

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

THE FIFTY-SIXTH ORDINARY MEETING OF CONVOCATION

Saturday 15 June 2013

Present: Mr AE Jones (in the chair); Mr O Amogu; Professor J Anderson; Dr M Anderson; Ms AJ Armour; Miss SJ Bevan; Dr CRB Bamford; Professor C Brink (Vice-Chancellor); Mr T Britten; Mrs AM Brown; Dr RJ Butterfield; Mrs C Butterfield; Mr P Byrne; Ms EM Carpenter; Mrs PM Chrisp; Dr HM Coyne; Dr P Coyne; Ms SL Davies; Miss R Draper; Mrs EE Earnshaw; Mr RE Eden; Mr A Fahm; Dr ML Fisher; Mr IH Forster; Mrs DJ Georghiou; Mr CC Goldthorpe; Dr K Harland; Mrs CM Harvey; Dr KF Hobbs; Mr CL Humphreys; Mr PBF Hood; Mrs E Hood; Dr J Hutton; Mr J Jeffery; Dr MA Kettle; Mr DKK Lam; Mr P Langley; Revd JNL Latham; Mr CG Lee; Professor TH Lilley; Mrs RE Lishman; Dr WB Lishman; Mr DF Lloyd; Mrs AM Makepeace; Ms RR Mawson; Dr RW McCrae; Mr JR Megson; Dr DJ Moffatt; Mr GA Mutale; Mr WG Oliver; Mrs A Parker; Professor DG Parker; Mr JDRB Percy; Mrs PAM Percy; Mrs MD Penn; Mr JS Prince; Mr RC Pickering; Mrs E Randall; Mrs JN Redgrave; Mr H Regnart; Dr LM Rozner; Mr S Saunders; Mr M Scrimshaw; Dr RS Shiel; Mr JJM Shiundu; Mrs CG Smith; Mr JR Stott; Mr RW Swinney; Dr RM Tait; Mr RM Theaker; Mr RF Todd; Sir Neville Trotter; Professor AJ Walton; The Rt Hon Lord Walton of Detchant; Mr FT Walton; Mr DP Worthington; Mr G Wynn.

In attendance: Miss TA Angelopoulos; Mrs A Burton; Mrs C Butterfield; Mrs J Clubley; Professor E Cross; Mr R Dale; Professor CP Day; Mrs K Hendrix; Dr JV Hogan; Professor S Homans; Mrs F Homans; Ms H Kirk; Mrs M Lam; Ms SL Lee; Mrs G Mason; Mr J Penn; Ms TM Readshaw; Professor E Ritchie; Mrs D Saunders, Mrs EM Taylor.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Convocation held on Saturday 16 June 2012 were approved as an accurate record.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document A.]

2. MATTERS ARISING

Noted that at the previous meeting, it had been reported that the Alumni Consultative Group was in the process of reviewing its constitution. Revised terms of reference would be presented as part of the report from the Alumni Consultative Group (see item 7 below).

3. THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENT 2012-13

Received: The Vice-Chancellor's Report to Convocation, 15 June 2013.

Noted that:

1. At the time of the last meeting of Convocation, the University had been preparing for a new era in student tuition fees and funding arrangements which came into effect from September 2012. Much effort had been put into the University's recruitment activities as it was unknown what effect the new regime would have upon student choices. The University succeeded in increasing the number of students who achieved A-level grades of AAB+ when compared with the previous year, and overall recruitment levels remained stable. This was considered to be a good result since performance across the sector varied considerably. The number of students from widening participation backgrounds remained at the levels seen in 2011 and the

University continued to exceed its benchmark in terms of local widening participation recruitment. The numbers of international students increased by 22.4%.

