

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

THE FIFTY-EIGHTH ORDINARY MEETING OF CONVOCATION

Saturday 20 June 2015

Present: Mr AE Jones (in the chair); Mr S Bailey; Mr L Barrett; Miss S Bevan; Professor C Brink (Vice-Chancellor); Mrs A Brown; Mr G Burton; Dr R Butterfield; Professor D Charles; Mrs P Chrisp; Dr M Cooke; Dr H Coyne; Dr P Coyne; Professor C Day; Miss R Draper; Mr P Fisher; Miss E Gould; Dr M Grady; Mrs C Harvey; Mrs E Hood; Mr P Hood; Dr J Hutton; Mr J Jeffery; Dr J Johnson; Mr L Knox; Miss X Liang; Mrs R Lishman; Dr W Lishman; Mrs A Makepeace; Ms R Mawson; Dr R McCrae; Dr D Moffatt; Mr B Oliver; Miss M Patereli; Mrs C Pearson; Mr JHG Phillips; Dr A Pollard; Mr A Ramsay; Mr H Regnart; Mr A Robson; Dr L Rozner; Ms C Stephens; Mr M Stoddart; Mr J Stott; Mr R Theaker; Mrs A Timlin; Mrs W Vigor; Professor A Walton; Mr F Walton; Ms J Wigfield; Mr G Wynn.

In attendance: Mrs K Barrett; Mrs C Butterfield; Mrs N Charles; Professor E Cross; Professor R Davies; Dr P Gutt; Dr JV Hogan; Professor S Homans; Mrs Homans; Mrs G Jeffery; Ms A Kelly; Mrs J Medcalf; Ms TM Readshaw; Mrs S Taylor; Mr P Wigfield; Ms T Wishart.

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the Fifty Eighth Ordinary meeting of Convocation.

Noted that Newcastle University has received two awards in the Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards 2015 (THELMAs), including the top award in the Outstanding Leadership and Management Team award category for the second time in three years. The University also won the Outstanding Procurement Team Award. The Chair congratulated the Management Team and the Procurement Team on their recent success.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Convocation held on Saturday 21 June 2014 were approved as a correct record.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document A.]

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair proposed that matters arising would be covered during the presentations given by the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors, and subsequent contributions and questions from the floor.

4. THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENT 2014-15

Received: The Vice-Chancellor's Report to Convocation, 20 June 2015.

The Vice-Chancellor's report highlighted a number of successes over the previous year, across all aspects of university life including the following:

Noted that:

1. The results of the six yearly national Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise have been received and Newcastle University has improved its position since the 2008 exercise, to 16th nationally for Research Power. The University is also in 16th

position within the Russell Group universities. The Medical School has been ranked in the world's Top 50 for biomedical and health sciences.

2. Amongst the five North East universities, Newcastle University leads the North East in Research Power, receives over 50% of the North East's QR research funding and has 46% of the region's postgraduate students. In addition, the University receives over 61% of the North East's research grants and contracts, nearly £31m in Research Council grants and 52% of the region's industry funding for research.
3. As a direct result of pioneering research led by Professor Doug Turnbull on Mitochondrial donation, the UK became the first country to approve laws to allow the use of a ground-breaking IVF-based technique to reduce the risk of mitochondrial diseases.
4. The National Centre for Ageing Science and Innovation (NASI) has received a £20m pledge from the Government, which has been matched by the University. The Centre will lead the UK's efforts to improve the health and well-being of older people by developing new technologies and services to support older people to continue to live in their own homes and remain socially active for as long as possible.
5. Our Student Satisfaction results are good. In the National Student Survey 91% have said they are satisfied overall, ranking us 6th in the UK, and 2nd in the Russell Group. Student employability is also good, with 94% of our students in employment or further study within 6 months of graduating.
6. The Newcastle University London campus has been launched and will be officially opened later this year.
7. We have successfully launched three Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) involving 43,000 participants, in more than 107 countries.
8. We are involved with a number of projects with the city and region through our three Societal Challenge Themes: Ageing: e.g. VoiceNorth; Sustainability: e.g. Global Principal Partner status with Siemens; Social Renewal: e.g. Cities Initiative.
9. The Science Central development is continuing. We are building an Urban Sciences Building for £57m, a Conference and Learning Centre for around £35m, and £10m has been awarded for on-site 'living lab' research.
10. NUMed Malaysia and NU International Singapore are each developing a distinctive research profile, and we are developing a strategic partnership with Xiamen University, China.

