UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

COUNCIL

6 February 2006

Present: Mrs M O Grant (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor, Professor J B Goddard (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Dr J C Appleby, Mr L M Aviss, Mr D Bulmer (Education Officer), Professor M Goodfellow, Dr F Harvey, Ms J Henderson, Mr C J Hilton, Mr M I’Anson, Sir Miles Irving, Mr P M Johnson, Mr S Lightley, Ms K Priestley, The Hon James Ramsbotham, Mr A Robson (Communications Officer), Professor P Sen, Sir John Willis and Mr A M Wilton.

In attendance: Professor O R Hinton, Professor O F W James, Professor T F Page, Professor C B Riordan, Professor E Ritchie and Professor A C Stevenson (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr J V Hogan (Registrar), Mr H B Farnhill (Bursar), Miss R Draper (Head of the Executive Office) and Mrs V S Johnston (Director of Human Resources).

M I N U T E S

36. JOINT COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE BOARD ‘AWAY DAY’

Noted that Council and Executive Board held an extended meeting from 12 noon to 5 pm to discuss the development of the University’s plan, and specifically to give members of Council an opportunity to contribute to the formulation of the University’s five year plan. The notes of the discussion, and the points arising, have been recorded separately and are attached as Appendix I

(Circulated only to members of Council and Executive Board)

37. MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman welcomed Dr Felicity Harvey to her first meeting of Council.

38. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 12 December 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed.

39. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Progress of business

Received a business tracking form.

[ Circulated with the Agenda as Appendix II. Copy filed in the Minute Book. ]
40. CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS

(a) Audit Committee

Reported that Ms Jacqui Henderson had agreed to fill the vacancy on Audit Committee.

(b) CUC meeting at Downing Street

Reported that the Chairman of Council was part of a senior group from the Committee of University Chairmen recently invited to a meeting with a senior Downing Street adviser. Amongst other points discussed was the need for the Government to continue to invest in higher education.

41. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

(a) Deaths

Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.
[Details filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that Council record its deep regret and sympathy for the relatives concerned.

(b) New Year’s Honours 2006

Reported that the following had been awarded OBEs in the New Year’s Honours List 2006:

Dr U Wariyar
Professor T Van Zwanenberg

(c) Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education

Reported that:

(a) In November, it had been announced that the University had been awarded a Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for our pioneering mine water remediation research programme, which was led by Professor Paul Younger (Civil Engineering and Geosciences).

(b) The Queen’s Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education were the equivalent of the Queen’s Awards for Industry in the nation’s Honours system. They were awarded biennially to HE and FE institutions for work of exceptional quality and of broad benefit nationally or internationally.

(c) The award recognised the outstanding contribution that Professor Younger and his colleagues had made to solving the problem of mine water contamination.

(d) Established in 1992 as a community-based project involving an experimental wetland creation scheme in the former mining village of Quaking Houses, County Durham, the programme had grown in scope, influence and reputation to the extent that the academic research which underpinned the project now lay at the heart of the national
and international effort to combat the grave environmental threat posed by polluted mine waters. The University was now widely considered to be one of the world’s leading centres of expertise in the field of mine water pollution.

(d) **Access Agreement**  
(Minute 58, 26.4.2005)

Reported that:

(a) The Office for Fair Access had invited the University to resubmit its Access Agreement in the light of the Government’s decision to increase the number of students who would be eligible for financial support from the Government. As a result of these changes, the University proposed to continue to allocate approximately 18-19% of its full fee income to students in the form of bursaries. In order to achieve this, the University had to substitute the existing bursary scheme (£1,300 for those in receipt of full Government support and £1,000 for those in receipt of partial Government support) to the following scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Bursary Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£17,500 - £25,000</td>
<td>£900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,000 - £30,000</td>
<td>£600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Government support</td>
<td>£1,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) This, together with the other elements of the expenditure in the Access Agreement, maintained the University’s overall commitment at 24% of the additional fee income.

(c) The Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of Senate, and the Chairman of Council, acting on behalf of Council, had approved the changes to the University’s Access Agreement. OFFA had very recently approved the University’s revised scheme.

(e) **Pay issues**

Reported that:

(a) The AUT had balloted members on two different pay issues. The first was in respect of local pay modernisation proposals. The proposals had been developed by Staff Committee, whose membership comprised the Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellors of the Faculties and Mr Aviss, in order to meet the criteria of the National Framework and Memorandum of Understanding and local requirements for a competitive pay structure and long-term affordability. The proposals were competitive when compared with our closest comparators in the Russell Group. Staff Committee would, of course, keep the structure under review during the first few years to ensure that the University was able to recruit and retain the best staff.