2. In response to the new fees regime, the University has continued its focus on improving the student experience. Recap, a facility which enables the recording of lectures, has been rolled out across the University and more than 10,000 lecture recordings are accessible to students. The University's access agreement for 2013 has been approved by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and it has maintained an overall satisfaction score of 89% in the 2012 National Student Survey, which places it 14th overall in the UK. The University continues to achieve strong results in terms of the employability of its graduates with 95.2% of its graduates being in employment 6 months after their graduation in 2012.
3. The University's overall income from research awards is approaching £100m. Efforts have been focused on securing European awards where funding appears to be more readily available. Recent notable successes include the award of funding from HEFCE to launch the Neptune National Centre for Subsea and Offshore Engineering and a £21.9m award to fund a drugs trial in conjunction with the NHS Trust over a period of 10 years. Professor Sugata Mitra has achieved a notable individual success, having been awarded the TED prize of \$1m for his 'School in the Cloud'. The University is now making final preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) which will be completed by the end of 2014 and which will determine the research allocations that the University will receive from HEFCE from 2015 onwards.
4. In terms of engagement activities, the University's three Societal Challenge Themes – Ageing, Sustainability and Social Renewal – are now well established with a leader in post for each theme. Following much publicity of the City Council's plan to cut its budget for cultural activities, the University has reached an agreement whereby any savings which can be achieved as a result of shared services between the University and the City Council will be redirected to help fund the cultural institutions in which the University has an interest, for example, the Great North Museum.
5. Internationally, the University's campuses in Malaysia and Singapore are continuing to expand. Recruitment to NUMed is expected to stabilise at around 180 students per year from 2015/16 onwards. The University launched a partnership with Xiamen University and also a Confucius Institute in May 2013. Reputation building is becoming increasingly important and the University has sought to increase its international profile by issuing a brochure entitled 'The Idea of a World-Class Civic University' in a number of publications both at home and overseas.
6. Following a 7% (£8m) reduction in HEFCE grants and cuts elsewhere, 2011-12 proved to be a difficult financial year for the University. Financial performance in 2012-13 is expected to be better with a 12% increase being witnessed in research grant income over the year to date. There are longer term funding concerns, however, with the achievement of student recruitment targets becoming increasingly important for the University's financial sustainability. The forthcoming Government spending review, to be announced on 26 June, is of concern and it is anticipated that this could result in a cut to the budget for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.
7. Environmental sustainability is an area where the University's performance has been strong. The University has been awarded a first class award by People and Planet, an organisation which monitors environmental performance across the sector, which places it 15th in the nationally, an improvement on 26th place in 2012.

8. Improvements to the estate continue with the conversion of Kensington and Park Terraces into student accommodation which is expected to be completed by June 2014. There has been an increase in the number of students living on campus as a result of the opening of the INTO accommodation. The Grand Hotel is also being developed to provide more student accommodation on campus. A phased programme of improvements to the Armstrong Building is continuing and ultimately it is intended that the rear facade, the Jubilee Gate, will be opened up which will provide another courtyard area on campus. Development of Science Central, the former Newcastle Breweries site, is another key priority for the University and a major campaign aimed at attracting potential investors and developers was launched earlier in the year. Further information is available at: <http://www.newcastlesciencecentral.com/>.

Contributions and questions from the floor:

a) Mr Horace Regnart (LLB 1968)

What can our immigrant Vice-Chancellor do to restore intellectual sanity and exorcise bigotry in respect of the misclassification of overseas students as immigrants?

Response:

At present, immigration figures include non-EU students. A recent article in the Times Higher has noted that:

‘...the most recent immigration figures showed that 190,000 people arrived to study in the UK in the year to September 2012, a fall of 56,000 on the previous year. Mark Harper, the immigration minister, hailed the statistics as proof that the government was “continuing to bring immigration back under control”.’

Elsewhere within the government this fall in international student numbers has not been so warmly welcomed with Vince Cable being quoted in the same article as saying that foreign students were “good for the country and good for universities”. Five parliamentary committees have recommended that non-EU students should be excluded from the immigration figures as they are temporary immigrants and the majority return to their home country on completion of their studies. The government has chosen to ignore this advice.