Contributions and questions from the floor:

a. Mr Horace Regnart (LLB 1968)

Mr Regnart enquired whether there were any business professionals within the University who could offer Newcastle United Football Club any business advice, on working together as a team. He suggested that this could be beneficial and prestigious to Newcastle University, Newcastle United Football club and Newcastle City.

Response:

The Vice-Chancellor said that although he was always open to opportunities, in this

instance, he would have to decline.

b. Mr Phil Fisher (BSc Naval Architecture 1975; MSc Computing Science 1982)

After taking part in the organised Richardson Road visit, and talking to a member of staff at the site, Mr Fisher was under the impression that planning permission and funding for this enterprise had yet to be agreed.

Response:

Discussions with the City Council have taken place, and the plans have been submitted, although the formal planning permission has not yet been completed. All of the usual necessary checks have been completed. The Vice-Chancellor reported that he is confident that planning will be completed subject to some minor alterations where necessary.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University is in a healthy financial position and could pay for the funding of this project itself, or could decide to take on a mortgage for the development which would be paid from the income generated from the rents. This will be decided once the planning permission has been finalised.

With regard to the financial position of the University, the University is nearing its target of being a £0.5billion per year enterprise; the budget for next year is £483m, and it will be approximately £500m the following year. A surplus has been returned each year since Professor Brink's Vice-Chancellorship commenced. The Finance Committee reports into the University Council, which is our Governing body. There is a rigorous budgeting process in place and an expectation for a certain level of surplus, which is dependent on student recruitment, expenditure plans and the timing of the planned expenditure.

c. Mr Michael Stoddart (BA Politics and History 1971)

Mr Stoddart asked if the Vice-Chancellor would like to comment on a report in the previous week's publication of the Financial Times, which stated that members of the Russell Group would wish to see a significant increase in the student fees.

Response:

In the run up to the election, one of the political parties included in the manifesto that they would plan to reduce the cost of student fees from £9k to £6k. Following the change since the last coalition government, it is now the case that most universities primary source of income is from student fees and not from HEFCE; it is recruitment that drives the major part of the budget - this means it is the number of students recruited and fees that are paid, that determine the budget.

With regard to the question as to whether fees should be increased, the Vice-Chancellor's sense of this was that the incoming government will have a lot of things to be considered, including immigration, the referendum on Europe, and many other things and he suspected that raising the student fee would not be the top of their agenda; at most there may be an inflationary adjustment. The Vice-Chancellor would not wish to comment on the position of other universities.

d. Dr Lorna Rozner (MBBS 1947, DPH Diploma in Public Health 1951)

Dr Rozner reported that it was a pity for the students who are in accommodation in the Jesmond area that the library in Jesmond has been closed.

Response:

The Vice-Chancellor was aware that the City Council, who owned and operated the

library in Jesmond have made some cutbacks, but it was not for him to comment on this matter.

e. Mr John Phillips (Physics 1962)

Mr Phillips enquired where the students would be housed whilst the building programme for Richardson Road is underway.

Response:

There is private student accommodation available around the area of the Business School, and it is intended to seek a nominations agreement to rent some of these premises during this interim period of work on the Richardson Road project. The private developers have built student accommodation around the city, but we are confident that when we build the new building at Richardson Road, students will prefer that option as students do prefer to have a 'university experience' for their first year at University.

f. Dr Michael Cooke (BSc Physics 1979, PhD 1984)

Dr Cooke stated that he believed that Newcastle University recognised its strengths and enquired whether there was a possibility in the future for a department of Physics?

Response:

The Vice-Chancellor reported there was already a plan in place for this; from September 2015 the University will be offering a full degree in Physics for the first time since the closure of the Physics department in the late 1990's. It is hoped that with the offer of a full programme, that this will lead to the establishment of a new school or department of Physics within the next 5 years.

5. 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. The appointment of a new Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Julie Sanders from Nottingham University.
2. There are 10,500 students within the Faculty which represents 47% of the taught student population of the University. This is a 12% growth since 2011-2012. There has been a growth of 33% of International students since 2011-2012.
3. In line with the student growth, an investment of staff is underway which will be a strategic improvement within the Faculty and will result in a higher Staff/Student ratio than our competitors.
4. The Newcastle University London campus will be launched from September 2015.

