

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

THE FIFTY-SECOND ORDINARY MEETING OF CONVOCATION

**held on Saturday 20 June 2009, at 11am
in Room 2.21/2.22, Research Beehive**

Present: Reverend Dr John Ameobi, The Vice-Chancellor Professor Chris Brink, Mrs Anne Brown, Mr Peter Byrne, Mr Hedley Chambers, Mrs Pamela Chrisp, Mr Alan Churchward, Mrs Sheila Churchward, Dr Helen Coyne, Mr Philip Coyne, Ms Suzanne Davies, Ms Elena del Valle, Mrs Hilary Dixon, Mr David Dunscombe, Mrs Elsie Earnshaw, Dr Elizabeth Earp, Mr John Earp, Mr Ian Forster, Mr Richard Fothergill, Dr Donald Gascoigne, Dr Frederick Hardy, Dr Michael Heather, Mr Philip Hilton, Mrs Elisabeth Hood, Mr Philip Hood, Mr Frank Ives, Miss Carole Jeffery, Mr Jack Jeffery, Mr Robert Jones, Mr Antony Jones, Mrs May Lewis-Meikle, Mr Helen Liddle, Mr Peter Liddle, Dr Dorothy Lincoln, Mrs Ann Makepeace, Ms Rosalyn Mawson, Dr Robert McCrae, Mr John McGregor, Dr Eileen Miller, Mr Anthony Norfolk, Mr William Oliver, Mr Clive Owen, Mrs Elizabeth Pallister, Mr John Percy, Mrs Patricia Percy, Mrs Judith Penny, Mr Dominic Pinto, Mr Derek Potter, Mr Rishiyur, Dr Bertram Randall, Mrs Ethal Randall, Miss Joyce Redhead, Mr Peter Regelous, Mr Horace Regnart, Mr Nicholas Richardson, Dr Lorna Rozner, Mr Michael Scott, Mr Mark Scrimshaw, Mr Michael Stoddart, Mr Robert Theaker, Mrs Adele Timlin, Mrs Vathsala Varada, Professor Anthony Walton, Mr Frederick Walton, The Rt Honorable Lord John Walton of Detchant, Reverend Robert Wardale, Professor Paul Younger, Mrs Bernadette Mary Zemouri, Dr Rachid Zemouri

In attendance: Miss Tania Angelopoulos, Mrs Anne Burton, Mrs Jane Clubley, Mr Stuart Garratt, Mrs Olivia Grant, Ms Mary Haworth, Dr John Hogan, Mrs Tracey Readshaw, Professor Ella Ritchie, Ms Louise Swan.

Apologies for absence: Mrs Lesley Black, Mr Peter Brealey, Mr Tony Brookes, Professor David Charles, Ms Alice Clark, Dr Helen Coyne, Dr Ann Cresswell, Mr Paul Dobson, Ms Denise Farrar, Miss Emily Fraser, Mr Alexander Fullarton, Professor David Lambert, Mr Malcolm Loudon, Mr David McKay, Mr Iain Nixon, Mr Antony Norfolk, Mr Richard Ormerod, Mrs Marilyn Owen, Miss Clare Rawcliffe, Mr Rory Renwick, Mr Matthew Revell, Mr William Richens, Professor Dennis Rumley, Mrs Hilary Rumley, Mr John Smedley

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Convocation held on Saturday 21 June 2008 were approved.

2. THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT 2008-2009

Received:

The Vice-Chancellor's Report to Convocation, 20th June 2009. **DOCUMENT B**

Noted that:

- a) There was a vastly different economic outlook from this time last year.
- b) The strategic overview document entitled: Vision 2021 was approved by Council 30 March 2009. It was presented as an outline of where the University would like to be in 12 years time: positioned as a 'world-class civic university'. (Note: Available in hard copy and on the web – type: "strategic overview" into internal search engine).
- c) The University's research strategy included the development of Institutional Challenge Themes over the next 3-5 years. The first theme for 2009/10 was 'Changing Age', building on the University's strength in 'Ageing and Vitality'.
- d) The University's performance in the Research Assessment Exercise had been solid - 17th in the UK on Research Power, and 27th on *Times Higher Education* Research Quality ranking.
- e) Our research income was rising (in particular Research Council grants).
- f) We had formed a partnership with Durham University and ONE North East on Commercialisation of intellectual property called the Angel Alliance and it had recently won an award of £3.6m from EPSRC.
- g) On teaching, we had established the principle of parity of esteem between teaching and research. Readerships were now available for outstanding performance in teaching as well as research and the first Vice-Chancellor's Awards for teaching had been made.
- h) Newcastle University was the first university to appoint a Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement, to look specifically at connections with civil society.
- i) The University's '10-Step Plan to support the Regional Economy' had been well received.
- j) The Great North Museum had opened on 23 May (20,000 people visited over the Bank Holiday weekend; 67,000 people by end of half-term).
- k) The three partners in Newcastle Science City, the University, the City Council and ONE North East, had established a company limited by guarantee. The CEO was Dr Peter Arnold.
- l) Property development and infrastructure was being managed by ING (Newcastle/Gateshead).
- m) A Science Gateway building was planned for the area positioned behind the new Business School building on the old brewery site. This would be the front door for engaging with business and industry.

