54. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

55. **BEST WISHES**

The Chairman reported that Mr Neil Braithwaite had recently been unwell and Council expressed its best wishes for a speedy recovery.

56. **MINUTES**

*The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 13 December 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed.*

Received the notes of the Council Conference held on 13 December 2010.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

57. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Received an oral report from the Executive Director of Human Resources on current health and safety issues affecting the University, including performance measures and actions taken.

Noted that:

1. Following comments made at the meeting of Council on 13 December, the statistics used to prepare the quarterly accident reports were in the process of being reviewed with a view to producing a revised presentation for future submissions to Council. It was confirmed that this review would included more detailed analysis of the underlying data.

2. The University was soon to undergo an external audit of its health and safety arrangements. Members of Council could participate in this and any member who was interested in doing so was invited to contact the Executive Director of Human Resources.
3. The University had recently arranged a number of meetings with representatives of the Health and Safety Executive with a view to improving engagement and maintaining good working relations.

58. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Progress of business

Received a business tracking form.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

59. CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS

Nominations Committee

Noted that there were a number of lay members of Council who would reach the end of their third term on 31 July 2011 who would not, therefore, be eligible for re-appointment. At its meeting on 14 February 2011, Nominations Committee would review the skills set for Council members. Any member who wished to make a contribution to this discussion was invited to contact the Chairman.

60. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(i) Pay and Pensions

Noted that:

1. Support staff unions had accepted a pay award of 0.4% backdated to 1 August 2010, but UCEA had been unable to reach agreement with UCU and EIS. UCEA had, therefore, advised universities to pay the increase to all staff.

2. Regarding USS, the USS Board had considered the feedback from the consultation exercise and recommended changes in a number of areas to the JNC which met on 1 February. The recommended changes were:
   - An extension to the six months’ rejoining period included in the original proposals.
   - During a two-year transitional period it was proposed that employees in a comparable scheme who were promoted to academic or academic-related posts should be permitted to join the final salary section of USS.
   - It was proposed that the planned caps on the revaluation of Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE)-like benefits should be set at a higher level, to retain an appropriate measure to address inflation risk whilst reducing the effect on scheme members of benefits being eroded by high inflation.

3. UCU had given notice at the beginning of February of their intention to run two ballots, one on changes to USS and the other on job security and pay. There were technical flaws in the notices which meant they had had to rescind both and start the
process afresh. It was the University’s intention to communicate its position to all staff at the point the ballot commenced, including the decision taken by Council at the time of the last dispute that pay would be withheld in certain circumstances. The letter would also explain the implications of industrial action for the student experience.

(ii) Singapore Institute of Technology

Council recorded its thanks to Professor Mesbahi and Professor Hinton on the successful completion of the agreement to extend the existing collaborative teaching arrangements in Singapore from one subject area to four subject areas.

(iii) Regional Growth Fund Bid

Council recorded its thanks to Mr Richard Dale and Professor Nick Wright for their work on the Regional Growth Fund bid which had now been submitted.

(iv) North East Doctoral Training Centre

Council echoed the Vice-Chancellor in congratulating Professor Neill Marshall, PG Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, on the success of the joint bid with Durham to establish an ESRC North East Doctoral Training Centre.

61. BUDGET 2011-12 : UPDATE

Received an oral report from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance on HEFCE’s proposals for funding in 2011-12. A background paper summarising government announcements at the end of December was circulated with the agenda as Document E.

[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. On 2 February, HEFCE had announced the distribution of funding for universities and colleges for 2010-11 and 2011-12. Funding was allocated to HEFCE based on the financial year but was distributed by HEFCE to institutions based on the academic year. As HEFCE’s budget for the 2011-12 financial year had been reduced, there would, therefore, be a claw back of funding during the current academic year. The University anticipated a total claw back of £2.4m from the teaching and research budgets which would be taken from the £3.7m contingency included in the budget for 2010-11.

2. Funding for 2* research would be significantly reduced from 2011-12 onwards. The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) would be held steady in overall cash but the amounts to be paid to individual HEIs would be reviewed.

3. Overall, the University’s budget would be cut by c.5.8% in cash terms and by 8.6% in real terms.

4. For 2011-12, fees income was expected to remain strong and, as a result, the overall budget was expected to be 0.7% up on 2010-11 despite the reduction in HEFCE income.

