Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chairman) and 29 members of the Academic Board.

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the fact that there were insufficient members at the meeting to constitute a quorum (100 members). The meeting could not conduct formal business as the Academic Board.

I NOTES OF THE 16 MAY 2001 MEETING

1. Reported:

That the notes of the meeting of Academic Board, held on 16 May 2001, had been previously circulated and are available on web site: (http:www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/statutory/academic/).

II NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR HONORARY DEGREES IN 2003

2. Reported:

(a) That, in accordance with Senate Standing Orders, members of Academic Board may submit to the Honorary Degrees Committee, through the Registrar, nominations for candidates for the conferment of Honorary Degrees in May, 2003.

(b) Honorary Degrees Committee now invited nominations in writing from members of Academic Board for next year's congregation. Members were asked to state clearly the grounds on which the nomination is made and provide relevant supporting information: (extracts from 'Who's Who' were not required). Where several members made a joint nomination, one should be shown as the nominator and the others as supporters.

Proposals should be sent in envelopes marked 'Confidential - Honorary Degree' to Mr D E T Nicholson, Registrar, 6 Kensington Terrace, by Friday, 18 October 2002.
III MEMBERS OF COURT APPOINTED BY ACADEMIC BOARD

3. Received:

An invitation to submit nominations for members of Court appointed by Academic Board.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document A)

IV REPORT BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR

4. Received:

An oral report by the Vice-Chancellor in which he thanked everyone involved in the restructuring review for helping to make it a constructive process and briefly mentioned progress on various aspects of the review. He also highlighted the increasing importance of strategic collaboration in the HE sector and the need to integrate and interface aspects of the Centre for Lifelong Learning with other University business. He invited Dr Atkins to give a progress report on the Institutional Review which had taken place in November 2001 and to share the latest news on possible future QAA arrangements.

V QUESTIONS

5. The Vice-Chancellor responded to questions from members of Academic Board as follows:

A The University’s financial position

The results of the HEFCE Grant were better than initial estimates, particularly in relation to research funding. Although this was encouraging certain of our comparator universities had increased their funding by far more. The costs associated with the VSS and restructuring have been built into the financial strategy and so long as the University meets its income generation targets as set out in the Business Plan it will end up in a strong position.

B Faculty and School support structures

The Financial Monitoring and Budget Scrutiny Group is currently considering resource allocation for 2002-03 and budgets are likely to be known by mid-June. Provosts and Heads of administration will be speaking to the new Heads of School in the next few weeks to discuss appropriate and affordable support. Templates for School support structures are being developed although account will be taken of the obvious variation in size and complexity of the Schools.
C  How had consultation affected the decision-making process?

In relation to restructuring there had been a number of instances including for example the structure and composition of Schools, the introduction of the VSS and proposals in the Teaching and Research Review Group Reports.

D  Can performance indicators improve quality of research and teaching?

There have been few controlled experiments in this area. Many people believe that major performance indicators such as the RAE and QAA have had an effect on the standard of research and teaching. Certainly attitudes and behaviour have been altered by them.

Secretary's note: The low attendance rate at the meeting was remarked upon. Several members of Academic Board suggested that in view of restructuring and the review of committees it would be timely and useful to look at the role and function of Academic Board. It might be appropriate for the Working Party on the Size and Composition of Senate and Council to include it in its remit.