Present: The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor Julie Sanders (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor David Burn, Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Nigel Harkness, Professor Brian Walker, Professor Phillip Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr Phil Ansell, Professor Caroline Austin, Miss Lucy Backhurst, Mr Mike Davison, Professor Gwyneth Doherty-Sneddon, Dr Stacy Gillis, Professor Stephanie Glendinning, Mr Jack Green (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students’ Union), Mr Jonny Hall (Education Officer, Students’ Union), Dr Joan Harvey, Dr Carmen Hubbard, Dr Helen Jarvis, Dr Phillip Lord, Mr Raff Marioni (President, Students’ Union), Dr Nick Megoran, Dr Julie Morris, Dr Andrew Pike, Professor Jackie Leach Scully, Professor Daniel Siemens, Dr Joanne Smith-Finley, Professor Selina Stead, Professor David Thwaites and Professor Aad van Moorsel.

In attendance: Mrs Lesley Braiden (Academic Registrar), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Ms Abi Kelly (Executive Director of Corporate Affairs), and Dr Simon Meacher (Executive Officer, Governance).

Mr Simon Gerry (Chief Executive, Students’ Union) for Item 12.
Ms Sally Ingram (Director of Student Health and Wellbeing) for Item 5.
Mrs Naomi Oosman-Watts (Assistant Director, Career Management) for Item 10.

Apologies: Professor Peter Jorgensen and Professor Jane Pollard.

M I N U T E S

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
   
   No declarations of interest were received.

2. MINUTES
   
   That minutes of the meeting of Senate on 26 June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed.
   
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document A. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

   Noted that:

   A paper regarding the use of student surveys scores for staff management teaching enhancement purposes would be considered by Senate at its meeting either in January or March 2019 (Minute 82, 26.6.18 refers).

3. 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.]

   Noted:
1. **Ed Farmer**

   Executive Board had discussed the recent coroner’s inquest into the tragic death of Newcastle University student Ed Farmer. The Vice-Chancellor had written to all students to reinforce the message that initiations were banned by the University and the Students’ Union, and to remind students of the dangers of excessive drinking. The Vice-Chancellor had also put himself forward to chair a Universities UK working group to look at how the university sector could take collective action to ensure that this serious issue was addressed effectively at every institution in the UK. An internal working group had been established to consider the issues arising from the coroner’s inquest and report. The report would be made available to Senate in due course.

2. **The Chancellorship**

   The Chancellor, Sir Liam Donaldson, had announced that he would be stepping down in July 2019. A working group had been established to undertake the process of identifying the next Chancellor. Senate was invited to appoint two representatives to sit on the group.

3. **Athena SWAN**

   In the latest round of Athena SWAN awards, the Faculty of Medical Sciences had been granted Silver status, and Bronze status had been awarded to the Newcastle University Business School, School of Arts and Cultures and School of Modern Languages. The School of Computing and the School of Engineering had also been successful in having their Bronze status renewed.

4. **Natural Environment Research Council**

   The University had been successful in obtaining funding from the Natural Environment Research Council for two Doctoral Training Partnerships in which it was a partner: the ONE Planet Doctoral Training Partnership between Newcastle and Northumbria universities; and IAPETUS, a partnership joining the universities of Newcastle, Durham, Glasgow, St Andrews and Stirling, with the British Geological Society and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

5. **School of Engineering**

   After its first year since the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering restructuring, the School of Engineering had reported a number of positive indicators, including a £4m increase in research income, improved performance in the Times Higher Education World University, QS World University, and Complete University Guide rankings. A full progress report would be considered by Senate in due course.

6. **Staff Success**

   Congratulations were recorded for twelve University staff who had become fellows of the Alan Turing Institute, and Professor Sharon Mavin (Director of the Newcastle University Business School), who had become a Fellow of the Academy of Social Scientists.

7. **Urban Sciences Building**

   The Urban Sciences Building had won the Campus of the Future Award at the Green Gown Awards for its building-as-a-lab concept. The extent to which sustainability was incorporated into the USB was the key to success.
8. **University Deanships**

   Executive Board had approved the creation of a new Dean of Lifelong Learning and Professional Practice post, on a 0.4-0.6 FTE basis for an initial term of three years, and would be discussing the establishment of a new Dean of Place and Partnerships at its meeting on 27 November.

9. **Effectiveness Questionnaire 2018**

   In light of feedback in the Senate Effectiveness Questionnaire, the meetings of Senate in 2019-20 would be scheduled to take place on Wednesday afternoons so as not to conflict with teaching commitments. Senate would consider the full report on the Effectiveness Questionnaire at its meeting in January 2019.