5. Within the University, the budget for central costs would be reduced by 1% for 2011-12 to allow faculty budgets to be increased by 1.8%. 
6. International recruitment was an area where there were some risks. International applications had increased by 34% but there had been a 70% increase in applications from Chinese students, which meant that the University was dependent on one country for a large proportion of its international students.

7. The Government was proposing changes to visa regulations, which was a concern since the current proposals could have significant implications for international student recruitment and, in particular, students who progressed onto degree programmes via INTO. Such changes could present a risk for the budget in future years. A consultation period on the student visa regime had closed on 31 January but there was still considered to be time to influence the Government whilst it considered the submissions. Any member of Council who came into contact with a Member of Parliament during the next few weeks was invited to raise this issue with them. It was agreed that a briefing paper on this issue, prepared by Universities UK, would be circulated to members.

8. The Government was encouraging institutions to consider shared services. Due to current VAT rules it was considered difficult to achieve significant savings in this area. There were, however, indications that changes to legislation were being considered which could lead to there being greater potential for savings.

9. The University would receive its provisional grant allocation for 2011-12 on 17 March and a clearer picture of the 2011-12 budget would be presented to Council at its meeting on 28 March.

10. It was confirmed that future fee income was based on the assumption that recruitment levels would remain constant. It was suggested that the University should consider the possibility that student numbers could decline by up to 15% once the new fee regime was introduced. It was agreed that more sensitivity analyses would be conducted.

11. The implications of the budget would lead to some difficult decisions internally. Medical Sciences would be significantly affected by the cuts in Government funding until the new fee regime was introduced and, unlike the other two faculties, would not have fee income from large numbers of international students to fall back on.

12. The budget was a corporate concern and the University was in a good position to buffer any short-term consequences. The University had subscribed to the concept of ‘One University’ and would respond to any problems it faced based on this principle.

13. It was suggested that the University should enter into a dialogue with staff to determine their expectations on pay to ensure a shared understanding of the implications of their pay requests. It was confirmed that the University met with the representatives of the local unions at least twice a year to discuss general issues affecting the University. The Vice-Chancellor’s Town Hall meetings had provided a good opportunity to obtain feedback from staff and, if necessary, a further round of meetings could take place.

62. WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE (Minute 123, 12.7.2010)

Reported that:

(a) Council, at its meeting on 12 July 2010, had resolved that Executive Board be asked to give further consideration to comments made by Council and also to any comments subsequently made by Senate and that its response be submitted to Council in the new academic year.
(b) Senate, at its meeting on 5 October 2010, had resolved that Senate and Council’s views on the Report from the Working Group on Governance be considered and assimilated into a final report on actions to be taken to be presented to Senate and Council for information.

Received an extract from the draft Senate Minutes of 11 January 2011 on Senate’s consideration of this item.

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

Considered recommendations in a report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board, which had been endorsed by Senate.

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

After noting that:

1. The Governance Review had included a recommendation that the induction programme for members of Council should be reviewed. This process was underway and the Working Group which had been set up for this purpose was expected to report to Council in the near future.

2. Annex C of Document G contained the final position of the committees of Council and Senate.

3. Document G presented a list of rules but it was noted that it was the spirit of the document that was important and that the rules could be adapted to suit new situations as they emerged.

4. Document G contained a recommendation to amend the standing orders of Senate to make clear the independent role of academic Senators. It was agreed that a similar statement should be added to Council’s Standing Orders.

Resolved that:

(i) The following statement be added to Council’s Standing Orders:

“In performing the duties of a member of Council, members of academic staff must not be constrained by the normal line management structures from expressing an opinion or supporting or opposing a proposal.”

(ii) The proposals in Appendices 1 and 2 to Document G be approved for implementation with immediate effect.

63. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES – KPIs: STUDENT SATISFACTION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Considered a paper from Professor Ella Ritchie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the KPI ‘Student Satisfaction and Student Experience’.

