Minutes of the Forty-third Ordinary Meeting of Convocation held in Lecture Theatre 1, Herschel Building, University of Newcastle upon Tyne on Saturday 3 June 2000.

M I N U T E S

Present:
Mr J Jeffery (Chair of Convocation), Mr JRG Wright (Vice-Chancellor), Mr F Ward (Deputy Chair of Convocation), Colonel R Belas, Dr S Bell, Dr U Bell, Dr J Beveridge, Dr J Beveridge, Dr K Broomfield, Mr P Byrne, Mr P Cobbett, Dr K Coghill, Mr C Cunningham, Ms K Denham, Mr RJ Fothergill, Miss C Frazer, Dr D Gascoigne, Mr A Gibbs, Dr G Hardy, Mr R Harvey, Mr R Haslam, Mr J Heron, Mrs WM Hodson, Mrs I Holmes, Mr A Jack, Mr A Jarvis, Dr H Lake, Dr D Lincoln, Dr A Lucas, Mrs A Makepeace, Mr R McCrae, Dr A McFarthing, Mr J McGregor, Ms D McMillan, Dr E Miller, Mr RR Mullen, Mr WG Oliver, Mr A Pape, Mr I Paterson, Mr J Pearcy, Mrs P Pearcy, Mrs M Penn, Mrs J Penny, Mr D Pinto, Mr J Poxon, Mr H Regnart, Rev. Canon G Revett, Mrs L Richards, Dr ML Robson, Mr RW Rutherford, Miss A Scott, Dr C Scott, Mr J Soden-Bird, Mrs M Taylor, Mr R Theaker, Mr H Thomas, Dr AJ Walton, Lord Walton of Detchant, Mr R Winyard.

In attendance:
Mr DET Nicholson (Registrar), Mr PS Mitchell (Deputy Registrar), Mr MAH Bond (Deputy Registrar), Mr TT McCarthy (Director, International Office), Mr CJ Cox (Alumni Development Officer), Miss WJ Taylor (Assistant Alumni Development Officer).

Apologies for absence were received from:
Dr A Brown, Dr H Brown, Mr DR Fitzpatrick, Mrs MC Kingham, Dr C McLean, Mr NP Richardson, Dr J Robson, Mr PN Robson, Mr JC Snowdon, Mrs A Timlin.

1. MINUTES

Received:

Minutes of the Forty-second Ordinary Meeting of Convocation held on 5 June 1999 had been circulated and were approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

2. THE VICE-CHANCELLORSHIP

Reported:

a) That, as reported to Court on 9 November 1999 and to Senate on 30 November 1999, Mr JRG Wright would be retiring from the post of Vice-Chancellor of the University with effect from 31 December 2000.

b) That Court had approved the appointment of Professor Christopher Edwards, at present Principal of the Imperial College School of Medicine, London, to the Vice-Chancellorship with effect from 1 January 2001.

3. HONORARY DEGREE NOMINATIONS: 2000

Reported:

a) That Honorary degrees had been conferred on the following at an Honorary Degrees Ceremony held on 13 October 1999:

DCL The Honourable Raymond George Hardenbergh Seitz
DLitt Professor Roderick Lemonde MacFarquhar
DLitt Dr Jessica Mary Rawson CBE

b) That honorary degrees had been conferred on the following at an Honorary Degrees Ceremony held on 12 May 2000:

DEng Dr John Parnaby
DSc Professor Adetokunbo Oluwole Lucas
DCL Mr Terry Farrell
DCL Ms Ann Pettifor

4 CHANGES TO UNIVERSITY STATUTES

4a Academic Board membership of Court and Boards of Faculties

Reported:

a) That Senate, on 26 October 1999, had agreed to expand the membership of Academic Board by including all staff on academic, administrative, library and computer and other related scales, research scales 1/1B and above and all part-time and hourly paid teaching staff.

b) That Senate, on 30 November 1999, had agreed that the eligibility threshold for Academic Board membership of Court and Boards of Faculties be re-worded so that the present threshold operated broadly unchanged and excluded administrative, library and computer staff; academic related, research or other related staff on salary scales 1, 1A, 1B and 2, and staff who are employed on a part-time or hourly basis.

Considered:

Proposed amendments to the relevant Statutes which had been supported by Court, Senate, Council and Academic Board. (APPENDIX A)

Resolved:

That Convocation agree to the proposed amendments.

4b Membership of Court

Reported:

That under the Statute relating to membership of Court, provision was made for a member appointed by the local Councils. Cumbria County Council had indicated that following an internal re-organisation it no longer wished to be represented on Court.

