NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

1 May 2018

Present: The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor Julie Sanders (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor David Burn, Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Brian Walker, Professor Nick Wright, Professor Phillip Wright, (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor Caroline Austin, Professor Paul Christensen, Miss Sarah Craggs (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students’ Union), Professor Nicola Curtin, Dr Emma Foster, Dr Stacy Gillis, Dr Ruth Graham, Professor Nigel Harkness, Dr Joan Harvey, Dr Helen Jarvis, Professor Peter Jorgensen, Dr Phillip Lord, Dr Nick Megoran, Dr Andrew Pike, Professor Jane Pollard, Mr George (Ronnie) Reid (President, Students’ Union), Professor Jackie Leach Scully, Professor Chris Seal, and Mr Rowan South (Education Officer, Students’ Union).

In attendance: Mrs Lesley Braiden (Academic Registrar), Mrs Judith Whitaker (Executive Director of HR) and Dr Simon Meacher (Executive Officer, Governance).

Apologies: Dr Phil Ansell, Professor Richard Davies, Mr Mike Davison, Dr Lindsey Ferrie, Professor Klaus Schoefer and Miss Holly Waddell (elected member, Students’ Union).

Dr Richard Harrison (Head of Learning and Teaching Development) was present for Minutes 72 and 73.

M I N U T E S

68. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 20 March 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed.

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

69. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Senate Elections (Minute 65, 20.3.18)

Noted that:

1. A member of Senate proposed that Senate should use one of its three currently vacant co-opted positions to co-opt a member of professional services staff.

2. Professional services staff provide a vital role in underpinning the academic work of the University. Many possess a detailed understanding of policies, procedures and regulations, knowledge that would be useful to Senate in considering its business.

3. Support for the proposal amongst Senators was not universal. Some felt it important to preserve the academic nature of Senate membership, whilst others argued that membership of Council by professional services staff would be more appropriate.
Senate, 1 May 2018

4. There are other categories of staff eligible to stand for election to Senate who were not or may not be included in Senate membership including Heads of Academic Units and Research Associates.

5. Feedback gathered by the Newcastle Professional Task and Finish Group suggested there was a perception the University’s governance structures excluded professional services. Co-option would be an important step towards the parity of esteem that the University was working to achieve. A member of Senate could be co-opted from professional services on a one-year trial basis.

Resolved that: following a vote by show of hands, Senate agreed by 13 to 8 that an election should be held to determine who would be considered for this position and Senate would then co-opt a member.

70. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor and President’s report. Highlights of this report are discussed below.

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

Reported:

a. Vision and Strategy

That the University’s new Vision and Strategy would be launched in September, beginning a year-long launch campaign aimed at bringing the Vision to life. The campaign will feature events for staff at each of the University’s four main locations (Newcastle, London, Malaysia and Singapore), and five separate events for other stakeholders. The Vision and Strategy will be predominantly web-based, and will feature a series of online stories with a focus on people and places that embody the University’s core areas of excellence and values. The staff launch will take place immediately after the Great Exhibition of the North and this year’s Clearing exercise have concluded, in order to maximise impact.

b. Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey

That the University was ranked 7th in the UK for student experience in the latest THE Student Experience Survey. This was the fourth consecutive year in which the University had been in the top 10. Newcastle scored particularly well for good social life and good library and opening hours.

c. Complete University Guide

That the University was in 22nd place up from 23rd last year (out of 131 UK universities) with 17 subjects in the Top 10. The University ranks among the best for subjects such as Art and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, Food Science, Dentistry, Communication and Media Studies, Medicine, Archaeology, Architecture, English, Linguistics, Marketing, Aural and Oral Sciences, Creative Writing, Anatomy and Physiology, French, German, and Iberian Languages. Other subjects that were delivered by large numbers of institutions, had also performed comparatively well.

d. Change of Deanship Title

In order to ensure consistency in the terminology used across the University when referring to equality, diversity and inclusion, Executive Board had taken the decision to amend the title of the Deanship from the Dean of Diversity to Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This change would also ensure consistency with the terminology in the Vision and Strategy.
e. **Leverhulme Doctoral Scholarship Programme**