The recruitment of staff to support the new programmes which fall within the Business School is underway.

Faculty of Medical Sciences

Noted that:

1. The number of students continues to increase within the Faculty, with an increase of 16.9% for Undergraduate International students.
2. The NUMed campus reported 100% student satisfaction in 2014, which is the first time the survey has taken place. Staff development is in place for the NUMed staff to continue to deliver high standards and retain a high calibre of staff. The first MBBS students arrived in Newcastle in January and the first of the Year 3 Biomedical Sciences students are due to arrive in Newcastle in September 2015.
3. The Faculty of Medical Sciences is ranked in the World Top 50 for Health and Biomedical Sciences, in the latest edition of the Leiden Ranking. The ranking measures the impact of publications in medicine and life sciences.
4. The Medical Faculty Atrium will be opened in September 2015. This has been funded by the Knott Foundation, in memory of a former Chancellor of the University, Viscount Matt Ridley. This will offer much needed space within the Faculty for social space and for informal meetings to take place.

Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering

Noted that:

1. Science Central is at 'phase 3' sign off, which translates to the project progressing within the timelines with a completion date of 2017.
2. The recruitment campaign for the new Physics degree programme has proved to be hugely successful and resulted in applications being oversubscribed 6 times over.
3. Some key new appointments have been made within the Faculty, including a new Dean of Research and Innovation, new Heads of Academic Units, Head of Academic Operations for Singapore and new Singapore Operations Manager. A number of School Managers have been appointed to support the business operations.
4. A ten year plan has been introduced for an Engineering Excellence project which will bring all of the engineering disciplines together in to an 'Engineering campus quarter' within the campus. This will include new build, and bespoke research and teaching facilities. An options paper will be submitted to Executive Board for consideration later in the year.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Received: A presentation from Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Internationalisation

Noted:

1. There are over 5,600 International students who come to Newcastle University from various parts of the world; this is 25% of the total students.

2. Professor Davies and the Vice-Chancellor recently visited Cornell, Indiana and Pittsburgh Universities in the USA. The purpose of the visit was to identify potential collaboration opportunities to continue our ambition to be a World-Class Civic University.
3. Xiamen University is one of the highest ranked universities within China. We are developing a collaboration with Xiamen in several areas including joint partnership teaching in China and Newcastle, joint research opportunities and exchange opportunities for both staff and students.
4. Professor Davies will be chairing a Special Interest Group that has been established to focus on Rankings and Reputation. The aim of the group is to improve our reputation nationally and internationally.
5. To mark the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King receiving his honorary degree at Newcastle University in 1967, we are working with the City Council, Northumbria University and many other organisations to develop a programme of celebrations to mark this occasion in 2017.

Contributions and questions from the floor following the presentations:

a. Mr Horace Regnart (LLB 1968)

Mr Regnart asked to know what progress has been made on the mis-classification of students as immigrants and the dire consequences this has.

Response:

Professor Davies responded that this is a matter of some concern. The UUK, which is a representative body of UK universities, has helped to pull together the necessary information to make representation back to the Government.

The student recruitment numbers for International students have shown an increase since 2011 of 28% to 5,250 students for the current year. Representations are being made to the Home Office regarding student immigration but there is little evidence to show any change to the policy at the current time.

b. Mrs Cathryn Harvey (BA Sociology & Social Administration 1969, DipSW 1984 MEd 1995)

Mrs Harvey asked about Internationalisation at home: she stated that UK home students on campus have a long way to go before they match the aspiration, confidence and risk taking of international students. She expressed concern about UK Home students not having an international experience including travelling overseas.

Response:

Professor Davies responded that our UK students are encouraged to travel overseas although feedback received has been that some UK students are not as willing to travel overseas as International students are to travel to the UK.

Caution should be taken in terms of student experience to ensure that we don't have too many students from one particular nation on courses which could have an adverse effect on the experience for UK students. When developing new courses, we need to ensure that we don't progress this too far in the wrong direction so that a healthy balance is maintained.