Convocation recognises the benefits which a multicultural environment can bring and the benefits for the wider economy. It was considered that, if the government continues to pursue its current policy, this could give the impression that the UK does not welcome international visitors, which could have implications for tourism and industry.

The implications of the government’s policy for the University had not as yet resulted in a reduction in the overall number of international students coming to the University but there has been a change in the countries from which students are recruited. India is a country from which the University finds it difficult to recruit students and it is thought that many students from this country may have been put off from UK Higher Education as a result of the recent messages sent out by the government’s policies.

b) Professor David Parker (BSc Chemistry 1971 , PhD Chemistry 1974)

The improvements that have been made to the University campus in recent years are to be welcomed. Can anything be done to improve the panelling on the top of Northern Stage?

Response:

The wood panelling which is placed on top of Northern Stage is an art work.

c) Mr Ronald Frederick Todd (BA Town and Country Planning 1963)

Does the University liaise with other universities with a view to promoting economic growth and prosperity in the region?

Response:

Following the demise of One North East a number of Local Economic Partnerships (LEP) were established across the country. Within the North East, two LEPs were established, one for Tees Valley and another for the remainder of the region. The Vice-Chancellor is a member of the LEP board where he represents the interests of the four universities in the North East LEP area.

The regional universities have established collaborations in relation to electric vehicles and the low-carbon economy. The Angel Alliance has been established with Durham University which has been successful in boosting the University's research income. The University has recently established a collaboration with Northumberland County Council and the N8, of which the Vice-Chancellor is Chair, is a body which encourages the research intensive universities in the north of country to work together and to collaborate with business and industry.

4. FACULTY UPDATES

Received presentations from:

- (i) The Dean of Cultural Affairs for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Eric Cross.
- (ii) The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Professor Chris Day.
- (iii) The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering, Professor Steve Homans.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Noted that:

1. During 2012-13, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS) has focused its attention on a number of key areas, including improving its international reputation and continuing to improve the student experience. Improvements to the estate, including the refurbishment of the Armstrong, Fine Art and Building Science buildings have also been key developments.
2. Encouraging a more ambitious research environment has been a key priority

together with a need to achieve greater uniformity of research performance across the Faculty.

3. The expectations of students continue to increase, particularly following the introduction of the £9k fee in September 2012, and the Faculty has had to respond to this. Contact hours have been reviewed to ensure consistent delivery of the Newcastle 'offer' and increased levels of small group teaching have been introduced. Recruitment performance varies across the Faculty which presents a challenge, however, in terms of recruitment to subjects such as Law, Geography and Fine Art the University appears to be out-performing national trends. New programmes have been introduced in what have been identified as growth areas and e-learning courses are being developed to provide alternative methods of delivery.
4. The Faculty is pursuing triple accreditation for the Business School and to assist with this, a number of high profile appointments have been made.
5. The Faculty is responsible for the Social Renewal Societal Challenge Theme which has recently completed a successful launch year under the theme leader Professor Mark Shucksmith. The Confucius Institute, which was launched in May, will seek to promote Chinese language within the University and also the region. The Newcastle Institute for Creative Arts Practice was launched on 5 June with the aim of supporting transdisciplinary teaching, research and research projects. A major bid has been submitted for funding to support improvements to facilities in the Hatton Gallery.

Faculty of Medical Sciences

Noted that:

1. The Faculty of Medical Sciences continues to achieve strong recruitment figures. Quotas for the courses which are regulated by the government have been met and other courses where student numbers are not restricted continue to recruit strongly. All subject areas within the Faculty have achieved student satisfaction scores in the National Student Survey in excess of 90%. Postgraduate student numbers have also increased whilst maintaining satisfaction levels in excess of 90%.
2. The fourth intake of students to the NUMed campus in Malaysia began their studies in September 2012. The General Medical Council (GMC) has conducted regular accreditation visits in Malaysia and the University is on course to it deliver its first GMC accredited graduates in 2014. A Biomedical Sciences degree programme is being developed for delivery in Malaysia along with a foundation course which will allow high quality students to be recruited at an earlier stage.
3. Research awards continue to increase from £42m in 2009-10 to ~£75m in 2012-13. Signal research successes include the opening of a Wellcome Trust Centre for Mitochondrial research in September 2012 (one of only 8 Wellcome Trust Centres in the country), the appointment of 3 Wellcome Senior Investigators and the award of multiple programme grants from a range of notable research councils.
4. The Faculty leads on the Ageing Societal Challenge Theme and negotiations are underway with the Medical Research Council (MRC) regarding the establishment of an MRC unit in ageing.
5. The Faculty continues to maintain strong links with the NHS Trust. Clinical