Fifteen PhD studentships would be funded by the Leverhulme Trust in the new field of Behaviour Informatics – the study of behaviour by using state of the art sensors, machine learning, and statistical and modelling techniques. The innovative programme would bring together experts from the Centre for Behaviour and Evolution and Institute of Neuroscience, in collaboration with the Behavioural and Experimental Northeast Cluster (BENC) at Newcastle University Business School, and Open Lab. The project also involves academics from the Schools of English Literature, Language and Linguistics, Natural and Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Mathematics, Statistics and Physics and the School of Computing.

g. **REF Panel Membership**

The University would be represented by 12 members of staff across eleven REF sub-panels. All members were confirmed for the criteria setting phase which had begun recently. The University would be calling on their valuable insights as the Sub-Panels develop their own interpretation of the rules, and as we work up our Newcastle REF Strategy.

h. **Northern Accelerator**

Together with Durham, Northumbria and Sunderland universities, Newcastle had been awarded £4.9m by the government to form the Northern Accelerator, which would build upon the success of university spin-out companies and encourage more start-ups. The new project will focus on four key areas of regional strength: advanced manufacturing, the chemicals and process sector, life sciences and healthcare and digital.

i. **Engage and Aspire**

The Engage and Aspire project was being established as a University-wide project tasked with understanding how to support staff to flourish and be the best they can be and at the same time realise the University’s goals and aspirations. Ultimately, the project would involve a review of the current PDR process, but would also seek to understand the variations of appraisal practice and process across the University. Senate would receive a presentation on this matter at its meeting on 26 June 2018.

j. **Dean of Business and Innovation**

Professor Nick Wright’s term of office as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Innovation and Business was due to end on 31 July 2018. Executive Board had agreed that, from this time, the position of Pro-Vice-Chancellor Innovation and Business would be replaced by a cross-cutting role of Dean of Innovation and Business, with Professor Brian Walker, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research Strategy and Resources, assuming overall responsibility for this wider portfolio. 22 applications had been received for the new Deanship post.

Professors Peter Hopkins, Rachel Pain and Diane Richardson from the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology had been conferred with the award of Fellow of the Academy of Social Scientists. Fellowship is awarded to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the areas of thought leadership, practical application or policy development in the social sciences.
k. Archive Service Accreditation

Newcastle’s Special Collections and Archives service has been awarded Archive Service Accreditation. The prestigious UK-wide quality standard award gives the University’s Special Collections and Archives service national recognition for the standard of service it provides and places it amongst other accredited archival services including the Natural History Museum and National Portrait Gallery.

l. North of Tyne Devolution

On 26 April 2018, regional council leaders had voted in favour of creating a new North of Tyne Combined Authority that would see increased investment in infrastructure and skills in the region. The devolution deal was still subject to ratification by parliament.

m. Professor Paul Younger

The University had learned with great sadness that Professor Paul Younger, former Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement, has passed away on 21 April 2018.

n. Professor Jane Wilson

Professor Jane Wilson (Professor of Fine Art) had been appointed as a Trustee of Tate by the Prime Minister.

o. Pensions

The impact of the industrial action on many of the University’s students and staff to date had been significant. Much would need to be done to ensure that students could be supported and assessed appropriately in the coming weeks.

p. Reports from Senate Committees

University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee

Professor Cholerton reported that the March meeting of ULTSEC had received information regarding the Office for Students and the substantial amount of work that had been necessary to enable the University to register with the new regulatory body, with registration documents required including an Access and Participation Plan (replacing the Access Agreement) and a Student Protection Plan.

Noted that:

1. ULTSEC had considered a proposal for the introduction of an inter-semester break, but had taken the decision to undertake a wider review of the shape of the academic year rather than progress the proposal.
2. There was concern that an inter-semester break would reduce the quality of the student experience, in particular in subjects where undergraduate students were required to carry out project work. The proposal also had the potential to impact negatively on staff with dependents.
3. A review of the shape of the academic year would involve substantial consultation with the faculties, and would seek to ensure there was a consistent institutional approach that protected student interests.