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

After noting that:

1. In terms of the KPI set in relation to the National Student Survey, a number of subject areas were achieving a satisfaction score of 90% or above but action was being taken to ensure the consistency of the results across the University.
2. The data that was used to produce the results for the KPI on graduate employability was taken from 2009. The University had set itself the target of being in the top 15 of institutions for its graduate employability following its good performance in 2007 where it had been placed twelfth. Due to the fact that the North East was disproportionately badly affected by changes in the financial climate which had taken place since, the University’s performance had declined in subsequent years. A large proportion of the University’s students remained in the region following graduation. As a result, the University did not expect to improve significantly its performance in relation to this KPI in the immediate future.

3. It was suggested that the KPI should include a narrative which explained how the University intended to improve its performance in future years.

4. It was argued that providing data on the percentage of the student population that was postgraduate did not necessarily provide insight into the quality of the student experience. Sources such as institutional audits, subject reviews and the outcomes from accreditation visits might provide more appropriate measures.

5. It was important for there to be a degree of consistency in the measures that were included in the KPIs to allow trends to be identified. This would be lost if the measures were changed too frequently. It was proposed that the Key Information Set (KIS) which the University would soon be expected to publish for prospective students might provide a useful measure.

6. It was suggested that institutional strategies, KPIs and risk registers provided different ways of looking at the same, or similar, information and consideration should be given to linking these documents in some way.

7. In terms of the percentage of full-time degree entrants from low socio-economic backgrounds, the University had failed to meet the national benchmark set in this area during the past few years. (It did, however, more than meet the benchmark from its regional intake.) It was important to articulate why the University had not met the national benchmark and why it would continue to be a challenge for it to do so.

8. It was proposed that the Vision 2021 document should be updated to include realistic measures which would allow performance towards the realisation of the vision to be assessed. Where corrective action was required, this should also be included.

9. It was confirmed that detailed action plans for the subject areas which had received poor results in the NSS had been prepared and were in the process of being implemented. The current format of the KPI did not lend itself to the inclusion of the detailed action plans.

10. The possibility of including a KIP which drew on student feedback provided during their studies and not just at the end should be considered.

Resolved that the KPIs should be reviewed to determine whether the current format continued to provide a useful tool for management and governance.

64. REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meeting of Audit Committee held on 14 January 2011.

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

Noted that Council members were invited to contact the Chairman of Audit Committee if there were any areas of University business which they wanted Audit Committee to consider.
65. **ANNUAL REPORT FROM REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE**

Received the Annual Report from Redundancy Committee.

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

Noted that:

1. Redundancy Committee continued to operate but would be disbanded once the proposed changes to the Statutes were approved by the Privy Council. The Committee hoped that safeguards advocated by Redundancy Committee would be put in place in order to protect staff once the committee itself had been dissolved.

2. It was confirmed that Staff Committee would be able to provide an overview of the operation of redundancy procedures and that it was well placed to do so since it was a sub-committee of Executive Board and not linked to a particular faculty.

*Resolved that the members of Redundancy Committee be thanked for their work.*

66. **HENRY WELLCOME BUILDING : BUSINESS CASE**

Considered a report from Professor Chris Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences on behalf of Executive Board.

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

*Resolved that Business Case for the Henry Wellcome Building Extension be approved.*

67. **NEWCASTLE SCIENCE CITY**

Received a progress report from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board.

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

68. **NUMed CAMPUS IN MALAYSIA**

Considered a report from Professor Chris Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences and Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The recruitment of staff in Malaysia was progressing well. Recruitment of the first cohort of students to be taught in Malaysia was also underway.

2. Of the 24 students who had commenced their studies in Newcastle in 2009/10, 22 had passed and 2 students had been required to repeat their first year. Language difficulties had been experienced by some of these students but this issue was now considered to have been resolved.

3. The possible removal of accreditation of the Malaysian programme by the GMC remained an issue. The University had contacted the Privy Council and had written to the local MP to advise them of the consequences that such a decision would have for the reputation of British higher education in Malaysia and elsewhere. One possible solution to this issue would be for the GMC to put in place a system by which institutions could pay for their overseas programmes to be accredited.
4. It was important for the degree programme to be dual-accredited in order to confirm the quality of provision. It was confirmed that the GMC was committed to accrediting each cohort of students until the law changed.

Resolved that:

(i) Council approve the increase in capitalisation of NUMed Malaysia SDN BHD by MYR5,000,000 from MYR500,000 to MYR5,500,000 (circa £105k to £1,155k) to fund future capital expenditure by the company in line with the business plan approved by Council in October 2008.