- n) The University's financial position was strong although there was concern about the prospects for future government funding.
- o) Work would commence in July on Business School Building (opposite St. James's Park). The Student and Administrative Services Building would be occupied by the end of 2009. The new Medical Sciences Building would be occupied in early 2010.
- p) That a series of institutional "Think Tanks" had been held including: - Gender in Academic Careers.
- q) The first cohort of students for the Medical Sciences Campus in Malaysia (NUMed) would be admitted in September. Newcastle University was now teaching a Naval Architecture degree in partnership with Ngee Ann Polytechnic Singapore on their campus. The initiative had been enlarged in the coming year from 60 to 100 students due to support from the Singaporean Government.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked members of Convocation for their support.

Questions:

- (a) Lord Walton (MB BS 1945) thanked the Vice-Chancellor for an extremely impressive and encouraging report. In Medicine there was a great deal of funding that came from the major charities but charities did not pay research overheads. He was aware that some universities had discouraged people from applying to charities for research grants because the actual money available did not cover the full costs. Lord Walton asked the Vice-Chancellor if this was his experience or was Newcastle not suffering from that particular problem?

The Vice-Chancellor replied that entire sector was aware of the issue of infrastructural funding. Research grants from UK research councils had an overhead rate of 80%. When you get a grant from the Wellcome Trust, for example, there was not an infrastructural component. However, charities could support in other ways. We recently received £6m from the Wellcome Trust for the new medical building itself.

- (b) Horace Regnart (LLB 1968) thanked the Vice-Chancellor for his presentation. He said that he understood from previous years, when the VC spoke of the University's plans, that the new Science City project was already too far advanced in its design, at the time when the VC took over, for it to be possible to change the fundamental physical structural design to meet the highest environmental, sustainability etc standards?

The Vice-Chancellor said the building plans were not so far advanced that retro engineering was a problem. The issue was the extent and the inbuilt costs of going for the highest standards of energy efficiency. For that purpose the Director of the Institute for Research into Environmental and Sustainability was doing an energy master plan for the site at the same time as the physical master

plan was happening. One of the options under consideration was to try and tap into geothermal energy on that site.

- (c) John Percy (BSc Mining Engineering 1962) said the Vice-Chancellor was very pleased with the outcome of the Great North Museum as a public interface, was there any plan to have a public interface with Science City?

The Vice-Chancellor said the Science Gateway would be an important part of it.

- (d) Dominic Pinto (BA Hons Politics, 1978) asked if the University would consider charging unlimited fees?

The Vice-Chancellor replied that he had been in Higher Education now for well over 30 years and every time there was an economic downturn that topic was raised. Should top universities be privatised? He has not seen it happen yet. On the University's budget the funding coming directly from government was now below 40% (which was not dissimilar to other research universities).

Nevertheless, this was a significant proportion which it would be difficult to replace by the simple expedient of raising fees.

- (e) Ian Forster (BA Geography 1955) asked the Vice-Chancellor how the volatility of finance, was going to affect student and staff numbers?

The Vice-Chancellor replied that higher education is counter cyclical. That typically when there was an economic downturn the demand for Higher Education goes up. The reason for that was threefold: graduates, who would have easily left university and gone on to take a job, decide to stay for another year for further qualifications to get the job that was now so scarce, so the demand for postgraduate study goes up. Secondly, for school leavers, who a year ago may have found it relatively easy to find a job, consider getting some professional qualification or skill in order to access the job market. Thirdly, in an economic downturn, typically the currency goes down on the international exchange and so it is more attractive for international students to come. In that sense the Higher Education system does not face an immediate problem. However, the problem would be governing funding from 2011 onwards.

- (f) Richard Fothergill (Applied Science/Electrical Engineering 1950) said he would like to ask how the Vice-Chancellor stood on the access for students to the University. He said that we would shortly have one of the finest entrances in the country. Could we create a thoroughfare from the underground, so the students would all come in one way?

