

UTS Council meeting report

21 October 2020

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 21 October 2020 meeting.

**The Report structure replicates the flow of the agenda.*

Strategic items of business

UTS's Future Teaching and Learning Strategy

Council received a report from the DVC (Education and Students) and noted the following;

The report focussed on the revised approach to learning.futures, the UTS learning strategy and reflects an evolution of the current learning.futures framework. This change is proposed primarily in order to increase the employability of UTS graduates which in turns increases the distinctiveness of a UTS education.

The evolved strategy further enhances the UTS 2027 Strategy “to advance knowledge and learning through research-inspired teaching, research with impact and partnerships with industry, the professions and community”. The ‘value-add’ for students is studying at a university known for creativity and innovation in teaching, which focuses on preparing them for the future of work and where they are taught by academics who are undertaking research in their field to advance knowledge and impact industry, the professions and society. As well it extends UTS2027 strategic initiatives particularly Learning for a Lifetime, Personalised Learning and Digital partners.

Finally, this approach brings the teaching and learning practices previously available to post-graduate students to under-graduates.

Council discussed the defining characteristics of teaching and learning at UTS and whether this creates an adequate point of difference. The feedback from Industry and survey data supporting the stated characteristics of a UTS graduate was also discussed.

To support the Strategy, Council was advised that student induction is being redesigned to be aligned with the objectives of the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The importance of maximising the opportunity of a purpose-design campus to support active learning was emphasised. Furthermore, a continuing commitment to work-integrated learning will continue to be a focus point.

UTS's Future Workforce

The *New Ways of Working* (NWW) initiative of UTS 2027 is undertaking foundational work to deliver a holistic set of initiatives and strategies that will develop the UTS workforce of the future. The aim is to support staff to develop new skills and to identify

different work structures that facilitate effective delivery of excellence in learning and teaching and research. The overarching activity under the NWW initiative remains the development of a blueprint for the future UTS workforce and accompanying transition plans and activities to enable the delivery of UTS 2027.

The NWW Workforce of the Future program (2019) defined strategic domains that formed the framing for projects progressed during 2020. These strategic domains were established from benchmarking analysis and a consultation process (50 + interviews and workshops). Projects during 2020 have focused on academic excellence, work planning and allocation, academic space, leadership and workforce drivers and levers. Initial work also commenced on consideration of team based approaches including the roles and contribution of professional colleagues.

The pandemic and consequential actions have shown that online collaboration and the collaboration between diverse groups of staff are not only possible but a viable way of working to obtain agility and speed responding to opportunities, problems and risks.

The “Blueprint” that is being developed in response to UTS Fit will inform the University’s ongoing commitment to new ways of working.

Operations and performance

Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor provides a report to each Council meeting containing updates on key developments and events that have occurred since Council’s last meeting. Updates include; the implementation progress of the UTS 2027 Strategy, State and Federal Government issues, updates regarding the university sector and internal matters, particularly achievements and awards.

The Vice-Chancellor provided Council with an update on COVID-19 (Phase 2 of UTS campus reactivation). A major focus of reactivation is maintaining health and safety. With increased campus activity, the major risk is the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. A range of measures are being taken to minimise risk to the community including through physical distancing, increased hygiene, staff parking access and health monitoring. The other major focus is to ensure students can continue to progress their degrees and fulfil requirements for graduation when these requirements require access to physical infrastructure.

UTS 2027 update

Council noted the current focus; prioritising new or continuing UTS 2027 projects. Following on from the reprioritisation of 2020 projects due to the impact of COVID-19, the imperative is now on the review of planned or proposed strategic activities for 2021.

The key criteria for assessing business cases for funding can be summarised as:

- Alignment with UTS 2027
- Revenue or efficiency generation
- Expected outcomes and benefits
- Impact of not proceeding
- Business readiness and capacity

- Project interdependencies

Federal Government

Council noted the Federal Government delivered some welcome relief to universities earlier this month. The key announcements for the sector were:

- \$251.8 million over two years for 50,000 additional places in short courses
- \$298.5 million for 12,000 additional places in national priority areas over four years (previously announced)
- \$1.0 billion in 2020-21 for research including:
 - \$1.0 billion through the Research Support Program
 - \$41.6 million (over four years) for a Strategic University Reform Fund
- \$2.0 billion in additional R&D incentives along the lines of the existing scheme
- \$25.1 million over five years to establish a Women in STEM Industry Cadetship program to support 500 women working in STEM industries to complete an Advanced Diploma through a combination of study and work-integrated learning experiences
- \$14.5 million over four years to extend or expand existing initiatives that support girls and women to gain STEM skills and capabilities
- \$5.8 million in 2020-21 for the Department to undertake a scoping study of potential options to accelerate the translation and commercialisation of research

The additional funding for research over the next 12 months is particularly pleasing given the impact COVID-19 has had on revenue for the sector. While it does not completely fill that gap, it is clear recognition from the Government of the vital role universities and research plays in our economy and will play in our economic recovery. We are now examining the budget papers in detail and will be discussing some of the potential opportunities for UTS with Minister Tehan in coming weeks.

