NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC BOARD

15 May 2019

Present: The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair) and approximately 120 members of the Academic Board.

NOTES

1. NOTES OF THE 16 MAY 2018 MEETING

The notes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 16 May 2018 are available at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/executive/governance/academic/minutes.htm

2. NOMINATIONS FOR HONORARY AWARDS 2020

2.1 Honorary Degrees

The Honorary Degrees Committee invites nominations in writing for next year’s Congregations. Any member of Academic Board, Court, Council and the alumni present at meetings of Convocation at which the request for nominations is tabled, may make a nomination and support for nominees for honorary degrees should be sought only from members of these bodies. Where several members make a joint nomination, one should be shown as the nominator and the others as supporters. The grounds on which the nomination is made should be clearly stated.

Principles for the award of Honorary Degrees can be found at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/congregations/honorary/nom_hongrad/

Proposals should be sent by email marked ‘Confidential – Honorary Degrees’ to Dr John Hogan, Registrar (Email: John.Hogan@ncl.ac.uk) by Monday 3 June, 2019.

2.2 Honorary Fellowships of the University

Court invites nominations in writing for the award of next year’s Honorary Fellowships of the University. Any lay member of Academic Board, Court, Council, and the alumni present at meetings of Convocation at which the request for nominations is tabled may make a nomination. Where several members make a joint nomination, one should be shown as the nominator and the others as supporters. The grounds on which the nomination is made should be clearly stated.

Principles for the award of Honorary Fellowships and Nomination Forms can be found at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/congregations/ceremonies/honorary/nom_honfell/

Proposals should be sent by email marked ‘Confidential – Honorary Fellowships’ to Dr John Hogan, Registrar (Email: John.Hogan@ncl.ac.uk) by Thursday, 27 February 2020.

Please make it clear whether the nomination is for an Honorary Degree or an Honorary Fellowship.

When making a nomination for an honorary degree or honorary fellowship, this should be done in the strictest confidence and must not be discussed with the potential recipient. Successful nominations will be publicised following approval by the awarding body (i.e. Senate or Court respectively) in advance of the relevant honorary ceremony.
3. MEMBERS OF COURT APPOINTED BY ACADEMIC BOARD

Reported that:

The term of appointment of the following members of Court appointed by Academic Board would terminate on 31 July 2019:

Professor Dame Louise Robinson  
Professor Mark Shucksmith  
Professor Phil Taylor

All three had served two terms and were eligible for re-appointment.

Members of Academic Board were invited to submit nominations in writing by not later than Friday 14 June 2019 to Dr John Hogan, Registrar (Email: John.Hogan@ncl.ac.uk) together with confirmation that the nominee was willing to be nominated. Nominees should be members of Academic Board.

4. REPORT BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT

Received an oral report by the Vice-Chancellor and President on current business, and an introduction to the University’s Engagement and Place Strategy.

The session was recorded and is available from http://www.ncl.ac.uk/executive/governance/academic/minutes.htm

Noted that:

1. There were a number of reasons to be proud of the University’s achievements. For example, the University was ranked 141st in the QS World Rankings, and was the only Russell Group institution to have improved its overall ranking in both the QS and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for three consecutive years. The University held a Gold rating in the Teaching Excellence Framework and an institution-wide Athena Swan Silver Award; and had secured £109.4m in research funding in 2017-18. The institution could also take pride in the diversity of its student body, student satisfaction levels, and being ranked second in the world for responsible consumption and 1st in Europe for climate action in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2019. Over the past ten years the University had transformed the appearance of its city campus estate by investing over £300m in buildings and facilities improvements.

2. Within the north east, the University was working closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership, Newcastle City Council and the new North of Tyne Combined Authority to inform their plans, including opportunities to develop priorities for the Authority in areas that complement the University’s strengths in rural economy, ageing and health, and energy.

3. In terms of external developments, the University was faced with uncertainty as a result of the ongoing lack of clarity over Brexit and its implications for research funding, immigration policy and student mobility, delays to the announcement of the government’s major review of post-18 education, and changes to pensions.

4. Student recruitment had been affected by a demographic dip and a competitive marketing and recruitment environment. The University had invested in its systems, processes and overseas presences to enhance applications and conversion rates for home and international students.
5. In implementing the Vision and Strategy the University was committed to values-led decision-making. Recently, the institution had declared its commitment to climate change action by declaring a Climate Emergency, had become a member of the Race Equality Charter and was seeking accreditation as a University of Sanctuary. The Real Living Wage had also been introduced. The University also had a commitment to closing the attainment gap for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. Systems were in place to ensure that potential partner organisations aligned with institutional values.

6. The Engagement and Place Strategy aimed to share the benefits of the University’s education and research through partnership working and inclusive approaches in order to improve the economy, health, social wellbeing and cultural richness of the places in which it operates. Significant progress to deliver on the strategy had already been made, examples being the establishment of a Social Justice Advisory Group with the aim of co-designing solutions to social justice challenges with practitioners and communities, a Knowledge Exchange Network to influence local, national and international policy development, and the continuing development of the Newcastle Helix site bringing together industry leaders, business and world-class researchers.

7. Looking ahead, the University would celebrate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed) in September, followed by the opening of the Frederick Douglass Building – a new learning and teaching centre – in November. A new Chancellor would also be appointed in the autumn.

5. QUESTIONS

No questions were offered by members of the Academic Board.

6. CHANGES TO THE UNIVERSITY STATUTES

Reported that:

1. The last major set of changes to the statutes had been approved by the Privy Council in 2011. Since then a number of issues had been identified that merited review. An important underlying drive behind the proposed alterations was to update the language on equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. The independent review of governance conducted by Advance HE recommended that the overall size of Council be reduced from 25 to 22 and specifically there should be a reduction of the elected academic members from five to three. It was proposed to move in the general direction of a slight reduction in size but strengthen the representative relationship between Senate and Council at the same time. Members elected by Senate would be reduced from the current three to two, one professorial and one non-professorial. One of the two members of staff elected directly onto Council would be a Professional Services member of staff. However the two Senators elected onto Council would have their membership of Senate extended for the duration of their membership on Council.

3. Under the proposals one member of Professional Services staff would be added to the membership of Senate. It was now commonplace for research universities to include such membership.

4. The changes to the Statutes would be considered by Convocation, Senate, Council and Court prior to being submitted to the Privy Council in 2020.

7. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF SENATE AND COUNCIL

Reported that:
1. Applications or Nominations were invited from any member of academic staff on Grade E and above to stand for election to Senate, and from any member of professorial staff to stand for election to Council in this year’s elections. There were 7 vacancies on Senate (5 professorial, 2 non-professorial) and 1 vacancy on Council (1 professorial).

Further details of this year’s elections could be found at: https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/executive/Pages/governance.aspx

Applications and nominations should be sent to the Governance Office, by email (governanceoffice@ncl.ac.uk) marked ‘Confidential Senate Membership’ or ‘Confidential Council Membership’, to arrive by not later than noon on Wednesday 29 May 2019.