(b) The AUT branch locally had voted in favour of acceptance of the University’s proposals, which would mean that the University would proceed to implement the proposals.
(c) The second ballot had been called by AUT in respect of this year’s national pay negotiations. The ballot asked members to indicate whether they were prepared to take industrial action in support of their pay claim. It was very unfortunate that the AUT were not prepared to continue in serious constructive negotiations with the employers association (UCEA). The University was considering carefully how it would respond to the outcome of the ballot. It would be necessary to report back on this item to Council.

42. HEADROOM FUNDING 2006-07

Reported that Executive Board had considered recommendations for the use of Headroom Funds for 2006-07.

[Details circulated with the Agenda as Appendix IV. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

43. CORPORATE VISUAL IDENTITY

Considered a report from the Director of the Marketing and Student Recruitment Service.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Appendix V. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. The University had given consideration to the issue of its corporate visual identity and the use of its name. There had been widespread consultation and this had shown strong support for retaining the current crest with the lion. However, it was recognised that the University’s full name was long and this made it difficult to use in conjunction with the crest in a manner which was always legible and helpful in terms of marketing the University.

2. A popular option arising from the consultation process was to permit the University to adopt the name ‘Newcastle University’ as a working title in the vast majority of contexts whilst reserving the full, formal title for more formal contexts only.

Resolved that Council endorse the proposal to adopt ‘Newcastle University’ as the University’s working title in the context of the development and future use of the University’s corporate visual identity, whilst retaining the title ‘University of Newcastle upon Tyne’ as the full, formal title of the University.

44. STUDENT RENTS AND CONFERENCE FEES 2006-07

Considered a report from the Director of Accommodation and Hospitality Services.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Appendix VI. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The proposed revision to student rents had been discussed by Executive Board. The significant, anticipated increase in fuel costs presented a major funding difficulty, which would lead to the proposed 5% increase in student rents for 2006-07.
2. Concerns were expressed by the student representatives and others concerning the standard of accommodation provided to students. It was recognised that the University had an investment plan, but planning constraints had limited the speed of new building developments.

3. It would be desirable for there to be clear communication to the student body about the reasons for the proposed increase.

Resolved that:

(i) Council approve a 5% increase in student rents for the academic year 2006-07, as set out in Appendix VI.

(ii) There be no increase in the current rates for lecture theatre/meeting rooms for 2006-07, in the light of the competitive position and the significant increase in hire rates introduced during 2005-06.

45. GREAT NORTH MUSEUM

Considered a proposal for Council to grant final approval to proceed with the construction phase of the Great North Museum.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Appendix VII. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. Excellent progress had been made on securing additional funding from the European Regional Development Fund and this would help to reduce the overall financial risk of the project.

2. The University was determined to take a clear business approach to the overall funding of the scheme and would limit its own contribution to the £3m previously approved by Council.

3. Council should be provided with updates on progress of the Great North Museum project and the funding available.

Resolved that:

(i) Final approval be given to the proposed Great North Museum project to proceed within an overall capital budget of £26,246,000, of which the University’s own direct contribution would be limited to £3m.

(ii) Professor Goddard, Dr Cross, Mr Dersley and other staff who had worked directly on the project be thanked for their excellent and successful efforts on behalf of the University.

46. GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

Received, for information, a report from Mr R J C Burrow, Assistant Director of Human Resources. [Circulated with the Agenda as Appendix VIII. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

47. **CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS 2006-07**

Reported that:

(a) The public holidays for Christmas 2006 and New Year 2007 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) The four additional days leave to which certain categories of University employees were entitled by their conditions of service would be taken on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Friday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48. **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 Chairman of Council on behalf of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairmen.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Appendix IX. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Some concern was expressed about some of the adverse publicity and implications that had been drawn from the departure of the former Professor of Stem Cell Biology.

2. The University remained extremely strong in stem cell work, indeed some of its work on human stem cells was world-leading, and although it was disappointing that a previous Professor of Stem Cell Biology had left, the University’s strength in this area was based on a number of specific teams and included successful collaboration with the University of Durham.

*Agreed that it would be helpful if the Vice-Chancellor would take steps to communicate further to the University and others on the ongoing position with regard to stem cell work, both to reassure people concerning the University’s strength in depth and its continuing commitment to this area.*