1. **MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document A)

2. **MEMBERSHIP**

The Chair welcomed Professor Nigel Harkness (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ms Lil Collingham-Clark (new lay member), Ms Hilary Florek (new lay member) and Mr Raff Marioni (President of Newcastle University Students Union) to their first meeting of Court.

Received:

(a) The membership of Court for 2018-19.

(b) A document detailing the profiles of members of Court.

(Circulated with the agenda as Documents B, and C)
3. **GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Received:

A presentation from Mr Marc Lintern and Mr Gareth Trainer, Director and Assistant Director of the Careers Service, on Graduate Employability and Entrepreneurship. The slides from the Presentation are now available on the Court website at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/executive/governance/court/presentations.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/executive/governance/court/presentations.htm)

Noted that:

**Presentation**

1. Graduate outcomes are measured by data from the statutory return to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (DLHE).

2. Currently each university carries out the DHLE Survey six months after graduation and submits data to HESA. For those graduating in 2017/18 and subsequently, data will be collected centrally and the census date will move from six to fifteen months after graduation. The new survey is called the Graduate Outcomes Survey.

3. Based on the most recent DHLE Survey (2016-17), the University is placed joint 10th in the country (from 28th) in the Good University Guide for Graduate Prospects and 5th (from 17th) in the Russell Group. The Good University Guide is published by the Sunday Times and is the first of three league tables published during the academic year.

4. With regard to our peer comparators, there are only 13 Russell Group institutions in the top 20.

5. The latest DHLE Survey reports that 43% of Newcastle University students are working in the North East six months after graduating.

6. In terms of the top 20 employers in the North East for Newcastle graduates, after the NHS and the University, third on the list are students who are self-employed, freelance or starting their own business.

7. Notable successes among student start-ups are Lixir Ltd, a company which has launched a new range of flavoured mixers; Tea Venture Ltd, a company which has introduced alcohol flavoured teas; Equiwatt Ltd, a company which plays into the University’s strengths in energy research by using Artificial Intelligence to reduce energy bills; and Busy Backpack Ltd, a UK-based online community platform that aims to help international students engage with the UK arts, culture, creative and business sectors.

8. The University’s entrepreneurial development process within the Careers Advisory Service leads to successful graduate employment.

9. Our START UP offer includes:

- Team -one-to-one coaching and advice that is bespoke, confidential, free, based around individual aspirations. We also offer introductions to our network of experts, influencers and investors, regionally and nationally, as well as access to START UP grant funding and workspace.
A series of workshops covering the basics of business planning, research, marketing and finance, providing the necessary skills to start-up.

Visa Endorsement – Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa endorsement for international students wanting to start a business in the UK after graduation.

START UP Founderships – Six months of pre-accelerator funding, intensive support and access to the START UP Space, for high potential recent graduates with scalable ideas and a case for acceleration.

START UP Connect – A monthly student led meet-up for great conversations, inspiring stories and new connections.

10. Some Court members have assisted with workshops and philanthropic donations have been used to fund Careers Service activities in this space via the Benefactors' Fund for Entrepreneurship.

11. In 2017/18, 356 students and graduates engaged in one-to-one start-up support generating 963 start-up and business advice interventions. These figures include home, EU and non-EU students, a 54/46% female/male split, and both postgraduate and undergraduate student engagement across all Faculties.

12. In 2016-17 140 graduates were self-employed, starting businesses or working freelance six months after graduation, 93% of whom were working at graduate level.

13. The University is 5th in the UK for graduate entrepreneurship, the top research-intensive university in the North of England for graduate entrepreneurship, creating the most investible university-supported start-ups in the North East of England and creating the most successful and sustainable social enterprises of those supported by Russell Group universities.

14. There are currently 220 founders actively trading related to the 179 businesses declared in the Higher Education Business and Communities (HEBCIS) Survey as at end of July 2017, plus 35 businesses created and trading since.