research awards have increased; the local NHS Trust is placed 1st in the country for the number of studies undertaken and 4th for the number of patients participating in clinical trials. It has been announced recently that the North East & North Cumbria's bid to become an Academic Health Sciences Network, in which the University will play a role, has been successful. The centre is one of 8 fully approved centres in the country and is intended to drive out improvements in health care. As can be seen by the above achievements, the city of Newcastle has established a strong reputation as a centre for medical excellence.

6. In terms of commercial engagement, the University has established a number of partnerships with pharmaceutical companies including GlaxoSmithKline, Astex and Ariad. A business consortium has been established to develop the Campus for Ageing and Vitality, the former General Hospital site, as a Science Park for Ageing.
7. The Faculty has recently received a number of significant benefactions from key donors including the Barbour Trust (£1m), the Sir James Knott Trust (£0.5m) and the Reece Foundation (£1m).

Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering

Noted that:

1. The Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAgE) is expecting to increase research awards by 30% during the current academic year. Notable awards include £5.5m from the EPSRC as part of a partnership with Northumbria Water, £2.7m for the SINATRA (Susceptibility of catchments to INTense RAInfall and flooding) Project and £1m from the EPSRC to fund the University's participation in a national programme to develop power electronics.
2. The Faculty leads on the Sustainability Societal Challenge Theme and has recently appointed Professor Phil Taylor as the theme leader and Director of the Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability (NIReS).
3. Notable achievements by staff during the past year include Professor Ian Metcalfe receiving a €2M ERC Advanced Investigator award, and also being awarded FREng status, together with Professor Elaine Martin. Mr Jeff Neasham from the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering has developed a £40 ultrasound machine that could be used by health professionals in developing countries where standard ultra sound machines are not available due to cost. Lady Elsie Robson officially opened the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation PET Tracer Production Unit (Cyclotron) which is a joint initiative between the School of Chemistry and Northern Institute for Cancer Research.
4. Applications numbers for undergraduate entry in 2013 have increased by 16.68% when compared with those from 2012 and applications to the Schools of Computing Science and Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials are particularly strong. Postgraduate applications for 2013 have also increased with a 15% increase in applications from potential home research students and a 31% increase in application from potential international research students.
5. It was the Faculty of SAgE which initiated the activity on the University's Singapore Campus and activity here has continued to expand with five schools from the Faculty now offering a number of degree programmes. Plans are underway to revise the governance structures in Singapore to enable a greater focus on research activity.

6. The Faculty is a key participant in the Science without Borders programme which provides Brazilian students with the opportunity to study in the UK. 78 of the 81 students participating in the 2013 programme are expected to study within the Faculty of SAgE. Previous participants have expressed high levels of satisfaction with the tuition and support they have received.

Contributions and questions from the floor:

- a) The Rt Hon Lord Walton of Detchant, TD, DCL (MB BS 1945, MD 1952, DSc 1972, Hon DCL 1988)

The presentations received by Convocation from the Vice-Chancellor and from the Faculties are impressive and Lord Walton expressed his pride at being associated with the University.

Lord Walton informed Convocation of the recent deaths of Raymond Dobson (a retired member of Newcastle University staff) and Dr Peter Dickinson (MBE, MB BS 1945). It was also noted that the nephew of Peter Dickinson, Professor Mike Griffin (MB BS 1978, MD 1989), had received an award in the Queen's birthday honours list, together with Professor Anne Johnson (MB BS 1978, MD 1992), an alumna of the University, who had been made a Dame.