Minister Tehan also announced \$326 million for additional student places from 2021. The money will fund 12,000 new university places next year, on top of those already in the funding Bill.

Times University Rankings

The Vice-Chancellor and Council were delighted with the results of the Times University Rankings for 2021, which has UTS ranked 160th. This is a significant rise in rankings from last year when we were ranked 194th. UTS saw an overall improvement in each of the five pillars including teaching, research, citations, industry income and international outlook. UTS saw the greatest improvement in the Citation Impact indicator and has continued to enjoy solid growth in publication outputs and citation counts. This is an outstanding result and far better than anticipated or even hoped for.

The Australian's 2020 Top Researchers

The Australian's 2020 Top Researchers have been named and I am delighted to inform you that 11 UTS academics have been named as the top researchers in their fields in Australia for 2020. The Australian partners with research analytics firm League of

Scholars, using data from Google Scholar, to examine papers published in the top 20 journals in more than 250 fields of research over the past 5 years. It identifies the field leaders as the authors and institutions that have the most citations from their papers published in these journals.

The UTS researchers named were:

- Adjunct Professor Caroline Homer AO for research in the field of pregnancy and childbirth
- Professor Hokyong Shon for research in the field of Water Supply & Treatment
- Distinguished Professor Jon Adams in the field of Alternative & Traditional Medicine
- Professor David Currow in the field of Hospice & Palliative Care
- Professor Debra Jackson in the field of Nursing
- Associate Professor Christina Ho in the field of Ethnic & Cultural Studies
- Professor Craig Batty in the field of Film
- Distinguished Professor Alastair Pennycook in the field of Foreign Language Learn
- Professor Huu Hao Ngo in the field of Environmental Sciences
- Associate Professor Roc Shi in the field of Environmental Law & Policy
- Emeritus Professor David Boud in the field of Higher Education

UTS was also named the top research institution in the fields of Computer Vision & Pattern Recognition, Signal Processing, Water Supply & Treatment, English Language & Literature, Sustainable Development, Forensic Science.

Social Justice Report

The Honourable Verity Firth discussed the Report and the initiatives underpinning the results. The Report continues to reflect a mixture of qualitative and quantitative content. Council also discussed the inequity in participation of students from lower socio economic status, and the potential for that inequity to increase as a result of the pandemic. The initiatives and programs to reduce that inequity were discussed.

Reports from committees

Council has a number of sub committees, whose membership have particular expertise, to provide assistance and advice to Council on matters for Council consideration. These committees report back to Council.

Audit and Risk Committee

The primary responsibility of the Audit and Risk Committee is to assist Council in overseeing the activities undertaken by the UTS body corporate and, from time to time, other related entities as requested by Council.

In 2013 Council approved a health and safety compliance reporting framework, the “UTS Council Health and Safety Responsibilities”. The Committee monitor various activities, and receive a number of reports, against the framework, in order to assure itself and subsequently Council.

Council were provided an assurance statement as to the effectiveness and completeness of the University's actions with regards to health and safety. Council received and approved the new Health and Safety Policy.

Academic Board

The Chair, Academic Board highlighted areas of the report, particularly the Academic Board Forum and the student presentation on Emerging Learning Practices – including embedding Indigenous Graduate Attributes. The Student Misconduct Report was discussed, noting the increasing numbers of misconduct cases. It was also noted that detection of academic misconduct is becoming increasingly sophisticated which is impacting upon case volume.

Student/Council Liaison Group

The Student/Council Liaison Group is a forum for UTS students, members of the University Council and UTS senior management to discuss matters of UTS policy and governance relevant to the student body. It gives effect to the UTS Governance Principle that the University engage the relevant interests of its stakeholders.

The Chair, Student/Council Liaison Group, highlighted areas of interest for the Group, including the Black Lives Matter movement. The Group has been highly engaged in Student Experience at UTS. Discussion has centred around a range of survey data.

Council discussed the success of the 2020 Student Forum, conducted via the Zoom online platform on 12 October. Participants were invited to develop ways of helping students to engage socially and form communities while studying online. The focus was on developing ideas that can be implemented quickly with a limited budget. Paid internships are available to students whose proposals were selected for implementation. Council expressed appreciation to the Chair, for increasing the attendance and engagement of the Group.

Items for approval

Council Appointment to the Board of ActivateUTS

The ActivateUTS Constitution provides for it to have a Board comprised of 13 Directors: five appointed directly by the University (including the Chair, the Treasurer, an "Other Outside Director" and two Staff Directors), seven elected Student Directors and the Chief Executive Officer.

Council considered the skills and experience required, and appointed an "Other Outside Director" to the Board of ActivatUTS.

Items for noting

Council are provided papers for noting and include activity that has occurred between Council meetings.

- Chancellor's Report

- Use of Power of Attorney, University Seal and Executive Action
 - Notice of Election of Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor and Pro-Chancellors
 - Student Report
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Items of General Business

None

Other reports

- Student Load Forecast
- Work Health and Safety Report
- Staff Profile Report
- Autumn Assessment Report
- Finance Committee Report
- Remuneration Committee Report