70. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Professor Stephanie Glendinning to her first meeting of Senate since assuming her appointment as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture and Engineering.

The Chair thanked all outgoing members for their contribution to Senate.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

72. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 5 May 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed.

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

73. 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 continued to receive the regular updates provided by Executive Board. At the meeting the Vice-Chancellor reported on sector discussions concerning the
return to the UK of international students and management of quarantine facilities. It was expected that all lockdown and social distancing restrictions would be lifted by the government on 19 July. Colleagues would be encouraged to return to campus gradually when it was suitable to do so.

2. Queen’s Birthday Honours

Senate was pleased to note that two retired colleagues were recognized in the announcement of the Queen’s Birthday Honours on 12 June 2021:

OBE Emeritus Professor Suzanne Cholerton. Lately Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education. For services to Higher Education.

MBE Dr Ian Buxton. Formerly Reader in Marine Transport. For services to the preservation of British maritime history.

3. Vice-Chancellor’s Review Group on Armstrong

Senate received a report on the work and outcomes of a review group convened to discuss campus representation specifically in relation to the Armstrong Building, together with the review group’s report and Executive Board response. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost thanked all colleagues who had been involved with the review group. A number of recommendations had been made for consideration by Executive Board, all of which had been adopted, with the exception of a recommendation to rename the Armstrong Building. Many of the Race Equality Charter workstreams’ ongoing efforts resonated with the review group’s recommendations and the report and response would be activity deployed in that context. The University’s Professor of Practice for Social Justice was leading on collaboration with the Richardson family that had arisen from the review group’s research, and a Black History Month Steering Group with colleague and student representation had also been formed to place the University’s work on a sustainable footing.

4. HE Freedom of Speech Bill

The government had announced the introduction of a new Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill to fulfil its 2019 manifesto pledge to strengthen academic freedom and free speech in universities. Council had an existing duty to promote academic freedom as well as freedom of speech. Senate noted that the clauses on academic freedom in the bill were not as strong as those found in the University’s own statutes, whilst the clauses relating to freedom of speech for staff, students and visiting speakers were similar to the existing 1986 legislation. The bill was silent on how to balance any legal commitments under this legislation with the University’s legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 or the Prevent legislation. The Office for Students (OfS) would gain new powers to monitor and enforce the legislation both on higher education providers and, for the first time, students’ unions. The OfS will be required to establish a direct line of responsibility over students’ unions despite most of them being regulated by the Charity Commission.

5. Sexual Misconduct and Harassment

As previously reported to Senate, the Office for Students (OfS) has called for urgent action to tackle harassment and sexual misconduct in universities and colleges, asking higher education providers to review their policies, systems and procedures before the next academic year. The University undertook a significant revision of student policies last year, the work on which was informed by an Office for Students consultation on harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education. Senate received a paper outlining the University’s response to the OfS statement covering both actions already taken to meet
the expected standards and how the University planned to ensure compliance with all aspects of the OfS statements.

6. Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

The Vice-Chancellor and President reported on further sector discussions regarding the USS valuation. Universities UK had issued a press release setting out its position, stating that the majority of UUK employers agreed with a strategy pursuing a reformed benefits structure in return for some covenant strengthening, with early work on conditional indexing as a long-term solution and a low cost entry point for Early Career Researchers. A consultation with the Joint Negotiating Committee would begin imminently.

7. Futures Festival

Over recent months the University had been working to look at the longer-term possibilities for Higher Education. A Futures Festival had launched on the 25 May with a provocation event, and the festival would conclude on 15 September. The over-arching event themes were: The campus of the future; The digital campus; The future of learning, teaching and assessment; The future of research; and The future of work. Colleagues and students would be hosting a range of events, in-person and virtual over the coming weeks and at the end of the Festival feedback would be collated, and reflections would inform future developments and projects across the institution.

8. #GettingResults

Universities UK had launched #GettingResults on 27 May 2021, supported by a members’ taskforce which was being led by the Vice-Chancellor and President. The campaign was aimed at putting universities at the heart of the economic and social recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. It would promote the central role that universities had to play in creating jobs, new businesses, and prosperity across the UK, and highlight how the sector was keen to do more by working with local partners to meet skills needs, provide opportunities, and support economic growth and recovery.