15. Exploring entrepreneurship is something that enhances employability whether the venture succeeds or fails. There is demand from industry for independent professionals to in/outsource with, and small start-ups to acquire to boost innovation.

16. The Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) will emphasise the need for reliable data dependant on positive relationship between the University and founders.

17. Understanding more about the journey and needs of independent professionals and female founders is increasingly important.

18. Creating value-adding ways to engage alumni and friends of the University in start-up support relationships and fundraising activity will enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

19. Furthering partnerships with other local organisations and agencies will provide additional ‘glue’ for the regional retention and make use of the City’s potential to incubate new ideas.
Discussion

1. Comparison should be made with approaches in the USA to see if there is anything we can learn. It was confirmed that US institutions are also interested in UK approaches and the main difference is that the focus in the US is on entrepreneurship rather than enterprise, and US efforts often are funded by philanthropy.

2. The engagement of Widening Participation students with this agenda tends to be more localised with students possibly going into small family-run businesses in the region.

3. We engage with small businesses and advertise a single point of contact in the University to facilitate links to departments organising e.g. internships and placements within small regional businesses. This link is on the University website in a section called ‘work with us’ - [https://www.ncl.ac.uk/work-with-us/](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/work-with-us/).

4. The University offers creative problem solving events in partnership with Santander Universities whereby would-be entrepreneurs develop prototype ideas and solutions for businesses.

5. The University links undergraduates with companies in the region to showcase the opportunities available and to help students to form local networks with external partners.

6. A possible partnership with The Prince’s Trust was suggested in terms of the provision of funding and mentoring opportunities for students.

7. The Home Office Visa Endorsement scheme allows universities to apply for 20 of 2,000 Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visas, whereby the University officially endorses a student as having a genuine and credible business idea. Not all universities take up these opportunities due to the work involved in monitoring etc and the risk of failures.

8. While retention of student start-ups in the region will bring economic benefit, it would be useful to know whether there is a drift to the South long term. It was confirmed that the University supports start-ups for three years and that data is less reliable after that period.

9. The University will shortly be launching NCL Spark, which will link students with graduate mentors from the UK and around the world.

10. The Careers Service is actively working towards improving our success by embedding graduate employability and entrepreneurship in the curriculum and ensuring a named person in each school can advise on this topic. The University also works with the Students’ Union in this agenda.

11. The potential of our expertise in rural economy research was emphasised with many Agriculture graduates going into family-run farms and related businesses. Our research centres could partner students and academics and it was confirmed that centralised enterprise modules contribute to agri-business courses.

12. Some graduates who do not have the confidence to go it alone take their ideas into big companies and perhaps the use of venture capitalists to fund start-ups should be explored. It was confirmed that the University’s business advisers maintain relationships with potential funders and promote all sources of funding.
Resolved that:

Mr Lintern and Mr Trainer be thanked for their informative and well-received presentation.

4. **THE CHANCELLORSHIP**

Reported that:

(a) The Chancellor had indicated that he will step down from the role in 2019.

(b) Convocation appoints the Chancellor on the recommendation of Court and Senate and Senators will be invited to the May 2019 meeting of Court to consider the final report of the Working Group on the appointment of the Chancellor.

Received and considered:

A report from Court Steering Committee on the process for the appointment of a new Chancellor and recommending the Court members of the Working Group to consider the appointment.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document D)

Noted that:

1. The process for the appointment of members to this working group in future should be to seek nominations from members of Court rather than have Court Steering Committee propose individuals.

2. The two proposals from Court Steering Committee on this occasion reflected the University’s partnership with the City and the perspective of a former student who has a role in the charity sector in the region.

3. The Working Group needs to cast their net as wide as possible to recognise the diversity and breadth of potential candidates.

Resolved that:

Councillor Nick Forbes and Ms Hannah Underwood be appointed as Court’s representatives on the Working Group for the appointment of the Chancellor.