- b) Mr Horace Regnart (LLB 1968)

Mr Regnart requested further information about recent reports in the media concerning a drug trial which encourages the retention of lactic acid which, in turn, causes cancer cells to self-destruct.

Response:

This is a drug trial which the University is pursuing in conjunction with the Royal Marsden Hospital in London. To date only one patient has been treated and it is therefore too early to comment on the likely outcome of the trial.

5. CHAIR OF CONVOCATION

Reported that the five year term of office of the current Chair of Convocation, Mr Antony Jones (BA Politics 1980) is due to end on 31 July 2014.

Convocation is a statutory body of the University. All alumni are members. The Chair of Convocation is also ex officio a member of the Court of the University providing a further formal channel of communication between alumni and the University. Statute 47 states that:

“Convocation, from its own members, shall elect a chairman and may elect a deputy chairman who shall respectively hold office for five years. Any retiring chairman or deputy chairman shall be eligible for re-election. Neither the chairman nor the deputy chairman shall be a member of the salaried staff of the University”.

Nominations will be invited for the role of Chair early in 2014, so that an election may be held and an appointment made at the meeting of Convocation in June 2014.

6. DEPUTY CHAIR OF CONVOCATION

Reported that Dr Donald Gascoigne (MB BS 1951) had retired from the position of Deputy Chair of Convocation after nine years in the role. His second term of office would have ended on 31 July 2014.

Nominations had been invited for this position with a closing date of Monday 20 May. In addition to specific mailings to alumni, the vacancy was also announced in AlumNews and on the DARO website. Despite this publicity, no nominations were received and it is therefore proposed to leave the position vacant until 2014 when it will be advertised alongside the call for nominations for the post of Chair of Convocation.

Convocation recorded its thanks to Dr Gascoigne for his contribution to the work of Convocation and the University over the past nine years.

7. ALUMNI CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Received:

- (i) The revised Constitution and Terms of Reference for the Alumni Consultative Group (ACG) and the Appendix.
[Circulated with the agenda as Documents B & C.]

- (ii) An oral report from the Chair of the Alumni Consultative Group (ACG), Mr Ian Forster on the activities of the ACG during 2012-13.

Noted that:

1. The ACG was established to provide a formal link between the alumni and Convocation.
2. There are 10 elected members of the ACG and an action plan has been prepared for each member to identify areas of strength and ways in which they can work with DARO to support alumni activity.
3. The review of the terms of reference for the ACG has been completed and a revised document has been prepared (Document B) for approval by Convocation. Two significant changes are being proposed; firstly that membership should be for five years rather than three and, secondly, that all elected member places will be open and there will no longer be places reserved for branch members. The ACG will appoint its own Chair and Deputy Chair.

Resolved that:

- (i) The revised Constitution and Terms of Reference for the Alumni Consultative Group (ACG) and the Appendix be approved.
- (ii) The ACG record its thanks to colleagues in DARO for their support.

8. DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE

Received a written report by Mrs Jane Clubley, Director of Development on the work of the Development and Alumni Office (DARO) during 2012-13.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document D.]

Noted that:

1. The report sets out the increasing number of ways in which the alumni can contribute to the work of the University.
2. DARO is in contact with over 100,000 alumni and social networking is becoming an increasingly important method of communication.
3. Donations to the University continue to increase. Recent figures suggest that £12.6m of donations have been received during the current academic year.
4. Jane Clubley will be retiring from the University in July 2013 after 7 years service.

Resolved that Convocation record its thanks to Mrs Clubley for her contribution to the University and support of Convocation over the past 7 years.

9. HONORARY DEGREES 2012-13

Reported that honorary degrees were conferred on the following individuals at an honorary degree ceremony held on the 12 July 2012:

DSc **Professor Lord John Krebs**, head of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the first chairman of the Food Standards Agency.