University Engagement Committee
Dr Joan Harvey (on behalf of Professor Richard Davies) reported that The Freedom City 2017 programme had recently concluded with a memorial service marking 50 years since Dr King’s assassination. The University FC2017 legacy programme would be taken forward by the soon to be appointed Dean of Social Justice. The Engagement Strategy had been reviewed and rewritten to align with the University Vision and Strategy. Key strategic projects for the next 12-18 months included; Redefining the partnership between the University and the International Centre for Life, reviewing the University’s digital presence for Engagement and delivering solutions to address identified issues, strengthening our international engagement working closely with the International Office and Global Challenges Academy, and defining the strategy and approach to embedding social justice throughout the institution.

Senate noted with deep regret that anti-apartheid and equal rights campaigner Archibald Sibeko, an honorary graduate of the University in November 2017, had passed away on 27 March 2018.

University Internationalisation Committee

Professor Nigel Harkness (on behalf of Professor Richard Davies) reported that recent visits by the President of the University of Pittsburgh and by Monash University had gone very well. The University was renewing its tier-2 ‘institutional level partnerships’ to check with faculties whether they remained appropriate (with a particular emphasis on European partnerships). The University had also written to 179 European partners to re-emphasize the importance of their collaboration to us, and was working hard on international student recruitment.

University Research Committee

Professor Brian Walker reported that URC had been considering the draft institutional QR Global Challenges Research Fund Strategy prior to its progress to Executive Board and Financial Monitoring and Budget Scrutiny Group. It had been agreed that the bulk of QR funding should flow in the usual way through Faculties but that it must be clearly accounted for as supporting Official Development Assistance (ODA)-compatible research activity. It was agreed that a smaller proportion of QR funding should flow in support of the Global Challenges Academy, but that it would be desirable for this proportion to increase with time.

The new Research Strategy would be submitted to Senate on 26 June 2018.

It was also reported that the RCUK Open Access Grant had run out of funds due, for example, to the rising cost of publishing, a fall in the relative value of sterling, and payment from the fund of page charges and colour illustration fees. The default position would be to pay for Open Access Green in order to achieve REF compliance, and only to extend to gold for publishers or funders for which green does not satisfy the requirements. Material would be prepared to encourage authors to negotiate with journals when inflated open access costs were proposed.

q. School of Engineering Probation Policy

Professor Phillip Wright reported that the School of Engineering had introduced Probation Expectations for Academic Staff in support of Faculty probation expectations. In line with University Probation Policy, the aim of the School document was to provide new academic staff with clarity of expectations and appropriate support to enable them to maximise their performance.

Noted that:
1. There were a number of strong objections to the School of Engineering probation document voiced by Senators on the grounds that it included individual performance targets, was highly prescriptive, and did not emphasise the need to support and value staff. The imposition of the current probation expectations would be highly detrimental to staff morale, wellbeing and reputation, as well as the reputation of the University.

2. The Head of the School of Engineering had introduced the probation expectations in response to the need for greater clarity and consistency of expectations for staff.

3. The interpretation of the University Probation Policy within both the SAgE Faculty and School probation expectations was problematic, and highlighted a need to review the University Probation Policy. This review would be carried out as part of the Engage and Aspire initiative.

4. As part of a review of Probation Policy, it would be worthwhile taking into account practice of other institutions where probation and promotion expectations were articulated in a qualitative and descriptive way, as well as academic literature on effective university performance.

**Recommended that: the School of Engineering Probation Expectations be formally withdrawn and that the School use the SAgE Faculty Probation Expectations, pending a full review of University Probation Policy.**

71. **SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 16 APRIL 2018**

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 16 April 2018.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

72. **EDUCATION STRATEGY**

Received a paper from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The University Education Strategy would be the means through which the education element of the University’s new Vision and Strategy would be implemented. The Strategy was deliberately short in order for it to gain currency and to provide a clear reference point for strategic decision making. No reference was made to external measures as these were highly likely to evolve or change during the lifetime of the Strategy.

2. The Strategy focused on four key themes: research-education links; student engagement with their learning; holistic student development; and technology-enhanced learning. These four key themes had emerged through the extensive consultation undertaken since September 2016 and aimed to give the Strategy its distinctiveness.

3. The term education would replace the current phrase ‘learning, teaching and student experience’. This reflects ‘education’ being one of the fundamental purposes of the University as set out in our Statutes. It is also based on education being a broad term that encompasses both the opportunities provided through all academic programmes and those available through extra- and co-curricular provision.
4. By extrapolation, the name of University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee would change to University Education Committee (with committees at faculty level following suit), and the title of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for this portfolio would change to Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.

