

UTS Council meeting report

20 October 2021

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 20 October 2021 meeting.

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

The Chancellor, on behalf of Council, thanked Mr Patrick Woods (DVC Resources) and Ms Chrissy Burns (Acting DVC Corporate Services) for their contribution to Council and the University more broadly.

Noting that this would be Professor Brungs final meeting as Vice-Chancellor, the Chancellor further acknowledged his leadership of the University and contribution Council. In particular, the Chancellor acknowledged Professor Brungs contribution to the University's culture through his accessibility to staff, enthusiasm and optimism.

Strategic items of business

Strategy Development Update

Council discussed the strategic initiatives for the next three-year plan. In implementing the Strategy over the next three-year phase, a number of thematic areas emerged in discussion including: understanding the impact of executing the Strategy in the context of the impact of the Pandemic on the University and its staff; give consideration to what makes UTS distinctive; and being clear on future success characteristics.

Customer Experience at UTS

Council acknowledged the complex and diverse range of stakeholders that engage and contribute to the University. Students, industry partners, and our community more broadly, all have expectations of service quality.

An important differentiator for the University, will be to continue to nurture a culture of service excellence. This will support improved retention and encourage repeat engagement with the University. Council discussed the UTS focus and approach that requires a significant shift in ways of working, systems capability, internal service culture and external engagement. The challenges and benefits of the model were discussed.

Social Justice Report 2020

UTS has been producing an annual Social Justice Report since 2011, and the report is presented to Council for oversight.

The report is a whole-of-university report, illustrating the breadth of work being undertaken across the university to promote equity, diversity and social justice in accordance with the objectives of the previous UTS Strategic Plan and the UTS Social Impact Framework. 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 Social Impact Framework has been integrated into the first three year phase of UTS 2027 through the 'Delivering positive social change' strategic initiative. The priorities outlined in this initiative align with the domains of focus within the Social Impact Framework, allowing the UTS 2027 social justice performance to be tracked at a more granular level. As part of UTS 2027 the Framework has also proven useful in its capacity to map existing activity, provide evidence of program effectiveness and identify strategic gaps.

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 discussed the current NSW Health Orders and UTS response to 'on campus' activity, as well as the proposed pilot for the return of international students.

The university rankings were discussed and in particular the need for the University to focus on the Strategy execution rather than being too focused on ranking outcomes.

The Vice-Chancellor gave a brief overview of the financial position of the University, highlighting savings achieved that will be incorporated into the Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP).

Work Health and Safety Standing Report

UTS Council has a proactive duty to exercise due diligence in the Work Health and Safety of the staff, visitors and students of UTS, under the Work Health and Safety Act. Council receive a standing report at every Council Meeting as well as an Annual Report and various other sources to enable due diligence.

Council discussed elements of the report including staff and student mental health and wellbeing. The actions taken to mitigate risk, increase awareness and manage any issues were also 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.

To ensure alignment with relevant international standards (ISO19600:2014), in 2021 the university developed a public-facing policy outlining the university’s commitment to compliance and a high-level compliance framework which identifies the University’s key governance, risk, legal and audit functions, management activities and sign-offs, operations, health and safety and their interrelationship. The Compliance Policy was approved by Council and outlines the processes, complementary policies and responsibilities associated with UTS compliance activities. The Policy is supported by the Compliance Framework which identifies the university’s key governance, risk, legal and audit functions, management activities and sign-offs, operations, health and safety and their interrelationship.

Academic Board Report

Council approved changes to the Student Rules in relation to inherent requirements and recognition of prior learning (RPL). The changes to the Student Rules in relation to inherent requirements reflect the need to better communicate to students the academic and non-academic requirements that are essential to the successful completion of a course or its professional or accreditation components. The changes to the Student Rules in relation to RPL arose following a review undertaken by a working group that recommended a range of amendments be made that redefined the principles and practices guiding the management of RPL across the University.

Report from Governance Committee

To fulfil a strategic governance role, the Governance Committee undertakes specific functions in regard to policy and general governance matters, and advises Council on a number of matters.

Council approved the 2020 UTS Modern Slavery Statement submission, amendments to UTS Delegations and Standing Orders for UTS Council. These documents and changes were considered by the Governance Committee and forwarded to Council for approval.

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 student feedback on the phased re-opening of the campus, leading into 2022.

Student members reported on the experience of the student body in 2021 and discussed challenges for 2022. Many concerns were identified as common across the student body and management will seek to address those concerns.

Items for approval

Council Appointment to the Board of Insearch Pty Ltd

Under the Insearch Limited ('Insearch') Constitution, clause 37.1(1) requires that two members, (a) and (b), of the Insearch Board must be appointed by the University. Council considered the skills and experience required, and approved and appointment to the Insearch Pty Ltd Board.

Council Appointment to the Finance Committee

Council regularly reviews the effectiveness, skills and experience necessary for Council Committees to serve the University. Council approved an appointment to the UTS Finance Committee.

Chair of Kilimanjaro Learning Solutions Pty Limited

Under the Kilimanjaro Learning Solutions Pty Ltd Constitution, Council approved the appointment of a Director and Chair to the Board.

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
 - Final Council and Committee Meeting Dates for 2022
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Items of General Business

Dean's Presentation (Faculty of Law)

Professor Lesley Hitchens gave a presentation from the Faculty of Law. Following her presentation there was discussion in relation to: the external environment and opportunities for Law at UTS; and the Faculty's competitive positioning.

Council expressed appreciation to Professor Hitchens for her leadership, and for continuing to strengthen the status and performance of the Faculty during her period as Dean.

Other reports

- Student Load Forecast
- Finance Committee Report
- Remuneration Committee Report