DMus **Thomas Zehetmair**, violinist, conductor and Music Director of the Northern Sinfonia.

In 2012, Senate agreed to award honorary degrees in areas related to the University's three societal challenge themes at December congregation ceremonies.

Honorary degrees were conferred on the following individuals at ceremonies held on the 4 December 2012:

DCL **Ms Shami Chakrabarti**, Director of the pressure group, Liberty, Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University.

DCL **Mr Rakesh Bharti Mittal, and Mr Sunil Bharti Mittal**, founders of Bharti Airtel, a leading player in the telecoms revolution.

DCL **Lord Garry Runciman**, 3rd Viscount Runciman of Doxford (Northumberland), one of Britain's most eminent sociologists.

10. HONORARY FELLOWSHIPS 2012-13

Reported that Honorary Fellowships were conferred on the following individuals at a ceremony held on 15 October 2012:

Alan Clarke CBE

Alan Clarke's relationship with the University began in the 1990s when he was head of economic development at Newcastle City Council. In 2003, he was appointed Chief Executive of Regional Development Agency, One North East, a position he held until March 2012. During his time at ONE, Alan Clarke oversaw investment in the PET Scanner in the Campus for Ageing and Vitality, which is helping with the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and brain conditions; laboratories and facilities at

the Centre for Life; and £5m towards the refurbishment of the Great North Museum. Alan supported the development of Centres of Excellence such as the National Renewable Energy Centre (NAREC), the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) and the Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences (CELS). Alan serves as a board member of Newcastle Science City.

Terry Davies

Terry Davies MD completed his undergraduate and postgraduate education at Newcastle University (MBBS in 1971 and MD in 1978). He was the original founder of the Board of the USA Friends of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and held the position of President for six years. He is the Florence and Theodore Baumritter Professor of Medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, where he teaches Endocrinology and Metabolism. He is an Attending Physician at the Mount Sinai Hospital where he has a clinical practice. He is also the director of Mount Sinai's Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism at the James J Peters Veterans Administration Medical Center where his research team is based. A Fellow of the United Kingdom's Royal College of Physicians and the American College of Endocrinology, he is the recipient of numerous awards and honours, including the Irma T Hirschl Career Scientist Award and the Mount Sinai Distinguished Research Award. He is an elected member of the prestigious American Association of Physicians. His long-standing warmth towards Newcastle University is illustrated not only by his founding of, and tireless and continuing work for, the Board of the US Friends, but also by his support for the University as an Annual Fund donor.

Teresa Graham CBE

Teresa Graham is a graduate in English Literature and Linguistics (1977). She does voluntary work for Newcastle University as a member of the External Relations Advancement Group (ERAG) and heads up the Women's Circle fund which works closely with Partners to help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into education. After her own university education here in Newcastle, she trained as an accountant and rose to the top of her field, demonstrating the professional distinction we seek in an Honorary Fellow. She then became heavily involved in national government work on financial regulation and this has led to the award of both an OBE and later CBE for her various contributions to the business sector and public service. Teresa is passionate about her work with the Lynedoch EcoVillage in South Africa via the Sustainability Institute, an international living and learning centre located outside the South African university town of Stellenbosch. She is volunteer part-time MD of the Lexi cinema in Kensal Rise, London, which covenants 100 per cent of their profits to this South African project.

11. DEATHS AND OBITUARIES

Reported that a list of deaths is available on the Alumni website:
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/news/obituaries.htm>

12. CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair reflected on the strong emotional attachment felt by many alumni for the University and thanked the Vice-Chancellor and Faculty representatives for their inspiring and informative presentations. The work which has been undertaken to develop and improve the campus in recent years is particularly noteworthy and the Executive team should be commended for their leadership in this area, together with their commitment to the alumni.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported that the date for the Fifty-seventh Ordinary Meeting of Convocation is 21 June 2014.

Lizzie Taylor
Secretary to Convocation
19 June 2013