

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Convocation held in the David Shaw Lecture Theatre of the Medical School, University of Newcastle upon Tyne on Monday 11 November 2002

MINUTES

Present:

Mr Jack Jeffery (Chair of Convocation), Professor Christopher Edwards (Vice Chancellor), Professor Madeleine Atkins (Pro-Vice-Chancellor), Dr Alan Adamson, Dr Elizabeth Adamson, Mr Detlev Anderson, Mr Jason Bain, Dr Michael Bowman, Dr Keith Broomfield, Dr Helen Cardy, Dr Sheila Cohen, Mr D Clements, Dr ZMA Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Mr Christopher Cox (Director of Development), Dr Jaqueline Falconer, Mrs Laurabeth Farrell, Mr Stephen Farrell, Mr Richard Fothergill, Dr Donald Gascoigne, Mr Greavson, Miss Elspeth Gould, Dr C Hargreaves, Mr Roger Harvey, Mr John Hulme, Mr Alan Jarvis, Mr Borge Johannesen, Dr William Lishman, Mrs Wilma Lister, Mr Edward McNaught, Dr Stephen McHanwell, MA Mark. Ms Gillian Mindham-Walker, Professor Duncan Murchison, Mr Hylton Owen, Mr David Park, Professor David Parker, Mr John Percy, Mrs Patrica Percy, Mrs Meriol Penn, Mr Quentin Pickard, Mr Dominic Pinto (Chair, Alumni Association), Ms Katharine Ridley, Mr Bradley Robinson, Dr Lorna Rozner, Dr Robert Shiel, Dr Janis Smith, Mr MR Smith, Mr Michael Stoddart, Emeritus Professor Roy Storer, Mrs Dina Tillotson, Mr R Tillotson, Mr Ron Todd, Mr Gareth Trainer, Mr Frank Ward, Ms Mel Whewell.

In attendance:

Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Dr Joel Burden (Alumni Development Officer), Ms Gillian Bell, Mr Mathew Cowen, Mr Paul Mitchell, Ms Tracey Readshaw, Ms Lynda Yorke.

Apologies:

Professor Trevor Page (Pro-Vice Chancellor), Professor Adedamola Adeuja, Ms Alaine Arruabarrena, Dr Laurence Atkinson, Mr Chris Baynham-Hughes, Mr Graham Beck, Colonel Reginald Belas, Dr Sandra Bell, Miss Marguerite Benson, Dr Janet Boonham, Mr Conleth Buckley, Mr Malcolm Bunzli, Mr Kai Huen Chan, Dr Shirley Coleman, Dr Maureen Chatterjee, Dr Elizabeth Copland, Professor Samuel Dagogo-Jack, Dr Peter Dale, Professor Lorraine de Souza, Ms Dolores Diamante-Fabunan, Miss Louise Dixon, Mr James Duncan, Mr Peter Edwards, Mr Eric Fallais, Dr Desmond Fitzpatrick, Mr Mathieu Guillaume, Mrs Mavis Harris, Mrs Cathryn Harvey, Mr Robin Hedderly, Miss Rachel Horner, Mr Jim Jackson, Miss Lorraine Jackson, Mrs Margaret Jones, Wong Yu Liong, Rev John Latham, Dr Herbet Loebel, Mr Alistair Lomax, Mr George Mackay, Mrs Ann Makepeace, Vida Makin, Dr Ian Makkison, Miss Derryanna Marson, Dr Peter Mason, Dr Susan Mason, Professor Norman McCord, Maureen Middlemist, Mr Guy Middleton, Laura Miles, Mr Peter Molesworth, Mr Matt Morrison-Clarke, Mr David Noble, Mrs Emma Ozanne, Dr Arthur Penman, Canon Stanley Prins, Mr Chris Raine, Mr Geoff Reed, Mr Horace Regnart, Sue Robinson,

Professor Dennis Rumley, Sir George Russell, Dr Dome Sittivate, Mrs Valerie Tarbitt, Mrs Maureen Taylor, Mrs Andrea Theakston, Mr Roger Thorn, Lord Walton of Detchant, Dr Paula Waterhouse, Professor Susan Wheeler, Professor Howard Williams, Mr Will Wright-Morris, Mrs Manching Zhang.