9. UUK Tackling Antisemitism

Universities UK had published new guidance on tackling antisemitism in response to rising incidence of antisemitism, including a recent spike in reports following the conflict in Israel and Gaza. Produced with the support of the Union of Jewish Students and the Community Security Trust, the briefing outlined three key areas where universities could act: improving understanding of antisemitism, addressing under-reporting, and responding to online harassment. It also featured several case studies of how members are responding to antisemitism at their own institutions. The University had recognised the IHRA definition of antisemitism as well as the All Party Parliamentary Group Definition of Islamophobia, and endorsed their use as appropriate by all parts of the University community.

10. Teaching Excellence Awards

The Newcastle University Students’ Union had hosted a virtual ceremony on 29 April 2021 for The Education Awards, which were an annual opportunity for students to recognise the work of University colleagues who had made a significant impact on their experience. A record 674 nominations were received across 12 categories.

11. EU PGR Scholarships
Following Brexit, postgraduate research (PGR) students from the European Union were now classified as international students for fee purposes. These students were no longer eligible for UK Student Loans. Without mitigation, this would be likely to result in a significant decline in numbers of EU PGR students, and the quality and diversity of the PGR student body. This would also further challenge the research intensivity of the University. At its meeting on 11 May 2021, Executive Board endorsed the implementation of a significant scholarship scheme to mitigate the impact of these developments.

12. Engagement and Place Awards

The inaugural Engagement and Place Awards were celebrated at an online event on 26 May 2021. The awards recognised the many innovative collaborations between the University and its external partners, and the value these brought to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Newcastle, its surrounding region and around the world. More than 70 entries were submitted across six categories.

13. Executive Director of External Relations

On 1 July 2021, the University had welcomed Justin Cole as its new Executive Director of External Relations. The terms of reference for Executive Board had been updated to take this into account.

14. Leiden Rankings

In the most recent Leiden Rankings (when looking at the aggregate of all 5 fields). Newcastle ranked 66th worldwide (up from 78th in 2020) based on the proportion of publications belonging to the top 10% of their field. Newcastle ranked 13th in the Russell Group (up one place from 14th in 2020) and 14th in the UK, up from 16th the previous year.

15. Living Wage Champion Award

It had been announced by the Living Wage Foundation on 16 June, that the University, in collaboration with Tyne and Wear Citizens, had won its Campaign of the Year award. The awards recognised and celebrated Living Wage employers and individuals that were leading the movement by promoting the real Living Wage in their industries and areas.

16. Resignation of Member of Senate

Due to his appointment as Head of the Department of Cardiovascular Research at Heidelberg University, Professor Konstantinos Stellos had announced his resignation from Senate from the end of this academic year. Professor Stellos had one year remaining on his term of appointment on Senate. To fill this casual vacancy, the Vice-Chancellor and Provost proposed to appoint Professor Chris Baldwin, who polled the highest number of votes of the two unsuccessful candidates in the recent election for new members of Senate in the professorial constituency.

Resolved that Professor Chris Baldwin be appointed as a member of Senate from 1 August 2021 until 31 July 2022.

17. University of Sanctuary

Following an appraisal visit in early June, the University had heard that it had been successfully awarded University of Sanctuary accreditation. The accreditation panel had been impressed in particular with the University’s student wellbeing support, outreach
events, and research activities that contributed to awareness-raising about sanctuary in the University and community. The embedding of this vision into many levels of the University was felt to be very clear. Detailed feedback would be received in an official report that would inform the University’s work on this important agenda over the next three years.

18. Teaching Excellence Framework

The Office for Students had announced that all current Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) awards had been extended until publication of the outcomes of the next TEF exercise. New awards would be published in early 2023, subject to consultation. Universities were not permitted to promote or use the extended awards to inform student choice once the 2021 student application cycle was complete in September 2021.

19. Travel Policy

A member of Senate had requested an update on University travel policy for overseas trips to attend conferences and/or undertake field work and secondments. International travel may not be booked until approved by a member of Executive Board. All restrictions required by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office must be followed. A full risk analysis must be prepared for any international travel and approved by the relevant Executive Board member, prior to booking, and updated immediately prior to travel.

20. Higher Education Consultations

The Vice-Chancellor and President reported that government announcements on a response to the Augar review of fees and funding, and the Lifelong Learning entitlement, were expected imminently. It was understood that the government wished to lower the financial burden of student loans, and impact of low-quality degree programmes, and to focus the higher education sector on producing graduates that the government think the economy needs.

74. SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 6 JUNE 2021

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 6 June 2021. [Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

75. RESPONSIBLE USE OF METRICS

Received a paper from 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 the University’s Policy Statement on Responsible Research Metrics which had been endorsed by Executive Board. The statement built upon the University’s Code of Good Practice in Research to offer guidance on how to implement its commitment as a signatory of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).

2. Responsible use of metrics could support the delivery of the University’s Research Strategy ambition to catalyse transformative research within and between disciplines, and build a positive and thriving research culture, and to develop a values-led approach to research evaluation.
3. The Statement recognized that the University was a diverse organisation, and metrics would be used in ways that were sensitive to disciplinary and local contexts. The Policy Statement was not intended to provide a comprehensive set of rules. Metrics were often more appropriate to evaluate the collective contribution of teams and performance against strategy, and were less useful in the evaluation of individual contributions.

4. The statement would evolve as the University’s Research Culture Action Plan was developed in consultation with students, colleagues and external partners. The implementation of the statement would have implications for processes relating to core People Services functions in the University, including recruitment and promotions.

76. STUDENT DRUG POLICY

Received the University’s proposed Student Drug Policy from the Executive Director of Academic Affairs.

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

Noted that:

1. The new policy set out the University approach to reducing the impacts of student drug use, and had been co-developed by cross-agency members of the University and Students’ Union Alcohol and Drug Working Group. A harm reduction report produced by the Students’ Union had been key to shaping the development of the policy. The policy recognised the importance of students being honest about their use of drugs and feeling able to seek support when concerned. A website with detailed Frequently Asked Questions, as well as pre-induction and online training would be rolled out.

2. Some members of Senate expressed concern about the level of drug use implied by the survey which had informed the Students’ Union report, which suggested that the University should take a less tolerant line on drug use. It was suggested that policy should incorporate more explicitly consequences for career options and international travel of a drug conviction. The wording in the policy would be revised to take Senate’s feedback into account, and the updated version would be circulated to members.

Resolved that Senate approve the Student Drug Policy subject to minor wording changes.

77. STUDENT FEES

Received a paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.

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

Noted that:

1. Senate considered the draft 2021/22 Fees Schedule, and 2022/23 programme and Study Abroad fees. Additional fee increases had been proposed by Student Finance Committee following concerns raised within the University that programme fees were very low compared to other providers in the Russell Group.

Resolved that Senate approve the 2021/22 Fees Schedule and 2022/23 Programme and Study Abroad Fees, and commend them to Council.

78. WHITE SPACE

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

79. **RE-APPOINTMENT OF A PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR**

Reported that, in accordance with Senate Standing Order X, the Vice-Chancellor may recommend to Senate and Council the re-appointment of an existing Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the period of the re-appointment.

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

Noted that:

1. Professor David Burn’s tenure as Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) was due to conclude on 31 January 2022. Professor Burn’s tenure had been highly successful. He had overseen the ‘Good to Great’ programme and reorganisation of units within the Faculty, creating new ways of thinking and removing thematic barriers to collaboration, as well as leading on the development of the Campus for Ageing and Vitality and the application for the award of Academic Health Science Centre status, deepening partnerships with local NHS trusts and the City Council.

2. The University wished to build on Professor Burn’s exceptional performance in the role and proposed the extension of his tenure as Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) for a 5 year period until 31 January 2027.

Resolved that, following a unanimous online vote, Senate endorsed the extension of Professor Burn’s appointment as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences until 31 January 2027, subject to final approval by Council.

80. **SENATE AND COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2021**

Received a report on the outcomes of this year’s elections for members of Senate and Council.

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

81. **NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ UNION SABBATICAL OFFICERS 2021-22**

Reported that the following had been appointed Sabbatical Officers of the Students’ Union for 2021-22 and would be members of Senate for the same period:

President – Abbie Hutchinson
Education Officer – Livia Scott
Welfare and Equality Officer – Briana Gordhan
Postgraduate Officer – Eleanor McCarthy

82. **SENATE-APPOINTED CHAIRS AND MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

Resolved that Senate approve the recommendations in Document J.

83. **SENATE REPRESENTATIVES ON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

Noted that at its next meeting in September 2021, Senate would be invited to nominate representatives from its membership to join University Education Committee, University Engagement and Place Committee, University Global Committee, and University Research and Innovation Committee. The term of appointment on the committee would match the member’s term of appointment on Senate.
84. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE

Received a report from the meeting of:

a) University Education Committee: 15 April and 17 May 2021
b) University Engagement and Place Committee: 12 April and 10 May 2021

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents K-L. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

85. 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 M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]