10. **Review of Academic Promotions**

   The Chair of the Review of Academic Promotions Steering Group, Professor Tim Kirk, would be attending the next meeting of Senate in January 2019 to provide an interim update on the group’s work.

11. **Reports from Committees of Senate**

    **University Education Committee (UEC) – Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education**

    UEC had considered a proposal for the replacement of the Certificate in Advanced Studies in Academic Practice. A replacement scheme would focus on UK Professional Standards Framework recognition rather than a University academic award, and would be more tailored to individual needs. The review of the scheme would provide an opportunity for timetabling staff participation into the academic workload model.

    The Committee had also considered the draft Self-Evaluation prepared by INTO Newcastle University for its Educational Oversight visit from the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

    **University Engagement and Place Committee (UEPC) – Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Internationalisation**

    Following its renaming the Committee had a renewed focus, with University aspirations and objectives for Place having been aligned with those for Engagement. The Committee had been instrumental in the development of the Engagement and Place Strategy, a final version of which had been produced for endorsement by Senate and approval by Council.

    **University Internationalisation Committee (UIC) – Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Internationalisation**

    The Committee had devoted significant time to discussing enhancements to international student recruitment. The University was seeking to become a member of the Chinese Scholarship Council, with the aim of raising the institution’s profile and attracting PhD students from China. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor had recently visited Delhi and Mumbai to present on University strategy.

    A number of new staff appointments had also been made in the University’s International Recruitment and International Relations and Partnerships teams.
University Research Committee (URC) – Professor Brian Walker, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources

The Committee had considered the proposed implementation plan and draft KPIs for the new Research Strategy. In terms of research income, Q3 results had shown a marked decrease in research grant applications and awards across all faculties, but short term actions to target funding opportunities had been identified. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Deans of Postgraduate Studies and Research had participated in a useful discussion on the governance and strategic management of research students.

4. SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 16 JULY AND 15 OCTOBER 2018

Received a summary report from the meetings of Council that took place on 16 July and 15 October 2018.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

5. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Senate held a discussion on the subject of Student Mental Health and Wellbeing, led by Ms Sally Ingram, Director of Student Health and Wellbeing.

Noted that:

1. Mental health was emerging as one of the most significant public health issues affecting young people. Considerable attention had been given in the national media to the rise in mental wellbeing issues, especially amongst young people in higher education.

2. Since last year, the University had experienced a 25% increase in the number of students seeking counselling, and a 113% rise in reported student welfare incidents.

3. The University was taking a proactive approach to coordinating its provision and anticipating students' needs. Newcastle's counselling service was open for 13 hours, four days per week and until 5pm on a Friday. A primary focus for the University was to make sure a support network was in place for students identified as vulnerable as part of the Fitness to Study process.

4. There had been a significant investment in the staffing of the University’s Counselling and Mental Health teams to enhance the level and availability of support for students.

5. The University had adopted the Universities UK ‘#stepchange’ recommendations on implementing a whole university approach to mental health encompassing students and staff. An internal task and finish group was developing an implementation plan.

6. Academic staff were often the first port of call for students experiencing mental health issues, which could be difficult and stressful as they were not professionally qualified to provide counselling. The University has a very clear guide on how to respond to distressed students, but it was acknowledged that awareness of the availability of the Counselling team needed to be improved. Emergency services should be called directly if there was an immediate risk.

7. Training for staff on supporting students was provided by the Student Health and Wellbeing Service, and bespoke sessions could be delivered in academic units by request. The University had submitted a bid to the Office for Students’ Student Mental Health Challenge Competition to support the development of further training, support student transition to university, and address barriers to access support involving different agencies.
6. ENGAGEMENT AND PLACE STRATEGY

Received the Engagement and Place Strategy from Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Internationalisation, and Professor Julie Sanders, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The strategy concerned how the University would respond to current and future challenges at local, national and global scales by working together both within and without the institution. The University had always recognised the value of engagement but there were now numerous drivers for this type of activity, including the UK’s Industrial Strategy, national media attention around the role of universities and value of higher education, and the UK’s departure from the European Union.

2. The University’s engagement activities were wide ranging and included: co-creation of research; collaboration with businesses; voluntary groups and the creative sector; influencing policy; student placements; and public engagement in its many forms. Place-based activities were locally rooted, nationally connected and globally engaged as the University sought to maximise its global impact through research and education.

3. The specific aims of the strategy were to:
   - Work closely with regional industries and businesses to address their needs including those related to: research and development; business innovation; and current skill shortages in their workforce and their requirement for appropriately trained graduates though mechanisms such as lifelong learning and professional practice and degree level apprenticeships.
   - Be an effective partner for local government, the NHS, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, the public and cultural organisations.
   - Use our global reach to increase the international connectivity of our region.
   - Contribute to the vibrancy and cultural richness of our region through our expertise in creative arts practice, culture and heritage.
   - Equip academic and professional staff with the skills to address policy challenges facing governments locally, nationally and internationally.
   - Improve the social mobility of people from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring our education and research is as widely accessible as possible.