The Chair of Convocation reported that there has been a major drive within the Business School to encourage international placements for students. The Chair encouraged members of Convocation to work with the Careers Team in identifying placement opportunities.

c. Mr Phil Fisher (BSc Naval Architecture 1975; MSc Computing Science 1982)

Mr Fisher enquired about student diversity in engineering; the numbers of female students is comparatively low and he asked whether the Faculty of SAgE has considered looking at opportunities to specify the percentage of students they would take on, using positive discrimination.

Response:

Professor Homans reported that positive discrimination is illegal. However, there is a plan to address the gender imbalance by offering a series of fellowships to enable people to take a career break. This will be offered to both men and women.

d. Xing Liang – Current registered student, Creative Arts Practice, School Arts and Cultures

Ms Liang wished to comment that she is one of 9 students in the 2nd year of her programme, and her classroom is located within the Culture Lab main building which is located a distance away from the Armstrong Building where the rest of the school is housed. Because of this, Ms Liang felt a little ignored and wished to express her comments to the members of Executive Board.

Professor Eric Cross agreed to speak to Ms Liang immediately after the meeting to discuss her concerns. Professor Cross reported that due to the building works ongoing within the Estate, this has resulted in temporary moves having to be enforced.

7. ALUMNI CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Received: An oral report from the Chair of the Alumni Consultative Group (ACG), Dr David Moffatt on the activities of the ACG during 2014-15.

Noted that:

Dr Moffatt reported that in his first year as Chair of ACG, at the meeting in September 2014, the group agreed that the priority was to produce a five year action plan which was drafted and presented at its meeting in December 2014. The purpose of the action plan is to ensure that the University develops its engagement with the alumni.

At the December meeting, various members agreed to take on various activities to drive the action plan. There was a feeling that the University did not know enough about what informed the relationships and engagement with its Alumni, and as a way to rectify this, it was agreed that an online survey would be undertaken during the summer which will be run by the NU Advancement Team. A consultant has been recruited to assist with this process, Mr Adrian Beney, who is well known for his work with alumni relationships.

A workshop is scheduled for the ACG meeting in September 2015, and the initial findings from the online survey will be considered at this meeting, and then at the next scheduled meeting in December 2015 the full results of the survey will be considered and will help to further progress and implement the action plan and the development of the overall value proposition for Alumni engagement.

8. HONORARY DEGREES 2014-15

Honorary degrees were conferred on the following individuals at degree ceremonies held on the 8th and 9th July 2014:

DCL **Mr Warren East (CBE)**, Chief Operating Officer, ARM Holdings plc.

DMus **Mr Bryan Ferry (OBE)**, Musician and singer-songwriter.

DSc **Professor Elizabeth Molyneux**, Professor of Paediatrics, College of Medicine and Queen Elizabeth Teaching Hospital, Blantyre, Malawi.

DSc **Sir Paul Nurse**, Director and Chief Executive of the Francis Crick Institute and President of the Royal Society.

DCL **Lord Stewart Sutherland**, chair of the Royal Commission on Long-Term Care of Older People in 1997 and the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology Inquiry into Ageing. (Deferred award from December 2013)

An honorary degree was conferred on the following individual at the degree ceremony held in Malaysia in June 2014:

MD **Datuk Dr Noor Hisham bin Abdullah MD**, Director General for Health, Ministry of Health, Malaysia.

An honorary degree was conferred on the following individual at the degree ceremony held in Singapore in November 2014:

DSc **Sir David Lane**, Chief Scientist of Singapore Agency for Science, Technology and Research

In 2013, Senate agreed to award honorary degrees in areas related to the University's three societal challenge themes at December 2014 congregation ceremonies.

Honorary degrees were conferred on the following individuals at ceremonies held on the 3rd December 2014:

DCL **Ms Angela Rippon OBE**, Broadcaster, journalist and author. **(Ageing)**

DCL **Mr Paul Roderick Clucas Marshall**, British Investor and Philanthropist and co-founder and Chairman of Marshall Wace LLP. **(Social Renewal)**

To note:

DCL **The Honorable Bruce Babbitt**, Politician and 16th Governor of Arizona from 1978 to 1987, has deferred his award to July 2015. **(Sustainability)**

9. HONORARY FELLOWSHIPS 2014-15

To report:

Honorary fellowships were conferred on the following individuals at a ceremony held on 13th October 2014:

