NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

22 September 2021

Present: The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor David Burn, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Stephanie Glendinning, Professor Nigel Harkness, and Professor Tom Ward (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Professor Ashley Adamson, Dr Shoba Amarnath, Dr Vanessa Armstrong, Dr Bruce Baker, Professor Chris Baldwin, Professor Nils Braakmann, Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Professor Darren Evans, Briana Gordhan (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students’ Union), Professor Jens Hentschke, Professor Alex Hughes, Abbie Hutchinson (President, Students’ Union), Jenny Johnstone, Dr Anjam Khan, Dr Gareth Longstaff, Dr Kirsten MacLeod, Eleanor McCarthy (Postgraduate Officer, Students’ Union), Kate McGill, Ms Claire Morgan, Professor Ted Schrecker, Dr David Stewart, Dr Eimer Tuite, Professor Stefano Utili.

In attendance: Professor Ian Head (Dean of Research and Innovation, SAgE) for Item 6, Dr Sara Marsham (Acting Dean of Education, SAgE, and University Disciplinary Convenor) for Item 10, Dr Colin Campbell (Executive Director of Academic Affairs), Mr Justin Cole (Executive Director of External Relations), Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Mrs Adrienne McFarland (Executive Director of People Services), and Dr Simon Meacher (Executive Office and Governance Manager).

Apologies: Professor Caroline Austin, Dr Barbara Eberth, Professor Jane Robinson, Professor Julie Sanders, Livia Scott, Professor Brian Walker.

M I N U T E S

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed new members of Senate to their first ordinary meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 30 June and 12 August 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents Ai and Aii. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

4. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor and President’s report. Highlights of this report are discussed below.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Reported:

1. COVID-19
Members of Senate had continued to receive the regular updates provided by Executive Board. The Vice-Chancellor and President provided a further update, which focused on the University's support for the return of students to campus. A vaccination survey had been carried out, with >95% of students who had responded confirming that they had been vaccinated against Covid-19.

2. Admissions

The Vice-Chancellor and President provided Senate with an update on the latest student recruitment figures relating to 2021-22 entry. The situation was developing as registrations continued.

3. Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

The Vice-Chancellor and President reported that universities had been asked to respond to USS formally on proposed deficit reduction measures. The University and College Union (UCU) had announced a plan to ballot for industrial action on USS, pay, workload and gender balance, and it was anticipated that this could take effect before Christmas. A consultation on scheme changes would take place with the sector in the Autumn in parallel to the UCU ballot.

4. Times Higher Education World Rankings

The University had been ranked in the global top 150 in the latest THE World University Rankings. This represented a rise of 32 places – the University's best performance for a decade – and a huge achievement, especially in the context of the challenges of the past 18 months. Senate welcomed these positive results, although the University's less favourable performance in the recent Guardian University Guide 2022 was noted.

5. Times Higher Education Awards

The University had been shortlisted in 5 categories in the THE Awards 2021: ‘International Collaboration of the Year’ (as part of the N8 Research Partnership); ‘Outstanding Estates Team’; ‘Outstanding Library Team’; ‘Outstanding Technician of the Year’ (Andrew Filby, Faculty of Medical Sciences); ‘THE DataPoints Merit Award’.

6. Singapore Institute of Technology

Senate noted that, at its meeting on 12 July 2021, Council had approved the University renewing its Collaboration Agreement with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) for another five years from September 2022 to September 2027.

7. Magna Charta Universitatum

Following the decision taken by Senate and Council in 2018 to become a signatory of the Magna Charta Universitatum, which contains principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy as a guideline for good governance and self-understanding of universities, the Vice-Chancellor and President had signed the ‘MCU 2020’ on behalf of the University. The new version of the Magna Charta recognised the more global nature of what universities do and the wider range of local responsibilities which they have.

8. Student Education Experience

Following a series of meetings in August with Students' Union sabbatical officers, Heads of Academic Unit and Directors of Education, as well as Senate and Council, a collective emphasis on putting students at the centre of our thinking and our efforts had been
agreed. Senate received a report on the key areas for focus that had emerged from the collective conversations in August, and taking into account the National Student Survey feedback both quantitative and qualitative. These had also been circulated to Heads of Unit and senior officers. It was hoped that this work could form a useful basis or scaffold for discussions and decisions in academic units as the issues and priorities in focus would vary slightly in each area. Creativity and adaptability at local level would be encouraged.

A discussion took place on how monitoring of the implementation of actions would be carried out, and on the importance of students seeing clear progress.

9. Colleague Success

Dr Paul Fleet (School of Arts and Cultures) had been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship from Advance HE.

Professor Jarka Glassey (School of Engineering) had been made a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering.

Professor Muzlifah Haniffa (Biosciences Institute) had been successful in reapplying for a Wellcome Senior Research Fellowship.

Professor Keith Magee (Professor of Social Justice) had been appointed to the US-UK Fulbright Board of Commissioners.

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences PG Cert in Research Training team has received the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence from Advance HE.

10. Professional Services Hubs

Senate received an update on the future organisation of the central Professional Services hubs. The current three hubs would be reconfigured into Academic, Financial and Operations hubs, headed by a Registrar, Executive Director of Finance, and Chief Operating Officer respectively. A recruitment process for the latter post would commence shortly.