(ii) Council delegate authority to the Executive Director of Finance to grant loans of up to £500k in aggregate by the University to NUMed Malaysia SDN BHD to fund future capital expenditure and working capital requirements. Regular reports would be provided to Finance Committee on use of this facility.

69. REPORT FROM THE JOINT SELECTION COMMITTEE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Reported that the Chairman of Council, acting on behalf of Council, and members of Senate who had been consulted by email, had approved the recommendations in the report from the joint Selection Committee on the Appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching.

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

70. DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

Reported that:

(a) Senate and Council had previously agreed that Professor Ella Ritchie be appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor from a date to be determined until 31 July 2014.

(b) The Chairman of Council, acting on behalf of Council, had approved a recommendation that the date of appointment should be from 1 February 2011 until 31 July 2014.

71. EXECUTIVE BOARD : CHANGE TO MEMBERSHIP

Considered a recommendation that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor be added to the membership of Executive Board with immediate effect.

Resolved that the above recommendation be approved, subject to the agreement of Senate.

72. STUDENT RENTS AND CONFERENCE FEES 2011-12

Considered proposed increased in student rents and conference fees for 2011-12 as outlined in a paper from the Director of Accommodation and Hospitality Services and endorsed by Executive Board.

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

After noting that:
1. Concern was expressed by the Students’ Union Sabbatical Officers at the size of the increase in student rents, particularly as they were to be introduced at a time when discussions over higher fees were taking place. It was suggested that this could have consequences for the widening participation agenda.

2. It was explained that the increases were necessary in order to meet substantial increases in utilities and to make finances available to invest in student accommodation. Unlike private rentals, the University did not charge for the full academic year and the rents were inclusive of utility charges.

Resolved that:

(i) The concern expressed by the Students’ Union Sabbatical Officers over the rent increases in light of the discussion over higher fees be noted.

(ii) Concern over the quality of some of the University’s student accommodation also be noted and that the Registrar be requested to ensure that this be taken into account during the considerations for the investment plan for University accommodation which would be presented to Council in due course.

(iii) The proposed increases in student rents and conference fees for 2011-12 be approved.

73. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY REGULATIONS

Considered the recommendation in a report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board, which had been approved by Senate at its meeting on 11 January 2011. [Circulated with the agenda as Document Q. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that the revised Delegation of Authority Regulations be approved with immediate effect.

74. INSTITUTE OF HUMAN GENETICS

Considered a recommendation from University Research Committee and Executive Board that the Institute of Human Genetics be renamed the Institute of Genetic Medicine from 1 March 2011.

Resolved that the above recommendation be approved, subject to the agreement of Senate.

75. DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Received a report prepared by Ms J N Catterall, Development Trust Manager. [Circulated with the agenda as Document R. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

76. REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY/UNION SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Reported that it had recently been confirmed that having completed all the requirements for registration with the Charity Commission, the Union Society’s legal status had successfully been changed and a new independent charity had been formed. To coincide with this change, the Union Society had decided to rebrand and would now be known as Newcastle University Students’ Union (NUSU). The name of the Committee and its sub-groups would be updated to reflect this change.
77. NOMINATIONS FOR HONORARY DEGREES

Reported that the Honorary Degrees Committee invited nominations in writing for next year’s Congregation. Any member of Academic Board, Court, Council and the Alumni Consultative Group may make a nomination and support for nominees for honorary degrees should be sought only from members of these bodies. Where several members made a joint nomination, one should be shown as the nominator and the others as supporters. The grounds on which the nomination was made should be clearly stated.

Principles for the award of Honorary Degrees could be found at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/congregations/ceremonies/honorary/nom_hongrad.php

Proposals should be sent in an envelope marked ‘Confidential – Honorary Degrees’ to Dr John Hogan, Registrar, King’s Gate, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU by Friday, 26 August 2011.

78. 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 Document S. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

RESERVED BUSINESS

79. CHAIR OF COUNCIL (Minute 50, 13.12.2010)

Reported that Mr Mark I’Anson had been the successful candidate in the postal ballot that had been conducted for the position of Chair of Council.

Resolved that Mr Mark I’Anson be appointed Chair of Council from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2014.