

Minutes of the Forty-fourth Ordinary Meeting of Convocation held in Lecture Theatre 1, Herschel Building, University of Newcastle upon Tyne on Saturday 9 June 2001.

MINUTES

Present:

Mr J Jeffery (Chair of Convocation), Professor CRW Edwards (Vice-Chancellor), Mr J Askew, Dr EU Bell, Dr S Bell, Dr J Beveridge, Mr J Brennand, Mrs A Brown, Mr P Byrne, Mrs D Byrne, Dr S Chan, Mr P Cobbett, Dr K Coghill, Mr E Collett, Dr H Coyne, Ms K Denham, Mrs H Dixon, Dr W Dobie, Mrs F Dobie, Mr D Fitzpatrick, Mr RJ Fothergill, Dr D Gascoigne, Mr AE Gibbs, Mr J Hall, Dr A Hargreaves, Mr R Harvey, Mr R Hornsby, Professor P Isaac, Dr R McCrae, Mr J McGregor, Mrs M Meikle, Mr Meikle, Dr E Miller, Mrs J Mills, Mr A Mitchell, Mr R Moore, Dr A Mudd, Mrs P Mudd, Mr W Oliver, Dr A Penman, Mrs J Penny, Mr D Pinto (Chair, Alumni Association), Mr J Poxon, Dr B Randall, Mrs E Randall, Mr G Reay, Mr H Regnart, Mr NP Richardson, Dr J Robson, Mr P Robson, Dr M Robson, Dr L Rozner, Miss J Scott, Mr M Scrimshaw, Mr C Sherwood, Mr I Smith, Dr C Stark, Mr R Theaker, Dr A Walton, Mr F Ward (Deputy Chair of Convocation).

In attendance:

Mr DET Nicholson (Registrar), Dr J Knapton, Mr PS Mitchell (Deputy Registrar), Mr MAH Bond (Deputy Registrar), Mr TT McCarthy (Director, International Office), Mr CJ Cox (Director of Development), Miss WJ Taylor (Assistant Alumni Development Officer), Ms L Allason-Jones.

Matters to Report:

Mr Jeffery welcomed Professor Edwards, the new Vice-Chancellor of the University to his first meeting of Convocation.

The Chairman also informed members that for the first time, Convocation was being broadcast live on the internet. Mr Jeffery thanked the University Computing Service for their considerable help and expertise in arranging the live web broadcast.

1 MINUTES

Received:

Minutes of the Forty-third Ordinary Meeting of Convocation held on 3 June 2000 had been circulated and were approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Received:

An enquiry from Mr RJ Fothergill as to whether a count of votes was recorded from Convocation's vote on the title of the University (cf. item 5, Minutes, 3 June 2000)

Resolved:

That the audio recording of the meeting be consulted and that if a count of votes was made, the minutes would be amended to show the number of votes.

Note:

A count of votes was not in fact made.

2 APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSOR CRW EDWARDS AS VICE CHANCELLOR**Reported:**

That following the approval of Court, Professor Christopher Edwards had been appointed Vice Chancellor with effect from 1 January 2001. The Chairman welcomed Professor Edwards.

3 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENT 1999-00**Received:**

An oral report by the Vice-Chancellor on national and strategic issues affecting higher education generally and this University in particular. The following were among the issues raised:

- ◆ In September 2000, the University had been awarded the title 'University of the Year' by the Sunday Times. The award was in part due to the fact that the University's five medically-related disciplines had scored the maximum 24 points in the most recent subject review exercise.
- ◆ In the previous Research Assessment Exercise in 1996 the University's overall position had been thirtieth. Since then the University has been steadily improving. However, there was still a great deal to do. The aim was to move the University into the top 10 for teaching and research over the next five years.
- ◆ The University was successful in winning four funding awards from the Joint Infrastructure Fund (JIF), which underlined the international quality of research in areas such as human genetics and neuroscience.
- ◆ To make sure that the University was best placed to compete, it was embarking on a process of restructuring. It was important that the University identified its strengths more clearly and had a structure giving adequate support to academic staff. The number of faculties would be reduced from seven to three. Interdisciplinary research and teaching would become increasingly important.

