those students whose lecturers do not use the system are placed at a disadvantage. Academic staff should take note of the fact that there is demand amongst students for more widespread use of the system.

6. It was suggested that, at present, many students are unaware of the E-portfolio. It was confirmed that awareness should increase from September 2013 onwards once the system, which is intended to facilitate tutor/tutee interactions, becomes fully embedded.

7. In terms of the research areas of Project 2012, staff are being encouraged to engage more with academies and learned societies. Executive Board has agreed the list of academies and societies which are to be recognised as especially meritorious.

Resolved that a report on the proportion of students with access to Recap and how students use this learning resource should be prepared and circulated to members of Senate. The further development of the Recap system should be considered to enable it to capture writing made on whiteboards during lectures.

29. INSTITUTIONAL KPI SUMMARY REPORT

Considered the summary KPI report 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:

1. There have been changes to the ratings of three of the KPIs since the summary report was presented at the previous meeting of Senate.

2. Top 20 in the UK for Student Satisfaction – The University maintained a high level of student satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2012 and, at its meeting on 16 October, Executive Board agreed that the rating for this KPI should be changed from Amber to Amber/Green.

3. Focus on Societal Challenge Theme: Ageing – Executive Board agreed to change this KPI from Amber to Amber/Green to reflect the progress made by the Changing Age initiative across the Faculty of Medical Sciences and also within the other two faculties.

4. A Significant International, National & Regional Profile & Reputation – As a result of the University’s decline in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings from 146th position in 2011 to 180th in 2012, Executive Board agreed to change the rating of this KPI from Green to Amber/Green. As mentioned in the Vice-Chancellor’s business paper, a
Rankings and Reputation Special Interest Group is to be established to address the issues related to the University’s position in this and other league tables.

Resolved that, in future, Senate should receive the summary KPI report on an annual basis unless there is a significant development which Executive Board considers should be reported to Senate.

30. VALUE FOR MONEY ANNUAL REPORT

Considered the report on Value for Money for 2011-12, prepared by Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

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

‘Commercial in confidence’ Minute, filed in the Minute Book.

31. FUTURE OF RCID

Received a report on the future of the Resource Centre for Innovation and Design (RCID) from Professor Steve Homans, Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

‘Strictly Confidential’ Minute, filed in the Minute Book.

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

Received a report from the meeting of ULTSEC held on 18 October 2012

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

33. 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.]