5. **VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT’S BUSINESS**

To receive a report from the Vice-Chancellor and President.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document E)

Noted that:

Report

1. Feedback on the recent launch of the new Vision and Strategy had been good and the focus will now turn to implementation.
2. The University's student recruitment had been positive for both home and EU students where we recruited slightly above our target, while recruitment of international students was slightly down on our targets. The positive student recruitment result was due to the efforts of a large number of staff led by Lucy Backhurst, Director of Recruitment and Admissions, and involving academics and professional staff across the University.

3. The University has been shortlisted for University of the Year in the Times Higher Education Awards 2018 in recognition of our contribution to the Freedom City initiative.

4. The University has improved its performance in all major league tables.

5. The government’s independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report had no good news for the sector as the proposed introduction of post-study visas was rejected. This would put UK universities at a disadvantage in competition with the likes of the US, Canada and Australia, for future student recruitment.

6. The University was a member of the Northern Bridge Consortium, and would act as host to a number of postgraduate students studying 28 different disciplines funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

7. Research funding success in the recently restructured Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering, were highlighted, including the Mindsphere Lab, which is open to students, academics, industry partners and Siemens experts; £m funding by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to build a national research hub, the Supergen Energy Networks Hub, led by Professor Phil Taylor; and the £2.5m awarded to the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences for five research projects in the 2017 Horizon 20/20 Food Security Hall.

Discussion

1. The University's policy of recruiting students through clearing, whose first choice may not have been Newcastle, may lead to higher drop-out rates. It was confirmed that the policy this year was to take near-miss students who were fully committed to studying in Newcastle.

2. All students who were recruited through clearing are monitoring to ensure that appropriate academic and pastoral support is given.

3. The drop in international recruitment numbers can be partly put down to the level of competition between UK universities. We have put an 8 point strategy in place to address this including in-country investment in China and India, looking at our relationship with INTO University Partnerships and considering innovative ways to ensure employment opportunities are available to international students when they return home.

6. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT’S QUESTIONS

Received from Nitin Shukla:

Official figures indicate that the number of students who drop out of university with mental health issues has more than trebled in recent years. What arrangements are made to ensure that the right support is in place to respond to increased demand and that the services have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of students?
Received:

An oral response from the Vice-Chancellor and President to the question received.

Noted that:

Response

1. This is a national, indeed, international problem. There has been a huge rise in reported cases of students with mental health concerns. A survey in 2015 showed that 78% of students experienced mental health issues. The numbers reporting a mental health condition are much smaller but have again risen significantly. The commencement of higher education is a period of significant change for most students. It involves moving from home and engaging with academic programmes whilst making adjustments to new social conditions.

2. At Newcastle we are fortunate that very few of our students drop-out. In 2016/17 5.2% of our first year undergraduate students who were expected to continue their studies in 2017/18 failed to do so. This figure includes withdrawals for all reasons including academic failure.

3. Our approach to student wellbeing is a holistic one with the involvement of academic staff and the Students’ Union. Much of the co-ordination comes from the Student Wellbeing Service.

4. Outline of key measures we have taken:

   - We work proactively to contact students who apply to Newcastle and declare a Mental Health Disability, in order to ensure that appropriate support is in place as soon as possible for them. We also take prompt and proactive action where concerns are raised about any Newcastle University student, in order to try and ascertain and meet their needs.

   - We have developed a comprehensive Support to Study Policy that we use to enable students who may have wellbeing vulnerabilities to continue their course wherever possible. This sees the student, School, the Wellbeing Team, other professional services and, when needed, NHS staff, working together to ensure that enough support is in place to allow the student to continue with their studies and/or suspend their studies while their mental health is given priority.

   - In the last three years we have increased the number of full time equivalent staff in the:

     - Counselling team by 22% - a total of 11 staff.
     - Mental Health Team by 49% - a total of 6 staff.

5. We have increased the number of students each counsellor sees, on average, from 3.5 to 5 per day. We have done this by reducing some over complex and unnecessary administrative processes.

