

UTS Council meeting report

16 June 2021

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 16 June 2021 meeting.

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

Strategic items of business

Strategic Briefing (DVC Education and Students)

Professor Shirley Alexander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) presented an update on the areas relevant to her portfolio.

The approach to teaching and learning post-COVID was discussed, detailing the changes the Division has made to teaching and learning practice in response to the lessons learned from the rapid pivot to remote teaching. There was accelerated digital upskilling of academic staff and a demonstrated capacity to be flexible and agile.

An overview of student perceptions of their UTS experience as revealed through both internal and external surveys was discussed. Results from the Early Feedback Survey (EFS) and Subject Feedback Survey (SFS) in the first half of 2021 reveal broad satisfaction with experience and some identified opportunities where improvements could be made. The external survey, the Student Experience Survey (SES), showed a significant downturn in students' reports on satisfaction with their experience as was the case for all universities in Australia during 2020. Council discussed the remedial action being undertaken.

The Division's strategic projects, which continue to make good progress in challenging circumstances, were discussed. Under the strategic banner of Learning for a Lifetime, the PG Futures, Online Program Management (OPM) and New Business initiatives have met and, in some cases, exceeded delivery and financial targets. Within the Personalised Learning strategy, TRACK – our career and subject matching and identification program – continues to develop. The physical and online Student Hub was launched, and a focus continues on Academic Integrity, in response to internal (management priorities and internal audit) and external (regulatory, via the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)) drivers. All of these contribute to continuous improvement in the student experience.

The rapid change to online learning post COVID-19 has changed student expectations around flexibility in mode of learning. The Division will continue to monitor and respond to expectations in relation to teaching and learning delivery strategies.

Retreat Follow Up: Distinctiveness – Lifetime of Learning and Employability

As a follow up to the discussion at the March 2021 Council Retreat and in response to a request to consider and report back on the risks to maintaining the current UTS course market share, the DVC Education and Students gave a briefing to Council.

The global context and risks to our market offering; our risk mitigation of differentiation through a focus on employability, the form and unique experience of our learning; and the vision and options for the future of our 2027 initiatives, PG Futures, learning.futures2, Learning for a Lifetime, New Business, Enterprise Learning, and Alumni Engagement were all discussed.

Emerging Trends and Themes in School Education that will Impact Universities

Mr Mark Scott AO, Former Secretary of the NSW Department of Education attended the meeting to discuss the emerging trends and themes in school education. The discussion focused on factors impacting the school education system and the emerging outcomes of these impacts. Some of the key points made by Mr Scott included; school funding, barriers to education, poor funding in school infrastructure and facilities, the lack of relationships and partnerships between schools, universities and business, and the impact of social media.

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 spoke to his report and highlighted various matters.

The Vice-Chancellor also presented the top six Strategic and Operational Risk Themes providing an overview of the key areas for UTS to mitigate its current risk profile. Consideration will be given to how strategic and operational risks will inform Council's forward agenda with consideration given to undertaking some "deep dives" into particular risk areas.

Council congratulated Professor Michael McDaniel, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement) for being appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), (General Division). The award was 'for distinguished service to Indigenous tertiary education, to the advancement of social cohesion through reconciliation, to the performing arts, and to the community'.

UTS Sustainability Report 2020

UTS has continued to implement the UTS 2027 Strategy, with a commitment to deliver a sustainable future as we work towards our vision of being a leading public university of technology recognised for our global impact. We have also continued to embed sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our core activities – from research on the impacts of climate change to equipping our students with the knowledge and skills they need to become the next generation of leaders.

Council discussed UTS's performance for the 2020 calendar year. Over the past 12 months work has focused on continuing to deliver the *UTS Sustainability Strategy 2017 – 2020*, with a range of initiatives across Teaching and Learning, Research, Campus Operations, and Engagement.

Highlights for 2020 included:

- Completing a 100kW solar array on the roof of Haberfield rowing club;
- Saving 8 million sheets of paper through the change to digital exams;
- Winning an ACTS Green Gown Award in the Outstanding Leadership Team category for the cross-campus circular economy food waste processing project;
- The Climate Change Cluster Research Centre began mapping and aligning their work against the SDGs; and
- Staff and student involvement in the Green Impact program consisting of 10 teams undertaking 257 sustainability actions despite most not being on campus.

Reports from committees

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

Report from 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 accordance with the University's Risk Management Framework, strategic risk assessment reports are provided bi-annually to inform Council, through its Audit and Risk Committee of the current risk profile of the university. These reports detail the current major strategic and operational risks faced by the University resulting from risks in the environment in which the University operates. The Key Strategic and Operational Risks were discussed.

The University's Cyber Policy Suite was discussed, and Council approved the rescission of two old policies enabling the Vice-Chancellor to approve the new replacement policies.

Commercial Activities Committee

The primary responsibility of the Commercial Activities 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.

The Commercial Activities Committee recommended Council approval to establish the proprietary limited company Kilimanjaro Learning Solutions Pty Ltd, to be 100% owned by UTS. Kilimanjaro Learning Solutions Pty Ltd will pilot, test and scale a direct-to-learner marketplace technology platform aimed at providing insights into new learner-experience focused delivery of a range of UTS and other short courses.

Items for approval

- Council Committee Meeting Dates for 2022
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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
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Items of General Business

- Dean's Presentation (FEIT)
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Other reports

- Fit for 2027 Update
- Work Health and Safety Report
- Physical Infrastructure Committee Report
- Academic Board Report
- Finance Committee Report