The Vice-Chancellor replied that on the point of access, the traffic flow and the pedestrian flow between Campus Coffee and our new campus building and the open space in front of the City Council and Haymarket was more difficult than it should be. For that reason three way discussions had been started with the City

Council and with Northumbria University, to see if a University precinct, in the space from Newcastle University, the City Council, the Haymarket and Northumbria University could be made into an open pedestrian friendly space.

- (g) Olivia Grant (Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor) thanked Convocation and said that the Council had worked closely with the Vice-Chancellor on the beginnings of the Vision document report and they were pleased with the outcome. The Council was delighted with the way the Executive Board team was now working and flourishing with the Vice-Chancellor.

3. HONORARY DEGREES 2008/09

Reported:

Honorary degrees were conferred on the following individuals at the Honorary Degree Ceremony held on 3 April 2009:

DCL Parveen Akhtar and Parmjit Kaur Mattu the founder members of Panah, the first black women's refuge in the North East. In 2006, they were awarded the Equality North East Award for 'Individuals making a difference' in recognition of their work on domestic violence. Both women have been key advisors on and contributors to government policy on domestic abuse, race relations, and equality and diversity.

DCL Lee Hall writer of the screenplay for the 1999 film, *Billy Elliot*. He had been behind some of the most innovative stage and screen productions in recent years, including *Spoonface Steinberg*, *Cooking with Elvis*, and his most recent play, *The Pitmen Painters*.

DCL Richard Sadler the Chief Executive Officer of world-famous marine organisation, Lloyd's Register. Richard graduated from Newcastle University in 1976 with a BSc in Naval Architecture followed by a postgraduate Diploma in Welding Technology. He was the first naval architect to be appointed to the role of Chief Executive Officer in the 248 years history of Lloyd's Register, an organisation which sets standards of quality and reliability during the design, construction and operation of ships.

DCL Choo Chiau Beng graduated from Newcastle University with a First Class Honours degree in Naval Architecture in 1970, and completed an MSc in 1971. An iconic figure in the Singaporean marine and offshore industry, he was instrumental in setting up the University's MSc in Marine Technology, which is delivered in Singapore, and stimulated the discussions which led to the establishment of NUMI Singapore, the University's first overseas campus in marine technology.

4. HONORARY FELLOWSHIPS 2007/08

Reported:

Honorary fellowships were conferred on the following individuals at a ceremony held on 6 October 2008:

Joe Carlebach had been a loyal supporter of Newcastle University since he enrolled as a student in the 1980s. Graduating with a BA in Social Administration in 1983, Joe served as President of the Union Society, before going on to a successful career in business. He chairs the Medical Faculty Development Board at the University, and is a member of the Development and Alumni Relations Council. A respected businessman and serial entrepreneur, Joe is Chairman of a number of organisations, including Node Ltd, HEC Ventures and Classical.com.

Ian Liddiard Clarke retired last summer from a long tenure as chairman of the board of trustees of the Retirement Benefits Plan. He was a member of Council between 1994 and 2003, and has also served on the Audit and Nominations Committees. Ian has spent most of his career in banking and internal auditing, and is a former agent of the Bank of England. He was a former Trustee of the Catherine Cookson Foundation, and has served on the committees of the Army Benevolent Fund and the British Lung Foundation.

Howard Benjamin Farnhill served under four Vice-Chancellors as Bursar and Chief Financial Officer of the University, until his recent retirement after 18 years in post. Howard joined the University as Bursar in 1990, after a short spell as Director of Finance at the then Sheffield Polytechnic, which was preceded by 21 years as an accountant at Rowntree Plc – latterly as European Finance Director and Group Internal Audit Manager.

Glen Campbell Wilson was Honorary Treasurer of the University's Development Trust, and a former member of Council, from 1990 to 1992 and again from 1997 to 2005. He was Chairman of the Audit Committee from 1997 to 2005, and was a member of the Retirement Benefits Plan, chairing its Investment Sub-Committee. Before his retirement, Glen was the Vice President of Finance for Procter & Gamble Europe.

Agreed:

That the citations for recipients of honorary degrees and honorary fellowships should be available from the alumni section of the website.

5. THE CHANCELLOR

Reported:

That Lord Patten had indicated his intention to resign as Chancellor with effect from 31 July 2009 following ten years in office.

Considered:

The recommendation from the joint meeting of Court and Senate held on 16 June 2009 to appoint Sir Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer, as the next Chancellor.

