

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

The Forty-Eighth Ordinary Meeting of Convocation

Saturday 23rd July 2005 at 11a.m.
The Herschel Building

MINUTES

Present: Mr Alan Balfour, Mr Tony Baptiste, Dr Elizabeth Bell, Dr Samuel Bell, Mr Philip Bolam, Dr Keith Broomfield, Mrs Anne Brown, Mrs Doris Byrne, Mr Peter Byrne, Mrs Wendy Dawley, Dr Jack Dineley, Mr Derek Eltringham, Mr Desmond Fitzpatrick, Mr Ian Forster, Mr Richard J Fothergill, Dr Thomas Frost, Mrs Suzanne Frost, Mr James Gartside, Dr Donald Gascoigne (Deputy Chairman of Convocation), Dr Anne Glavina, Miss Elspeth Gould, Mrs Anne Gowar, Ms Clare Grieve, Ms Regina Haba, Mr John Hall, Dr F Gavin Hardy, Mr Peter Harvey, Mrs Sarah Haswell, Mr Dan Howarth, Mr Alan Jarvis, Mr Jack Jeffery (Chairman of Convocation), Mr Antony Jones, Mr Yuen Ho Lee, Mrs Lai Ping Lee, Miss Yi Ching Lee, Mrs May Lewis-Meikle, Mrs Ann Makepeace, Mr Baljit Matharu, Ms Rosalyn Mawson, Dr Robert McCrae, Mr John McGregor, Dr Eileen Miller, Dr Julian Minghi, Mrs Lee Minghi, Mrs Joyce Norman, Mr Norman Paul, Mrs Vera Paul, Mrs Mary Pearce, Mr John Percy, Mrs Patricia Percy, Mrs Meriol Penn, Mr John Penn, Mrs Judith Penny, Dr Betram Randall, Mrs Ethel Randall, Mr Horace Regnart, Mr Nick Richardson, Mr John Roxborough, Dr Lorna Rozner, Mr Mark Scrimshaw, Miss Margaret Steele, Mr Michael Stoddart, Mr Ian Symes, Dr Joan Tarnoky, Mr Robert Theaker, Mrs Adele Timlin, The Rt Hon Lord Walton, Mr Steven Weddle, Mrs Marie Weddle, Mr Arthur David Williams, Mrs Williams, Dr Mary Wynne.

In attendance:

Vice Chancellor Professor Christopher Edwards, Ms Jaine Fleetwood (DARO), Dr John Hogan (Registrar)

Apologies were received from Mr Robin Abraham, Professor Michael Clarke, Mr Prosper Bissi, Dr John Burnett, Professor John Goddard, Mrs Ann Goulding, Mr Michael Hyde, Professor Oliver James, Revd John Latham, Professor Trevor Page, Professor David Parker, Col the Rt Hon the Viscount Matthew Ridley, Ms Janet Robinson, Professor Tony Stevenson, Professor Anthony Walton, Professor Malcolm Young.

The Chairman, Mr Jack Jeffery welcomed all those present to one of the most well attended reunion weekend events in recent years. He noted that there were in the region of 100 Politics graduates on campus over the weekend, and the lecture by Hugh Berrington earlier that morning had been well attended. He also expected high numbers for the Convocation Lecture by Rt Hon Lord Judd this evening, along with almost 200 for dinner.

1. Minutes – Mr Bob Theaker pointed out that Messrs Theaker, McCrae, Oliver & Walton were not recorded as being present at last year's meeting, but were present

. It was agreed that the minutes would be amended and the amended minutes were then agreed.

2. Matters arising

The Chairman reminded Convocation that Mr Roger Harvey had been elected Vice Chair of Alumni Association at Convocation 2004 but reported that he had had to stand down for personal reasons during the year. As elections were due this year, it had been agreed to leave the position vacant until after the elections for the Alumni Consultative Group. At the ACG meeting held the previous evening, new members had been elected and the results would be announced under item 5.

The Chairman noted that Chris Cox, former Director of Development, had left in 2005 after 8 years at Newcastle, and his major contribution to alumni relations was acknowledged. Stephen Teal, the new Director of Development, would take up his post on 12th September. Joel Burden, former Alumni Relations Officer, had also left and a replacement will be considered in due course .

It was also noted that the changes to statutes mentioned at Item 5 in the Minutes had now been approved by the Privy Council.

3. Vice Chancellor's statement

The Vice Chancellor thanked the Chairman for his introduction, and congratulated the Politics Department on their 50 years anniversary. He then gave a detailed presentation on current issues at Newcastle. His presentation is attached but some of the key points were: -

- An Institutional Audit was undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency in March 2005. The University-wide systems were reviewed and we achieved the best rating of 'Broad Competence'. Our approach to student representation and support was highly praised. The Academic Audit Committee was also praised, and the Performance Development Review for staff was described as exemplary.
- In 1999-2000, Newcastle University was at the bottom of the growth league of our comparator universities. Since that time, the University has moved to the top of the growth table, with growth of over 45% over the period. Growth has been achieved both in student numbers and in research income.
- The Higher Education White Paper recommended the establishment of a number of Centres of Excellence for Teaching & Learning (CETL). We are involved in three of these and leading two, one in Music, which received funding of £4.5m and one in Health. We are also involved in one further CETL in Computing Science led by Durham. We are also now using the new SAGE Gateshead for our Folk Music degree course as part of a new collaboration.
- Enterprise Education- This year, 9 new businesses were set up through the University Enterprise Centre. A group of students were UK winners in the Students in Free Enterprise championship (SIFE), and then went on to compete in the world cup in Barcelona, where they came 7th. The University was given the Spirit of SIFE award in recognition of our work in student enterprise. This is important for the North East as the region has the lowest number of home graduates per head of any region in the UK.
- Widening Participation- Our PARTNERS programme, which encourages regional

students to apply to Newcastle, has now expanded to 89 schools and colleges, and has been very successful in increasing applications from the less well off areas of the north east.