6. We have extended the Counselling Service opening hours to 9pm four nights a week, this is vital as we had no more rooms to expand into in the day, yet interview rooms were empty in the evening. These extended hours, combined with all therapists being trained to deliver telephone counselling and provision of appointments at Students’ Union, ensures that support is as accessible as possible for students. These changes also reflect student feedback.
7. Commissioned external specialist counselling services (rape crisis and eating disorder services) to come on to campus to deliver longer term specialist therapy for those students needing it.

8. Established the “Multidisciplinary Group for the Care of Newcastle University Student Wellbeing”, to act as an overarching co-ordination body.

9. Extended the placements and work opportunities we have offered to the School of Psychology from 5 to 10. We could further expand if we had greater room access and Psychology are building a suite of clinical rooms into their new building. These will be ready from 2019.

10. We are working closely with other projects concerned with student wellbeing including in the Changing the Culture work, which is addressing sexual violence and hate crimes on campus.

11. In terms of impact that counselling has, our screening measures show students on average report a mental wellbeing score of a moderate-severe range on entering therapy and sub clinical at the end of counselling with us.

12. Earlier this year we asked Student Progress Service to alter the way in which it recorded students who left for health reasons. Prior to this, when a student left due to health, we had only recorded it as “health reasons” and had not been specific about whether this was physical or mental health.

13. From this September, Student Progress Service will record more detail i.e.
   - Student’s mental ill-health
   - Student’s physical ill-health
   - Student’s carer responsibility
   - Student’s disability

14. This more detailed recording will enable us to obtain a better indication of the extent of the issue here at Newcastle and to inform additional preventative actions we need to take.

Discussion

1. UUK’s report on ‘Suicide-safer universities’ wants more join up to look at cases overall so that tutors, halls of residence staff and all those who come into contact with a student during their time at University work together to identify causes of concern relating to a specific student.

2. Prevention is as important as treatment and mindfulness was cited as a good way to encourage resilience and it may be useful for the University to put a mindfulness programme in place.

3. The work of the counselling and mental health team is supplemented by Psychology students and the Students’ Union, who also have a role in ensuring student wellbeing.

4. Onward and timely referral to colleagues in the NHS is also crucial in this area.

5. Student debt can lead to mental health issues and the use of early career researchers to point to issues arising is important.
6. The University’s School of Psychology is one of the main contributors to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) programmes and skills based training programmes for those involved in student wellbeing.

Resolved that:

Student Mental Health could be a good topic for a future presentation to Court.

7. **ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT**

Received:

A report prepared by the Director of Advancement and the Alumni Relations Manager.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document F)

Noted that:

**Report**

1. The “NCL Professional Network” provides face-face and online opportunities for alumni to meet, network and mentor graduates with similar professional interests and make connections to further their career, enhance employability and fulfil Newcastle University’s commitment to life-long learning.

2. In October 2018, the University will launch ‘NCL Spark’, an online networking platform that will enable alumni to connect with each other around the world. The platform will facilitate online mentoring, the formation of alumni special interest groups, digital content in support of career development and lifelong learning and an interactive forum for discussion.

3. There are a growing number of alumni societies and the University supports their programme of activities and communications via the Advancement office. While many of these societies plan their own programmes, the advancement office is always on hand to offer support.

**Discussion**

1. It is important that the University not only actively supports existing branches of alumni societies but also actively encourages the formation of new branches.

2. The disbanding of the Alumni Consultative Group (ACG) was regretted by some as it was the only alumni organisation that used a democratic process to vote members on and off.

3. The Armstrong Circle did not seem to be operating as envisaged, having not met for at least 18 months.

4. Without plans for collective feedback from alumni on the formation of alumni associations/societies/engagements and the disbandment of the ACG, it may appear that the University simply see the alumni as a potential source of income.

5. The University has made a definite effort to ensure that there are representatives from the University’s alumni in its governance structures and this is emphasised by the number of lay members of Court who are also alumni.
Resolved that:

The Vice-Chancellor and President’s business report to the next meeting of Court should include information on the representation of the University’s alumni on Court and Council.