Noted that:

- a) The Chairman of Convocation had chaired a working group which had representation from all the statutory bodies in the University. The working group had considered a large number of names from a wide variety of backgrounds. After careful consideration and vigorous debate it had made a unanimous recommendation to appoint Sir Liam.
- b) Sir Liam had outlined his commitment to the role, including his affection for the city, his commitment to the wider regeneration work of the North East and of having great admiration for the University itself. In his position as the government's Chief Medical Officer he would not be involved with any of the funding decisions of the University.
- c) That the issue of the openness of the process was raised but it was recognised that many eminent individuals would not be willing to let their names go forward for consideration if strict confidentiality was not maintained.

Resolved:

That Sir Liam Donaldson be appointed as the next Chancellor of Newcastle University with effect from 1 August 2009 for an initial period of five years.

6. CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF CONVOCATION

Reported:

- (a) That, in accordance with Statute 47, Convocation was required to elect a Chair and may elect a Deputy Chair. Both shall hold office for five years. Any retiring Chair or Deputy Chair shall be eligible for re-election. Neither shall be a teacher or a salaried officer of the University.
- (b) That the current terms of office for the following as Chair and Deputy Chair of Convocation respectively were due to terminate on 31 July 2009;

Mr Jack Jeffery
Dr Donald Gascoigne

Mr Jeffery was not eligible to re stand as he had served a period of ten years. Dr Gascoigne was eligible and had indicated that he was willing to be re-elected, should that be the wish of Convocation.

Considered:

The appointment of a Chair and Deputy Chair of Convocation for the period 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2014 in accordance with Statute 47.

Noted that:

Concern was expressed about the procedure to be used to elect the Chair and Deputy Chair. It was suggested that a more open process should be adopted in future.

Agreed that:

That the Chair of the Alumni Association, the incoming Chair of Convocation and the Registrar be requested to review the procedures to be used to appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of Convocation in the future.

Resolved that:

- (i) Dr Donald Gascoigne be appointed as Deputy Chair for a second term of five years commencing 1 August 2009.
- (ii) Mr Antony Jones be appointed as Chair for a term of five years commencing 1 August 2009.

7. ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Received:

A report was given from the Chair of the Alumni Association, Mr Mark Scrimshaw.

DOCUMENT C

Noted that:

- a) Reference was made to the DARO (Development and Alumni Relations Office) report and the work of the DARO office. In terms of funding, the money raised from the Annual Fund activities had given 1,000 bursaries to students from the region
- b) In addition, the fund had been used to support the ncl+ Foundation awards and the worldwide community projects. The Vice-Chancellor's Award had gone to the team who had raised money for gene therapy trials. Thanks were given organisers of ncl+ Foundation.
- c) DARO had worked hard on recruitment and supporting the branches. One of the

new branches of Marine Alumni had done a particularly good job. It has launched the branch in three locations and now had over 200 members.

- d) Thanks were given to staff in DARO and for the support of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement.

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY STATUTES

Reported:

The University was considering a comprehensive review of the Statutes. The procedure for amending the Statutes required that all proposed changes be communicated to Convocation and for any representation made by that body to be taken into account by Senate, Council and Court prior to their submission to Her Majesty in Council. The Registrar explained the proposed changes.

Received:

- (a) An explanatory note on the proposed changes. **DOCUMENT D**
- (b) The proposed Statute changes. **DOCUMENT E**

Noted that:

- a) It was intended to simplify the current Statutes to bring them in line with employment legislation and practices generally adopted by charities.
- b) Advice had been sought from the University's solicitors, Eversheds.
- c) That consideration should be given to defining the membership of the University.
- d) Under the current Statutes, reference was made to the possibility of a payment of a fee to be a member of Convocation which should be removed.
- e) It was suggested that the reference within the current Statutes to the use of public notices to publicise meetings of Convocation should be retained.

Agreed that:

- a) Members of Convocation were invited to contact the Registrar concerning any specific points that they would wish to be considered as part of the changes to the Statutes.
- b) The reference to the possibility of a fee payment for membership of Convocation should be removed.
- c) The reference to the use of public notices as a way of informing people about a meeting of Convocation should be retained.

9. JACK JEFFERY

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Jack Jeffery and presented him with a gift in recognition of his service to the University.

10. DEATHS AND OBITUARIES

The list was available on request in hard copy on and on the web (type 'Convocation' into internal search engine).

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported:

The date of the Fifty-Third Ordinary Meeting of Convocation in 2010
Provisional date: Saturday 19 June.