11. Postgraduate Research Students

Senate received a proposal on moving responsibility for research students from the portfolio of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education to that of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources. The rationale for the change was the contribution made by postgraduate research students to the Research Strategy, the benefits that such students could gain from better alignment with Research Strategy, and the importance of investment in research students that the University made as part of its investment in funding research. Members noted that a discussion on funding and treatment of research students would take place at the next meeting of Senate.

Resolved that Senate approve the change with immediate effect.

12. Appeals Panel for Promotions Review of Academic Staff

Resolved that Senate approve the appointment of Dr Aileen Mill (School of Natural and Environmental Sciences) as a member of the Appeals Panel for Promotion of Academic Staff from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024.

13. Graduation Ceremonies
Senate noted the dates and main planning principles for graduation ceremonies for 2020 and July 2021 graduates that had recently been agreed by Executive Board.

14. **Representatives of Senate on Senate’s sub-committees and other University Committees**

After a ballot, the following members were elected to represent Senate:

Professor Ashley Adamson – University Research and Innovation Committee
Professor Caroline Austin – University Engagement and Place Committee
Dr Anjam Khan – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Dr Eimer Tuite – University Global Committee
Dr David Stewart – University Education Committee

5. **SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 12 JULY 2021**

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 12 July 2021. [Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

6. **NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY CENTRE OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE**

Received a paper from the Dean of Research and Innovation (SAgE) on behalf of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources. [Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Senate considered a proposal for the establishment of a Newcastle University Centre of Research Excellence in Mobility and Transport. The context for the new NUCoRE included the UK government’s agenda for decarbonising and electrification of transport, together with the North East region’s leading role in electric propulsion and automotive manufacture. Senate was very supportive of the case put forward.

2. The potential for the centre to create opportunities for students was considered. It was suggested that future proposals of this nature should always spell out what the benefit of research activities were for students.

3. After querying the gender balance of the proposed centre leadership, Senate was assured that equality, diversity and inclusion issues had been considered by the Dean of Research Culture and Strategy. It was suggested that a full equality analysis could be carried out on all existing NUCoREs.

*Resolved that Senate approve the establishment of a Newcastle University Centre of Research Excellence in Mobility and Transport.*

7. **BUDGET**

Received a presentation from the Executive Director of Finance.

Noted that:

1. The University’s budget for 2021-22 had been built in the context of significant risk to student related income and a cautious prioritisation of expenditure and investment as the
University built back from the effects of the pandemic, while ensuring the University was able to maintain teaching and research capability.

2. There was a critical need to invest heavily in student and colleague wellbeing, cyber and wider IT issues, and to pump-prime the development of research intensivity, and the University’s commitments to achieving net zero carbon.

3. Senate considered an update on student recruitment for the 2021-22 academic year, noting that the registration period had not yet concluded.

4. Senate noted that the University had introduced a scholarship scheme for international students intended to help mitigate the impact of Brexit on the increase in fees for students from the European Union and beyond.

8. **STUDENT SURVEYS**

Received student survey reports from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents Ei-Eiv. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Senate noted the outcomes of the National Student Survey 2021, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2021, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2021, and Student Evaluation of Teaching for Semester 2 2020-21. University Education Committee had considered the results in detail, including differentiations between under-represented student groups.

9. **WHITE SPACE**

Noted that:

1. The Vice-Chancellor invited members of Senate to submit suggestions for future agenda items.

10. **REVOCATION OF A DEGREE**

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 30, Senate may revoke any title, degree or other distinction conferred by the University and all privileges connected therewith if it appears to the Senate that the degree or other distinction has been obtained by or as a result of academic misconduct on the part of the holder or for some other substantial reason as determined by the Senate.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Senate considered a detailed Statement of Reasons relating to a case considered under the Procedure for the Revocation of a Degree or other Distinction conferred by the University concerning the falsification of data used in a doctoral thesis and a previously published academic paper.

2. In relation to the case presented, Senate expressed its unanimous support for the recommendation proposing revocation of a PhD.

3. Senate wished to commend Dr Helen Phillips (Biosciences Institute) for the honesty and integrity they had shown throughout the procedure.
4. A brief discussion about the University’s methods and procedures for plagiarism and data falsification detection took place. This subject would be considered in more depth by Senate at a future meeting.

Resolved that Senate approve the revocation of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy as recommended in the case presented in Document F.

11. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 29(4))

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 29(4), Senate may accord the title of Professor Emeritus on professors retiring from the University.

Considered a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor and President following consultation with the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus. [Circulated with the agenda as Document G. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that the title of Professor Emerita be conferred on:

   Professor Helen Foster, with effect from 1 December 2021
   Professor Kim Reynolds, with effect from 1 February 2022

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:

   Professor Roger Burrows, with effect from 1 October 2021

12. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY REGULATIONS

Received the revised Delegation of Authority Regulations.

   [Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

13. MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE 2021-22

Received the membership of Senate for the 2021-22 academic year.

   [Circulated with the agenda as Document J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

14. SENATE’S DELEGATION OF POWERS

Received Senate’s Delegation of Powers.

   [Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

15. STANDING ORDERS OF SENATE

Received the Standing Orders of Senate.

   [Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

16. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE

Received a report from the meeting of:

   a) University Education Committee: 2 June and 7 July 2021
   b) University Engagement and Place Committee: 5 July 2021
   c) University Global Committee: 14 July 2021

   [Circulated with the agenda as Documents M-O. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]
17. REPORTED BUSINESS

Received a report of action taken in accordance with agreed procedures, approved where necessary by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and/or the Chair of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairs.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]