8. **CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF CONVOCATION**

Reported that:

In June 2019 the current term of office of the Chair of Convocation, Mr Antony Jones, and the Deputy Chair of Convocation, Mr Ali Robson, comes to an end. Under statute 43:

“The convocation, from its own members, shall elect a chair and may elect a deputy chair, under procedures as the Court may from time to time decide, who shall respectively hold office for five years. Any retiring chair or deputy chair shall be eligible for re-election. Neither the chair nor the deputy chair shall be a member of the salaried staff of the University.”

Received and considered:

A report from Court Steering Committee setting out the recommended election process for the Chair and Deputy Chair of Convocation for Court’s approval.

(Circulated with the agenda as Document G)

Noted that:

1. Court Steering Committee felt that a small working group should be formed with membership comprising alumni who were also lay members of Court, to consult with the Chair of Convocation and other key stakeholders to identify the best process for the election.

2. This Working Group should have delegated authority to decide on the process to be put in place.

Resolved that:

Ms Lil-Collingham Clark, Dr David Moffatt and Ms Sarah Green be appointed to consider an appropriate process for the election of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Convocation and report on progress to the Spring 2019 meeting of Court.

9. **PAST COURT PRESENTATIONS: UPDATES FOR MEMBERS**

Received:

A document updating Court on the presentation received in October 2016, delivered by Professor Anya Hurlbert, on Philanthropic Fundraising.

(Circulated with the agenda as Document H)
Noted that:

Report

1. We have the highest return per FTE fundraising staff within our peer group.

2. Legacy income is consistently strong, which reflects our commitment to stewarding legacy pledgers e.g. the Armstrong Circle.

3. Alumni participation is lower/lowest in our peer group and this reflects our small programmes of asking and low spend per graduate.

4. We have outperformed the average cash raised of our peer group for the second year running, and sit 6th within this group.

5. The University has embarked on a feasibility study for a possible major funding campaign. Successful campaigns in other universities have a direct correlation to the institution’s success.

Discussion

1. The view that the University is performing well in this area could be challenged, particularly in terms of the decrease in philanthropic income from the reported £13.8m in new funds ‘secured’ in 2014-15 compared to £7.1m in 2016-17. (The figures for the income received were £6.3m in 2014-15 and £7.8m in 2016-17).

2. The increase in fund-raising staff from 7 to 10 had been offset by the reduction in alumni engagement staff from 8 to 6.

3. Previous funding telethons had been successful but were no longer pursued and an in-depth consideration of the activities of the Advancement Team could be useful.

4. The Community Foundation is a partner with the University in the organisation of ‘A Festival of Philanthropy and Giving’ from 7-27 November 2018. Further information can be found at https://www.generosityfestival.co.uk/.

Resolved that:

The Registrar should convene and chair a meeting for any member of Court who wished to discuss the issues raised above in further detail. Those who wish to be included should inform the Registrar after the meeting.

10. MEMBERSHIP OF COURT STEERING COMMITTEE

Reported that:

(a) The membership of Court Steering Committee for 2018-19 is as follows:
(b) The Chancellor has taken Chair’s action to approve the appointment of Mr Rob Williamson as the Court appointed member of Honorary Degrees Committee for one year with effect from 1 August 2018.

11. LAY MEMBERS OF STATUTORY BODIES AND OTHER UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES PRIVACY NOTICE

Received:

A document setting out the University’s responsibilities for use of data relating to members of Court and other statutory bodies and committees.

(Circulated with the agenda as Document I)

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Court resolved to send its good wishes to Sir Robert Malpas, Honorary Graduate of the University (Hon DEng 1991), following his attempted murder on the London Underground.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported that:

(a) The next meeting of Court will take place at 10.30am on Friday 10 May 2018.

(b) That Court Steering Committee has agreed that a presentation on the University’s Internationalisation activities, including plans for Brexit, should be the main item on the agenda. This presentation will be delivered by Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Engagement & Internationalisation.