◆ The University would also be striving to create a more entrepreneurial culture, focussing on turning intellectual property into commercial reality. The University was forging closer links with the Regional Development Agency, One NorthEast, which had put universities at the heart of its economic strategy.

The Vice-Chancellor answered questions on a wide range of subjects, including the following: -

◆ In seeking corporate sponsorship, the balance to be struck between the interests of the sponsors and those of the University.

◆ Recruitment problems in Engineering.

◆ Whether graduates of the University should be required to pay an annual subscription to remain a member of the University, similar to that of many professional institutions, in order to help raise funds for the institution.

◆ The plans for consultation with the academic community over restructuring, in order to ensure the process was as consensual as possible.

Following the discussion, the Chairman thanked the Vice-Chancellor for a clear and thought-provoking summary of his vision for the future shape of the University.

4 HONORARY DEGREE NOMINATIONS: 2001

Reported:

That honorary degrees had been conferred on the following at an Honorary Degrees Ceremony held on 4 May 2001:

DLitt Dr Robert Woof CBE DCL The Honourable Alexander Downer DCL Mr Jonathan Edwards CBE DCL Mr James Wright DL

5 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Received:

a) A written report from the Chairman of the Alumni Association, Mr Dominic Pinto.

b) An oral report from Mr Dominic Pinto.

6 ELECTIONS TO THE VICE-CHAIR OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Reported:

a) That following the agreement of the new structure of the Alumni Association confirmed at its last meeting, Convocation was required to elect, as necessary, a Vice-Chair of the Alumni Association.

b) That nominations had been sought for the appointment of Vice-Chair for two years.

Received:

One nomination for the appointment of Mr M Scrimshaw as Vice-Chair of the Alumni Association

Considered:

The appointment of Mr M Scrimshaw.

Resolved:

That Convocation approve the appointment of Mr M Scrimshaw as Vice-Chair of the Alumni Association for the period 9 June 2001 until the meeting of Convocation in June 2003.

7 NAME OF THE UNIVERSITY

Reported:

That, at its meeting on 2 October 2000, Council had considered the proposal from Mr RJ Fothergill and approved the subsequent resolution of Convocation regarding the name of the University.

Received:

A report from Mr PS Mitchell, Deputy Registrar which had been circulated with the minutes. This report outlined the circumstances in which the full and abbreviated titles of the University were used.

8 DEATHS AND OBITUARIES

Received:

A paper from Mr CJ Cox, Alumni Development Officer, was circulated at the meeting.

Considered:

The following options for the recording and publication of the deaths of members:

1. To develop an Obituaries Section linked to the Convocation pages on the University website. This could be updated with information, wherever possible on the day it is received, and would include details of funerals and/or memorial services, when provided. Obituaries provided in electronic format could be linked in, together with details of obituaries published in the press, etc.

2. A list could be presented more formally to the Meeting of Convocation, and attached to the Minutes of each meeting.
3. Members of Convocation planning to attend a funeral and/or memorial service where it might be appropriate for Convocation and the University to be formally represented, would be encouraged to contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office in advance.

Resolved:

That the options 1 and 3 be adopted.

Further to this, an obituary list would be made available at the meeting, although this would not be attached with the minutes. This list would contain notification of the deaths of alumni that the Office received, rather than a comprehensive list. The web-site would remain the primary means for displaying the information.

9 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Considered:

The date of the Forty-fifth Ordinary Meeting of Convocation in 2002.

Resolved:

The next meeting would be held on either Saturday 1 June 2002 or Saturday 8 June. Preference was expressed for the earlier date, should this tie in with the University Boat Race.