4. Two priority approaches would be employed by the University to deliver the aims of the strategy: the University’s place as a “Living Lab”, using its Urban Observatory, estate, incubators, national centres in ageing and data, and farms; and collaborating with partners to co-design solutions, including projects such as the Vital North Partnership, Newcastle City Futures, and Freedom City 2017.

5. Two transformative initiatives, designed to create a step change in the delivery of benefit of research and education outside of the University, had also been identified. These were: leading on the social justice agenda, and developing a culture of public engagement to support better research and education. A Dean of Social Justice had been appointed to lead the development and implementation of a vision and strategy for social justice. The University aimed to be a leader in public engagement, maximising the benefits of its research to the public of the North East.
6. Senate was broadly supportive of the Strategy, but suggested there could be more emphasis on the notion of the ‘rural’, on social wellbeing and enabling corporate social responsibility, on North East sport, and on the role of the University in defining and critiquing the concept of ‘public good’ as well as delivering it.

7. The University’s Strategy Implementation Group was considering the milestones and key performance indicators that would apply to the Strategy, and these would be submitted to Council for consideration in due course.

**Resolved that**: Senate endorse the Engagement and Place Strategy for onward transmission to Council.

7. **UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS**

Received a paper from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education, and Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Internationalisation, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The report provided details of the outcome of the undergraduate recruitment cycle for Newcastle University (including London) for 2018 entry at 5 November 2018, as well as reflections on the 2018 cycle and the 2019 recruitment strategy.

2. Overall, the target for UK/EU undergraduate registrations for 2018 had been exceeded but the fall in international undergraduate student numbers continued to cause concern. A drop in progression rates from INTO Newcastle had negatively impacted upon acceptances.

3. The Clearing and Adjustment period had been very successful for the University. In order to fill places, some subject areas dropped their acceptance grades to below ABB to secure quality “near miss” applicants, prioritising students from a widening participation background and elite athletes, but always recognising the grades required to succeed on the programme. This reduced student numbers required at Clearing, resulting in a more manageable target.

4. The University had experienced a fall in applications greater than that of the sector average and its competitors. It was thought that this was due to demographic decline in key sending areas. Newcastle’s geographical distance from other locations was also cited as a factor for non-acceptances. The Strategy for future recruitment cycles would be informed by detailed analysis using UCAS data and insight carried out in light of this years’ experience.

5. A more competitive Undergraduate Admissions Strategy for 2019 had been approved by Executive Board. The Strategy includes measures that respond to the aggressive admissions activity of competitors. These included in selected subject areas higher entrance requirements, more unconditional offer making (home and international) linked to achievement scholarships for high achieving students identified by a combination of GCSE achievement and predicted grades as an intervention to recruit more high tariff students, and a dual offer approach that would reward students who selected Newcastle as firm choice.

6. The three key elements for achieving student recruitment targets with respect to overall numbers, balance between UK/EU and international, diversity in respect of under-represented groups, were product, i.e. what was offered to the undergraduate market,
marketing and recruitment, i.e. how the University markets the produce and drives applications, and admissions, i.e. how the University deals with applicants to maximise conversion. It was considered that the University needed to more effective in its communications and relationship-building with applicants, and more nimble in its decision-making on admissions.

7. In terms of next steps and mitigating activities, a Student Recruitment Task and Finish Group had been established to consider medium and long term strategies for maximising recruitment and conversion, in particular undergraduate applications for 2019 ahead of the January deadline.

8. Consideration should be given, when reflecting on admissions strategy, to reviewing the traditional range of prerequisite subjects that were stipulated in entry requirements.

9. Given the importance of Open Days in determining student destinations, consideration could be given by the University to ensuring its own open days were differentiated from those of its competitors.

10. There was concern about the use of unconditional offers, although it was emphasised that the University’s approach was a measured one, with offers linked to achievement scholarships to incentivise students to continue working hard towards achieving their predicted grades.

8. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2018

Received a paper from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The University’s absolute scores in the National Student Survey had fallen across all of the question domains, continuing a trend that started in 2017. Additionally, the University’s performance against its institutional benchmarks calculated by the Office for Students emphasised this downward trend. Newcastle was in the bottom quartile of full service universities for results in assessment and feedback, and in the third quartile for performance on teaching.

2. A similar pattern of declining absolute and relative performance was also evident in this year’s Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey results. This was accompanied by poorer relative performance against the rest of the sector.