- Research- We freed up 3% of our turnover to appoint 24 Headroom Chairs and a further 9 supporting appointments. A Fellow of the Royal Society currently based at Oxford University will be moving to work at Newcastle University.

- European Links- We are to focus on the Framework 6 programme of funding from Europe, in which we have a very large number of awards and programmes at a value to us of £25 million

- The University Estate –The Terry Farrell Master Plan is being rolled out and we are building on car park land, and planning a multi storey car park to be situated on the Herschel car park. We have advanced plans for the Barras Bridge site, and will be applying for planning permission at the end of August to create one space for the Business School and Student Services with easier access. The development would act as the 'Front Door' to the University. The Devonshire Building, (home of the Institute for Research on Environment & Sustainability and the Informatics Institute), has won two of the four North East Architectural Awards this year. It was the first university building in the UK to be awarded a BREEA (Building Research Establishment Environment Award).

- Science City- an initiative was set up by the government to attempt to link academe with business; this has combined with the North East's 'Strategy for Success' project, and led to plans for a major campus development- 'The Discovery Quarter'. The three major partners are the City Council, One North East and the University of Newcastle. Three areas of research were decided upon for development- Stem Cell Biology, Ageing & Health and Energy & the Environment. It is planned to move these to a new 'campus' on the Old Scottish and Newcastle Brewery site. Science Central is about 100,000 square metres of space on this 19 acre site, bringing together laboratories, offices, incubation facilities, teaching space, exhibition areas, hotel, café, bars, restaurants, and housing, including a major student housing development.

- Fundraising- The University Development Council, which is currently chaired by Sir Terence Harrison has raised over £7m for capital projects, research and student support. Several alumni are members of the Development Council.

A number of questions and comments followed including questions on how to increase applications for Science and Engineering courses, which the VC hoped Science City would address to some extent by raising awareness of the opportunities in the Science sector. Comments were made regarding the importance of inter-disciplinary work across various schools; the benefits which the City's bid for Capital of Culture seem to have brought by encouraging projects such as Cultural Quarter to move ahead; the importance of outreach work in schools to encourage students to apply to Science and Engineering at the University; the need to exploit further the research & development work done at UK universities, the importance of continuing alumni support for the Alumni Fund and a request for reassurance that the University would continue to place the same importance on teaching and research.

It was suggested that the VC's report was given a more suitable title in order to encourage more people to hear about the exciting changes at Newcastle. The Chairman agreed that this would be considered.

4. Report of Honorary Degrees, Conferred on 6th May 2005.

It was noted that Honorary degrees had been conferred on the following individuals at an Honorary Degrees Ceremony held on 6 May 2005:

DCL Richard Adams OBE, the founder of Traidcraft and the Out of this World chain of ethical supermarkets.

DCL Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson OBE MBE, an 11 times gold medal-winning wheelchair athlete and Great Britain's most successful Paralympian.

DLitt Dorothy Heathcote, a renowned drama teacher and former lecturer at the University, credited with having single-handedly developed drama as a secondary school subject.

DSc Steven Pinker, an experimental psychologist and Professor in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. .

DLitt Alan Plater CBE, an award-winning playwright who studied architecture at Newcastle University before becoming a full-time writer in 1960.

5. Alumni Association Elections

The Chairman announced that the following candidates had been elected:

Mrs Wendy Dawley

Mr Ian Forster

Dr Donald Gascoigne

Mr John Percy

Mr Mark Scrimshaw

Miss Louise Needham

Mrs Judith Penny

Mr Gareth Trainer.

Two members from Branches elected were Dr Ian Corbett and Dr Jean Robson.

6. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Alumni Association:

This had taken place at ACG the previous evening and was reported to Convocation:

Mr Mark Scrimshaw had been proposed as Chair by Mr Ian Forster and seconded by Professor Christopher Edwards.

Mrs Wendy Dawley had been proposed and seconded as Vice Chair by Professor Christopher Edwards & Mr Ian Forster

Both were elected unopposed.

7. Report by Chair of Alumni Association, Mark Scrimshaw:

Mark thanked Hugh Berrington for his excellent lecture that morning and congratulated the Politics Department on their 50th anniversary. He mentioned the challenge the DARO office had faced without a Director and looked forward to the arrival of Stephen Teal, the new Director of Development. Mark thanked the DARO staff and Cathryn Harvey for their hard work in the last 6 months. The Alumni fund had raised £160,000 last year and the office hoped to have two Fund staff in post

in time for this year's fund in October and November. Mark thanked Antony Jones for his ideas on alumni smartcards and thanked all those attending reunion weekend and supporters of the alumni fund for their ongoing support of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

8. Any other business

The Chairman thanked alumni present for their attendance, the Vice Chancellor for his consistent support for Convocation, Mark Scrimshaw and the DARO staff who had made such successful arrangements for the weekend under difficult circumstances. The meeting closed at 1pm.

9. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the date would be set according to the availability of the 2006 speaker.