Matters to Report:

Mr Jack Jeffery, Chairman of Convocation welcomed members of Convocation to the extraordinary meeting in the new David Shaw Lecture Theatre, including an alumnus attending from Norway. He also welcomed Dr John Hogan, the new Registrar, to his first meeting of Convocation.

Jack Jeffery reported that, among a large number of apologies received was one from the former Chairman of Convocation, Lord Walton of Detchant.

1. VICE CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENT

Received:

An oral report was received from the Vice-Chancellor outlining the rationale for recommending amendments to be made to the University's Statutes. The following points were made:

- ◆ University restructuring provided the occasion for amendments to be made to the University's Statutes.

- ◆ The two principal restructuring implications were: ? The appointment of Provosts as heads of Faculty

- ◆ ? A change of emphasis within the wording of the statutes from a University comprising a Medical School and other departments to a University with strengths in teaching and research across the full range of academic schools. Changes in the wording of the statutes so that Medicine and Dentistry would cease to receive special mention in no way implied that the University was not fully supportive of teaching and research in these areas.

- ◆ Most of the recommended amendments were not directly related to restructuring, but instead reflected the need to update the University's governing structures to fit the modern environment, as recommended in the Dearing Report.

- ◆ In particular, the amendments involved a confirmation that Council is the governing body of the University and a clarification of the role of Court.

- ◆ The Statutes were also to be amended to correct a series of gender assumptions implicit in their phrasing.

In response to the Vice-Chancellor's statement, Mr Richard Fothergill questioned whether the University has missed an opportunity to undertake a more fundamental review of the Statutes. In particular, he questioned the continued use of the term ◆Pro-Vice Chancellor◆ as old-fashioned and confusing. The Vice-

Chancellor responded that there was a need for equivalence in the use of terminology across the sector and that this term was widely used elsewhere.

2. AMENDMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY'S STATUTES

Jack Jeffery indicated that the latest version of the recommended amendments to the Statutes was the version distributed at the Extraordinary Meeting of Convocation (Appendix A). He invited the Registrar to present the amendments to Convocation. Received:

An oral précis from the Registrar of the key recommended changes to the Statutes above and beyond a general tidying-up of the Statutes. Key changes concerned the constitution of Senate and Council, confirmation of Council's position as the governing body of the institution, a broadening of the definition of staff to include research staff and part-time staff in certain categories, and changes relating to gender assumptions in the Statutes. He took the amendments on a page by page basis.

Substantive issues raised by the Registrar or members of Convocation were:

◆ On existing Statute 15, change to the wording of Statute relating to auditors, reflecting the fact that the existing injunction that ◆all the partners◆ belong to one of a number of listed bodies presented difficulties for the current auditors with whom the University wished to continue its relationship and was unnecessarily restrictive.

◆ On existing Statute 16, the Registrar thanked Richard Fothergill for alerting the University to the need to update the Statutes with the correct names for the local authorities represented on Court.

◆ On existing Statute 16, Richard Fothergill questioned whether it remained necessary for a representative of the Council of the City of Sunderland to be a member of Court. The Chairman responded that this type of consideration would be more appropriate in the event of a more fundamental review of the Statutes.

◆ On existing Statute 16, Mr Frank Ward, Deputy Chairman of Convocation, questioned whether the University needed to retain a Court. The Registrar noted that most older universities had a body equivalent to Court and that this was a useful body. While it was necessary to clarify the powers of Court, the abolition of Court would represent a significant additional step.

◆ Following discussion of Statute 16, the Chairman observed that the existing Statutes were somewhat confusing on the roles and relationships of the University's senior bodies. He emphasised that the current round of Statute changes were more narrowly focused, but suggested to Convocation that it might consider making a recommendation for the longer term that the University should give further consideration to defining the roles and relationships of its senior bodies in a way that would be helpful to the University.

Recommendation

A recommendation to Council was proposed by Frank Ward and seconded by Dominic Pinto that:

The University may wish to re-examine how the Statutes define the way in which Court, Council, Senate and Convocation relate to one another, with the aim of achieving greater clarity over the respective roles, responsibilities and relationships of these senior bodies.

◆ On existing Statute 18, Roger Harvey questioned why Statutes relating to Council followed Statutes relating to Court in the ordering of the Statutes. The Vice-Chancellor responded that this ordering probably reflected Court's role in the appointment of the Chancellor and additionally, mirrored the way in which the relationship of the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor was generally articulated.

