NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

8 November 2011

Present:  The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Charles Harvey, Professor Oliver Hinton and Professor Nick Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor Ashley Adamson, Professor Simi Ali, Dr Peter Andras, Professor Alan Boddy, Mr Charles Barry (student member), Dr Debbie Bevitt, Professor Alan Boddy, Mr Wayne Connolly, Professor Eric Cross, Mr Liam Dale (Education Officer), Dr Hugh Dauncey, Dr Catherine Exley, Ms Katy Hargreaves (Welfare and Equality Officer), Ms Jacqui Henderson, Dr Alton Horsfall, Dr David Kennedy, Professor John Kirby, Professor Pete Lee, Professor David Parker, Professor Nick Reynolds, Dr Candy Rowe, Mr Steve Williams, Professor Paul Watson and Dr Kirsten Wolff.

In attendance: Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Mrs Veryan Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources), Mrs Jeanette Strachan (Academic Registrar) and Mrs Sam Taylor (Administrative Officer).

MINUTES

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

26. PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR SAgE

This was the last meeting of Senate for Professor Oliver Hinton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Professor Hinton for his valuable contribution to the work of the University and the business of Senate.

27. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 4 October 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed.

28. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

29. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

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

(i) Deaths

Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.
The Vice-Chancellor reported the death, on 5 November 2011, of Mrs Joan (Kate) Caethoven, who was employed in Admissions from 27 June 1983 until her retirement on 30 September 2003.

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

(ii) Pay, Pensions and Industrial Action

Noted that meetings would take place between representatives of employers and UCU in November and December to discuss changes to the pension scheme.

(iii) Official opening of the NUMed Campus in Malaysia

Reported that the Vice-Chancellor and other members of the University had attended the official opening of NUMed Campus in Malaysia on 1 November. The official opening had been performed by HRH The Duke of York.

(iv) Singapore graduation

The Vice-Chancellor reported that this event had been well received and could possibly become an annual event.

(v) London Provision

Reported that the possible development of limited academic provision in London was still under review and Professor Bayan Sharif has been asked to take further soundings on this matter.

(vi) Late News: Science Central

Reported that the University’s bid for £6m of Regional Growth Fund for the development of Science Central had been successful.

30. VISION 2021 : UPDATE

Received a powerpoint presentation from the Vice-Chancellor.

[A copy of the slides used by the Vice-Chancellor are filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The concept of national and international partnership should be considered for inclusion in the update to Vision 2021 to emphasise the national and international reputation of the University.

2. Further consideration should be given to the description of the University’s international, national and regional profile.

Resolved that:

(i) The powerpoint presentation be made available to members of Senate who should be invited to submit comments to the Vice-Chancellor.

(ii) The draft version of the Vision 2021 update would be available at the next meeting of Senate.
31. **ACADEMIC STAFF CAREER PATHWAYS**

Considered a paper from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Received a statement from Newcastle UCU on this document.

[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

In response to this statement the following points were noted:

1. The Teaching and Research Pathway would remain the main route for academic staff career progression but it was essential to recognise the importance of both the Teaching and Scholarship and the Research and Innovation routes, both for individuals and the well being of the University.

2. The ‘Research active’ reference on page 2 will be amended to ‘Research active should be interpreted as meaning the employee is normally producing, or is expected to produce research that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour.’

3. That Teaching & Scholarship contracts are intended to recognise contribution and achievement in teaching and learning and not to be used for those not making a significant contribution in other areas.

4. Employment contractual changes would only be made with the agreement of the employee.

5. No changes were intended to the promotions criteria but it was acknowledged that there was a different set of assumptions for progression from F to G for the Teaching and Research Pathway than the other strands. However, progression was not guaranteed on any of the Pathways.

6. Further consideration would be given to the position such as Scientific Support officers.

Resolved that:

(i) A response be made to UCU on their statement.

(ii) Subject to the amendments noted above being incorporated into the paper, and the minor changes to the wording, Senate endorse the Academic Staff Career Pathways document for submission to Council.

32. **UNDERGRADUATE RECRUITMENT**

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

[A document tabled at the meeting is filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Although it was still early in the Undergraduate admissions cycle, there appeared to be a decline of around 12% in the number of applications nationally for places commencing in 2012 although the decline was only around 2.5% against applications for 2010.
2. The perception of the University appeared to be better than the national average although there was significant variation between subjects.

33. FEE FOR PLACEMENT YEAR ABROAD

Received a 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.]

After noting that:

1. The report set out some principles for the charging of fees for the placement years. It was recognised that there were difficult areas and some inconsistencies caused by the operation of the Erasmus scheme and different academic credits awarded for different activities.

2. The costs involved in placement years had been considered.

3. The case proposed was to charge a flat fee of £1,000 for non-Erasmus placement years. This would be lower than most Universities but would help support such programmes.

4. It was proposed that given the substantial fee reduction, additional fee discount/bursary support should be suspended during the placement year for students eligible for Access Scholarship Scheme and the National Scholarship Programme. Concern was expressed by student members over this proposal. Students would still have access to student facilities during the placement year.

5. That where full academic credit was awarded for the placement year, the fee would be charged but Schools may subject to local economic considerations, determine the extent to which the fee liability rests with the individual student undertaking a placement year where the full £9,000 fee would normally be payable (principally Stage 3 of an Integrated Master’s Programme).

Resolved that the recommendations in Document D be approved for submission to Council.

34. REPORT FROM THE 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 2012 be approved.

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

1. Much of the data used to prepare Document F was from 2009/10 since this allowed the University to benchmark its performance against that of other, similar institutions.

2. It was considered that Document F showed that the University had achieved an excellent performance with significant improvements in the areas of the National Student Survey, Non-continuation of Undergraduates: Variation from Benchmark, and the HEFCE Employment Indicator.

3. Student : Staff Ratio was one area where further improvement was required, although no direct correlation to the National Student Survey was noted.

4. The report would now be submitted to Council.

Resolved that the revised format of the report be endorsed.

36. SOCIETAL CHALLENGE THEMES – SOCIAL RENEWAL : ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RENEWAL AND APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR.

Considered recommendations in a report from Professor Charles Harvey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor HASS on behalf of Executive Board, which had been approved by Council at its meeting on 24 October.

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

Resolved that Senate approved the establishment of the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal from 1 January 2012 for a period of 5 years in the first instance and the appointment of a Director for the same period.

37. ANNUAL REPORT FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE

Received the Annual Report from Ethics Committee for 2010-11.

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

38. PROJECT 2012 : SCORECARD (Minute 91, 14.6.2011)

Received a report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

39. INTO LLP UPDATE

Received a report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that the results of the 2010/11 student satisfaction survey were very encouraging. INTO achieved a national satisfaction rate of 90% but Newcastle achieved the highest centre score at 94%.
40. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Received the report from the meeting of UTLSEC held on 12 October 2011.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

41. REPORTED BUSINESS

The Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and the Chair of Council on behalf of Council had approved the appointment of Professor R Lightowlers as Acting Director of the Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences from 1 November 2011 to 31 October 2012.