5. A number of key projects and developments would be undertaken as institution-wide initiatives, in order to promote and facilitate the development of the quality and nature of a Newcastle University education set out in the University Education Strategy. Progress had already been made with a number of these projects, including the Graduate Attributes Framework, which would set out the personal attributes and skills that characterise a Newcastle University graduate, and embed the development of these attributes and skills across our programmes and our co- and extra-curricular provision.

6. Key performance measures would be determined once the Strategy had been fully approved. These would need to take account of external factors, one example being student progression, which was a particular focus for the Office of Students as the new sector regulatory body.

7. In keeping with the Vision and Strategy, where the principle of academic freedom was enshrined, implementation of the Education Strategy would be carried out by academic staff applying their professional knowledge, expertise and experience to interpret and deliver the vision in ways appropriate to their disciplinary contexts.

8. The intended growth in research intensity would not undermine efforts to fulfil the commitments of the Education Strategy, since growing intensity – which would bring an increase in the numbers of staff on Teaching and Research contracts – was a mechanism for growth in general terms.

9. There was support for the emphasis within the Strategy on maximising the benefits for students and staff from the use of technology, and also for its commitment to collaborative activity and external engagement, which the University should aspire to do more of.

10. The Education Strategy would be considered for approval by Council in June 2018.

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

Received a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching.

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

Noted that:

1. Senate had been asked to approve two proposed changes to the University Examination Conventions for Undergraduate Degree Programmes (including Integrated Master’s Programmes) with effect from the 2019/20 academic year. Each raised a significant matter of principle.

2. The first change concerned issues relating to the degree classification of undergraduate and integrated master’s students who, due to professional accreditation requirements, were required to pass one or more core final stage modules. As such students did not have the option of graduating carrying a fail of up to 20 credits, regulations exemptions had been granted to permit these students to graduate with the classification of degree obtained at their first assessment. Other students who undertook a resit of a final stage...
module were limited to a classification no higher than a third class degree, and ULTSEC had taken the view that this was not equitable. A review of practice at comparator universities had shown that while some did restrict classifications for students required to resit, several did not. ULTSEC had therefore recommended to Senate that the University should amend its regulations so that no student required to resit final stage modules should be able to improve their overall classification as a result of undertaking a resit, but that such students should be able to gain a classification corresponding to their final programme average following their first attempts at final stage.

3. The second change was a proposal that in programmes where students must pass one or more modules as a professional accreditation requirement, a non-accredited ‘exit’ degree with a different name must be provided. Liaison with Faculties and professional bodies would be needed to determine the nomenclature for non-accredited ‘exit’ degrees.

Resolved that Senate approve both changes to the University Examination Conventions to take effect in 2019/20.

74. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 29(4))

In accordance with Statute 29(4), Senate may accord the title of Professor Emeritus on professors retiring from the University.

Senate was asked to approve the proposal from the Vice-Chancellor, following consultation with the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

[Circulated as Documents F. Copies filed the Minute Book.]

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:

Professor David Mendelow with effect from 1 July 2018.

75. APPOINTMENT OF A PUBLIC ORATOR

In accordance with Senate Standing Order XI, Senate is asked to approve a recommendation from Executive Board for the appointment of a Public Orator

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

Resolved that Senate approve the appointment of Professor David Jones as Public Orator for three years from 1 May 2018 to 31 July 2021.

76. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE

The following meetings of Senate committees have taken place and the minutes from each committee were provided for information

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

a) University Engagement Committee: 7 March 2018
b) University Internationalisation Committee: 18 January 2018
c) University Research Committee: 26 February 2018

77. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT
Received the annual Health and Safety report.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

78. **ANNUAL REPORT FROM PUBLIC LECTURES COMMITTEE**

Received the annual report from Public Lectures Committee. 
[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

79. **REPORTED BUSINESS**

Received 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 N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

Senate received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.

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

80. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Noted that:

Senate received feedback about the excellent conduct of Student Ambassadors at University Visit Days, and this feedback should be passed on to the Student Recruitment team.