3. While individual subject areas did continue to achieve strong results in these surveys, overall institutional results were showing a worrying trend of decline. The only area where Newcastle’s results were in the top quartile of universities was learning resources, with core areas of education, such as teaching and assessment and feedback, showing particularly concerning absolute and/or comparative performance.

4. Academic units were considering their results leading to individual action plans that would be including in Annual Monitoring and Review reports. The PVC Education, Faculty Deans and Head of the Learning, Teaching and Development Service would also be meeting with some specific subject areas to discuss their results.

5. It would be important to understand what high performing subjects were doing and to share good practice as much as possible.
9. OFFICE FOR STUDENTS ANNUAL ASSURANCE RETURN

Received a paper from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education. [Circulated with the agenda as Document G. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

The paper provided a summary of the operation in 2017-18 of the University's framework for assuring academic quality and standards, to provide a basis for the University to make its annual assurance return to the Office for Students on the institutional management of academic quality and standards.

Resolved that, based on the information provided in Document G, a recommendation be made to Council that assurance could be given to the Office for Students regarding the University’s student academic experience, student outcomes and degree standards.

10. GRADUATE FRAMEWORK

Received a paper from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education, on behalf of Executive Board. [Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Following a review of the Graduate Skills Framework, a new Graduate Framework had been developed which was intended for use at programme level. The new Framework was designed to take account of employers’ needs, the dramatic increase in the graduate population and changes in the labour market, as well as the development of the new Education Strategy and new employability metrics including the Teaching Excellence Framework, Graduate Outcomes Survey and Longitudinal Education Outcomes.

2. The purpose of the Framework was to provide an accessible and usable resource for students, staff and external stakeholders to understand the key attributes gained by studying at Newcastle University.

3. The implementation of the Graduate Framework was a priority action within the new Education Strategy. It would be underpinned by practical tools and resources allowing students to reflect on their development and to facilitate meaningful conversations with staff. Development of the attributes within the Framework would enhance students’ employability and prepare them to be responsive to current and future challenges.

4. It was suggested that the definitions of terms such as ‘Resilience’ and ‘Social Responsibility’ should be revisited. The meaning of Resilience should be tested with the student body. There should be greater emphasis within Social Responsibility on environmental awareness as well as clearer references to numeracy.

5. Students often struggled with self-reflection, which might impair their ability to engage with the Framework.

6. There was the potential to use the Graduate Outcomes Survey as a means of measuring the impact and success of the Framework.
Resolved that: a revised version of the Graduate Framework should be submitted to Senate in Spring 2019 following further consideration by University Education Committee.

11. IMPACT OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Received a paper from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education, and Mrs Lesley Braiden, Academic Registrar, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The report focused on the impact of the industrial action on the student experience rather than the wider issues of impact on staff.

2. The report identified a number of learning points and concluded that there had been a significant impact but the efforts of staff meant that all eligible students were examined and graduated with the published timetable, having received a fair and consistent consideration which maintained standards.

12. STUDENTS’ UNION IMPACT REPORT

Received a presentation from Mr Simon Gerry, Chief Executive of the Students’ Union, and Mr Raff Marioni, President of the Students’ Union.

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

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

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

Considered a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor and President following consultation with the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

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

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:

Professor Greg Rubin with effect from 1 November 2018.
Professor Mark Thomas with effect from 1 August 2018.

14. REPORT FROM HONORARY DEGREE COMMITTEE

Considered a report from the Honorary Degrees Committee.

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

Resolved that the nominations made by the Honorary Degree Committee for the award of honorary degrees in July 2019 be approved.

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

15. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEE OF SENATE
The following meetings of Senate committees have taken place and the minutes from each committee are provided for information:

(a) University Education Committee: 6 June, 4 July, 13 September, and 17 October 2018  
(b) University Engagement and Place Committee: 20 June 2018  
(c) University Internationalisation Committee: 17 May and 19 July 2018 and Annual Report  
(d) University Research Committee: 25 June and 16 July 2018  

[Circulated with the agenda as Document N-Q. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

16. GREAT NORTH MUSEUM BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE  

Received the revised Terms of Reference for the Great North Museum Board.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document R. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that Senate approve the revised Terms of Reference and new title for the Board (University Museum and Gallery Board).

17. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY REGULATIONS  

Received the revised University Delegation of Authority Regulations.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document S. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

18. SENATE’S DELEGATION OF POWER AND AUTHORITY  

Received Senate’s delegation of power and authority document.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document T. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

19. NU WOMEN REPORT  

Received the NU Women review of 2017-18 report.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document U. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

20. REPORT FROM CATHERINE COOKSON FOUNDATION  

Received a report from the meeting of the Catherine Cookson Foundation held on 11 June 2018.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document V. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

21. REPORTED BUSINESS  

Received a 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 W. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]