Mr Colin FitzPatrick

Colin is currently a lay member of Court and Honorary Treasurer of Newcastle University Development Trust. He was a Member of Council from 2004-2013 and Chair of Audit Committee for the same period. Director of: Fitzpatrick Royle, Chartered Accountants Limited; Techflow Flexibles Limited; Techflow Marine Limited; North of England Estates Limited; Newminster Estates Limited; Colpet Limited; Audit Committee member of The Port of Tyne; Partner in Grant Thornton Chartered Accountants 1987-1997; Governor of the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne 2003-2013. From his time as a student sabbatical officer in 1975-76 and Vice-President of the Students' Union in 1976-77, to his governance positions as a member of Council and Chairman of Audit Committee from 2004-2013, Colin has been a long standing friend and supporter of the University. He continues to offer his time and expertise to us and his Chairing of Audit Committee for a nine year period was a particularly important contribution worthy of reward in itself.

Dr Vanessa Hammond

Vanessa retired from the post of Head of Administration in the Faculty of Medical Sciences in 2013 She made exceptional contributions to the work of the University in that role and in addition has a record of long and meritorious service to the University. Vanessa joined the University in 1978 as a research assistant in Clinical Biochemistry. She studied for a PhD and this was awarded in 1986 while she was a research associate in the Department of Medicine. Thereafter she entered administration, first in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and then in the Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Dentistry before her appointment as Assistant Registrar in the Faculty of Medical Sciences (then the Faculty of Medicine) in 1995. In her 17 years of service as the lead administrator in the Faculty, Vanessa has shown remarkable insight and prescience in both operations and strategy. While always respecting the convention that she advise on and implement decisions made by the academic leadership, she has been a key contributor to strategic decisions and their implementation; indeed, she has been very keen in her judgement about whether potential strategic decisions could be implemented in practice. She has supported four Deans/PVCs – George Alberti, Peter Baylis, Oliver James and Chris Day. She has overseen two major reorganisations that have led to the current Faculty disposition of research institutes and teaching schools, initiatives that have led to major changes for administrative staff as well as academics. Vanessa has also acted as a guiding force to the expansion of medical student numbers through intricate involvement with Durham University and she has managed well the resource stretch associated with the setting up of NUMed Malaysia. She has manifested an admirable mix of caution and resolve in

confronting these challenges. Vanessa will be known to Court members as she served as a Member of Court appointed by Academic Board from 2005 to 2012.

Mr Ashely Wilton

Ashley retired from service with the University on 30th September 2013, having been a staff member of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne since 1973. During his long and distinguished career at Newcastle University he made major contributions to both the University and the Law School. He variously held the offices of Dean of Law, (Founding) Director of the Newcastle School of Business Management (now the Newcastle University Business School), and the Dean of Law, Environment and Social Sciences. He was Head of Newcastle Law School from 2001 to 2010 and served several terms on Senate and Council.

Ashley's contribution to Newcastle Law School has been immense. However, it is his wider contribution to Newcastle University and its corporate identity and processes, which make him a strong candidate for an Honorary Fellowship. Ashley has provided outstanding service to the University over many years. He has made a very strong contribution to the University's disciplinary and student assessment processes, serving initially as a member of - and then from 2000 Chairman of - the Student Disciplinary Panel, responsible for annual training, monitoring regulations and procedures, reviewing appeals and advising on difficult cases.

He has performed many other important roles for the University during his 40 years of service. He continues to provide advice for the disciplinary panel, and also for the Law School in assessment and other matters. He has also represented the University in a number of roles in the wider community in Newcastle and the North East. He is Chairman of the Herbert Dove Trustees Ltd (University nominee), Chairman of the St Mary Magdalene and Holy Jesus Charitable Trust (University nominee), and a Trustee of the St Mary the Virgin Charitable Trust. He is held in high regard by many local partners of the University and Law School, and by the University alumni community. He still takes part in DARO events organised for the Law School, for instance, and his continuing involvement in alumni work as an ambassador for the University and for the School is highly beneficial to the wider University and to the alumni community (including fund raising).

10. DEATHS AND OBITUARIES

Reported that a list of deaths is available on the Alumni website:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/news/obituaries.htm>

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported that the provisional date for the Fifty-Ninth Ordinary Meeting of Convocation is Saturday 11 June 2016. This date will be confirmed in due course.

Sam Taylor
Secretary to Convocation
2 July 2015