It was noted that this change had no implications for the close relationship which the University enjoyed with Cumbria in many areas of activity.

Considered:

The following amendment to the relevant Statute:

Delete: The Council of the County of Cumbria.

Resolved:

That Convocation agree to the above amendment.

5 THE TITLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Considered:

The following proposal from Mr R Fothergill:

"Convocation, having observed the effect of an action by Council in 1992, which suggested that two alternative titles of our University might be regularly used according to the whims of such users has resulted in confusion and mistakes in the outside world and undignified publications. Worst of all our publicity, carrying the incorrect 'University of Newcastle', especially in Pacific Rim countries has usually been initially attributed to the real University of that title which is in Australia. Convocation will be pleased to see immediate actions carried out to ensure that from now into the future our University returns to its exclusive use of the internationally-famous name of its host city."

Noted:

The following extract from the minutes of the Thirty-ninth Ordinary Meeting of Convocation on 13 April 1996:

"The Vice-Chancellor was asked about the title of the University. The Registrar explained that the University's policy, approved by the Council, was that the title 'University of Newcastle upon Tyne' should be used on all official documentation

and in circumstances where failure to do so could lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Otherwise, the more informal titles 'University of Newcastle' or 'Newcastle University' could be used. It was agreed that all future Convocation minutes and agendas should make use of the full title."

In discussion:

The following issues were raised:

a) The possibility that using more than one title could devalue the brand name.

b) Confusion could be caused when searching for the University web-site on the internet.

c) It was difficult to have a consistent interpretation by different individuals of the circumstances in which the abbreviated titles might or might not be confusing.

d) An element of flexibility was desirable, in circumstances where there was no possibility of confusion.

Convocation then voted on the proposal by Mr R Fothergill and agreed it by a large majority (on a show of hands).

Resolved:

In response to a request from the Registrar for further clarification in terms of re-opening the subject with Council

1. That Council be asked to consider revising its present policy so that it reads as follows:

"The full name of the University ('University of Newcastle upon Tyne') should be used on all written documentation, except in exceptional circumstances where flexibility was particularly desirable, and in all other circumstances where use of the abbreviated titles may cause confusion."

2. That the Registrar be asked in due course to put a paper to Convocation clarifying the circumstances in which the full and abbreviated titles may be used.

6 STRUCTURE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Reported:

That Convocation, at its meeting on 5 June 1999, had asked the Alumni Development Group (ADG) to make a final recommendation to Convocation about arrangements for appointment to the Chair of the Alumni Association. Convocation had given its endorsement to the broad principles proposed at the meeting of 5 June 1999 and had confirmed that it would be happy to make a new appointment at its meeting on 3 June 2000, based either on the proposed format or on whatever amended format was agreed by the Alumni Development Group.

Received:

The ADG's proposed changes to the terms of office for the Chair of the Alumni Association. (APPENDIX B)

Resolved:

That the new structure be agreed.

7 ELECTIONS TO THE CHAIR OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Reported:

a) That, in accordance with Statute 54, Convocation was required to elect, as necessary, a Chair of the Alumni Association.

b) That, following the decision of Mr NP Richardson to retire from the role of Chair of the Alumni Association, as reported to Convocation on 5 June 1999, nominations had been sought for a new Chair to take appointment for three years, following agreement of the new structure outlined under item 6 above.

Received:

A nomination for the appointment of Mr DF Pinto as Chair of the Alumni Association.

Considered:

The appointment of Mr DF Pinto as Chair of the Alumni Association for the period of 3 June 2000 to 1 June 2003.

Resolved:

That Convocation approve the appointment of Mr DF Pinto as Chair of the Alumni Association for the period of 3 June 2000 to 1 June 2003.

8 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Received:

a) Apologies from the Chairman of the Alumni Association, Mr NP Richardson.

b) A written report from Mr NP Richardson. (APPENDIX C)

9 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENT 1998-9

Received:

a) The Vice-Chancellor's Statement from the Annual Report of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne 1998-99.

b) Oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on national and strategic issues affecting higher education and this institution in particular.

The Vice Chancellor gave Convocation an introduction to the key elements of the University's Institutional Plan for 1999-2004 and a brief outline of the University's Widening Participation programme.

c) On behalf of Convocation, the Chairman of Convocation thanked the Vice-Chancellor for all that he had done for the University and wished him a happy and fulfilling retirement.

9 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Reported:

That the provisional date for the Forty-fourth Ordinary Meeting of Convocation was Saturday 2 June 2001.

Resolved:

That the date of the next meeting of Convocation would be confirmed at the next meeting of the ADG (subsequently confirmed for 9 June 2001).