◆ On existing Statute 18, there was some discussion on student membership of Council. The Registrar clarified that a reduction in student representation was proportional to an overall reduction in membership. In response to a comment from Dominic Pinto on increasing student representation, the Vice-Chancellor emphasized that students were making an extremely valuable contribution to the running of the University and that it was becoming increasingly important to listen to their views as 'the customers'.

◆ On existing Statute 31, the Registrar reported that most of the detailed procedure was to be removed, and that this would be dealt with in future through regulation outside of the Statutes.

◆ On existing Statutes 38 and 44-47, Professor Storer indicated that he had intended to comment against deletion of explicit reference to Dentistry from the Statutes, but that he was reassured about the rationale for doing so by the Vice-Chancellor's opening statement to Convocation. However, he urged the importance of making some reference to the relationship between the University and NHS partners reflecting the key role they play in relation to University funding. The Registrar noted that the University was the only large civic university with a Medical School (except Bristol) that made explicit reference to a Medical School within its Statutes.

◆ On existing Statute 50, Frank Ward noted that the phrase 'all persons registered on or after the appointed day' had simply been a legal convenience at the drafting of the Statutes and might be looked at again in any future re-consideration of the role of Convocation.

◆ On existing Statute 53, Frank Ward sought clarification on the difference between an 'Extraordinary' meeting and an 'Emergency' meeting of Convocation. Jack Jeffery confirmed that only the Vice-Chancellor could summon an Emergency meeting, while an Extraordinary meeting was summoned by the

Chairman of Convocation. There were particular circumstances under which an ♦Emergency♦ meeting might be required.

Richard Fothergill stated that notwithstanding occasional differences of view, members of Convocation were only here to help the University and he hoped the University understood that that was the case. Jack Jeffery thanked those who had provided comments, and confirmed his belief that the University did find consultation through Convocation a useful process.

3. THE CAMPUS MASTERPLAN

Received:

A presentation from Clare Rogers, Director of Estates, providing an introduction to the context for the Masterplan. Amongst a number of points made were the following:

- ♦ The University♦s estates strategy was effected by a series of inherited arrangements.
- ♦ The campus estate is oversized and under utilised in comparison to other similar sized universities.
- ♦ The estate has suffered from long-term under-investment, especially in relation to its teaching stock and general environmental improvements.

The University wished to oversee a general environmental improvement to the campus which would involve better integration with the city. A number of intersecting strategies directed at achieving this aim were being explored:

- ♦ Terry Farrell & Partners Masterplan.
- ♦ Estate Development Strategy, looking at development in a regional context including opportunities off-campus.
- ♦ Cultural Quarter plans for the Barras Bridge site, linked to ensuring the University maximises its cultural assets in the context of the 2008 European Capital of Culture bid.
- ♦ Rationalisation of the estate with the aim of having a better funded smaller estate. Received:

A PowerPoint presentation from Julian Tollast, a Director at Terry Farrell & Partners, outlining the key elements of the Campus Masterplan. These included the University♦s physical relationship with the city, the concept of a strong central facilities spine linking the faculties through the campus, the direction in which the campus faced and access onto the campus, the development of four new ♦quads♦ and the relocation of car parking facilities to two consolidated sites.

There were a number of comments and questions on a range of topics, including the following:

- ◆ The likely cost implications of removing the boiler room to an alternative location.
- ◆ The implications of civic plans for restricting traffic access to St Thomas's Street on proposals for a University car park in this area.
- ◆ Opportunities for improving disability access throughout the campus.
- ◆ The future of the Debating Chamber. This was likely to be demolished, but there was a possible opportunity to develop the space between the Union Society Building and the Refectory Building, improving disabled access to the Union Society in the process.
- ◆ Whether the University had plans for a park and ride type scheme for parking. Clare Rogers indicated that the University is working on a transport plan with the University of Northumbria, and in liaison with the Civic Council.
- ◆ Opportunities to improve provision for cyclists on campus, including better bicycle security facilities.
- ◆ Whether there were opportunities for joint funding with the city where strategies intersect. The Vice-Chancellor indicated that a jointly funded post between the University and the Council was a possibility.

3. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Saturday 7 June 2003