

UTS Council report

24 November 2021

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 24 November 2021 meeting.

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

Strategic items of business

DVC International strategic briefing

Council was provided with a brief overview of the International portfolio's priorities, strategy, and approach to risk management. It focused on three key elements:

- i. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on UTS's international activities, particularly student recruitment in 2020 and 2021, and the likely impact of the pandemic in 2022 and beyond on international student numbers;
- ii. The changing geopolitical environment, and strategies to respond to and manage the related risks; and
- iii. The UTS International Strategy 2021-25 and how it aligns with UTS2027 and particularly the strategic initiatives for 2022-24.

Pricing and diversification strategies were discussed for both domestic and international student segments. Risk management strategies and mitigations were explored across a number of dimensions including geopolitical, pipeline and competition.

Council discussed the significant work that has been undertaken to ensure the best possible experience and support for continuing international students throughout the past year given the Australian border restrictions.

UTS Start Up's

Council discussed the data collected on UTS start-ups, and the identification of a number of key performance indicators to gain insight into the types of activities and support valued by the start-up community. As some of UTS start-ups have begun to grow, UTS is beginning to track the economic impact in terms of employment, investment attraction and success in the market.

Precincts were also discussed, and in particular, the anticipated growth in start-up activity in the Ultimo area in the coming years given the State Government's focus on developing the Tech Central Precinct. The opportunities for UTS in the context of this Precinct and the start-up ecosystem were discussed.

UTS Freedom of Expression

Council discussed the background to the University Chancellors Council Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Attestation Statement. It is clear from the recent internal and external cases that UTS must continue to communicate the University's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech.

Disrespectful or deliberately offensive delivery of views is not consistent with UTS's ethos. Council discussed the implications and actions concerning the complexity between lawful speech and misconduct. Any action the university may take in relation to breaches of the code of conduct

must now clearly assess whether there are freedom of expression or academic freedom elements that may require consideration.

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 highlighted aspects of his report to Council including the status of international border restrictions. The latest NSW and Federal Government efforts to open up to the regions and international community were discussed.

There was also discussion in relation to the Federal Government's recently released Technologies Blueprint and how this may impact upon UTS.

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.

Academic Board

Council noted the Academic Board approved amendments to the Strategic Risk Assessment (SRA) for Academic Board. The updated SRA will be considered by Council (via the Audit and Risk Committee) in 2022. The SRA has been updated in response to:

- feedback from standing committees of Academic Board as part of the annual review of the SRA; and
- risks identified under the review of research risks project undertaken by the Research Committee.

Council also noted Academic Board approved changes to the Academic Standards Framework (ASF).

The ASF was introduced to:

- document and guide the standards for academic activities and its alignment to the HESF 2015 (updated in 2021) to effectively achieve the UTS's strategic direction and desired outcomes; and
- ensure that UTS meets threshold or minimum requirements in all academic areas (including teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and engagement), with commitment to reflective practice and continuous improvement.

Honorary Awards Committee

The Honorary Awards Committee recommends to Council, nominations for honorary awards according to the policy and procedures adopted by Council.

Council approved a number of honorary awards, including: emeritus professorships; honorary doctorates; fellows of the University; and distinguished service awards.

Items for approval

The UTS Council is required to regularly review its own performance in light of its functions and obligations under s16(1B) of the University of Technology Sydney Act 1989 (NSW) (the 'UTS Act') and under Protocol 6 of the Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Public Universities (the 'Voluntary Code'). These obligations are captured holistically in the University's Governance Review Framework. As part of that review, Council regularly reviews Council Committee Terms of Reference and Membership. Council approved changes to the Commercial Activities Committee Membership.

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

Other reports

- Work Health and Safety Standing Report
- Preliminary Student Admission and Enrolment Report
- Finance Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Commercial Activities Committee
- Physical Infrastructure Committee

Dean's presentation

The Dean, UTS Business School, was joined by the Faculty General Manager to present the Faculty's Strategy and its development. The Strategy's development has considered the role of a Business School in a university that is committed to social justice.

Council discussed the Faculty strategic alignment to UTS 2027 and the identity, purpose and values underpinning the strategy. The changing environment and expectations of the community regarding ethical business and corporate social responsibility are elements addressed in the UTS Business School Strategy.

Council discussed the implications and use of technology in business, and more broadly, in a digital economy. It was noted that company directors are increasingly being assessed in relation to their technology and digital literacy. The changing workplace environment was discussed, including the impact upon people. The opportunities to assist the business sector through research, partnership and education to define and work towards solutions are significant in both for profit and non-profit sectors.