

UTS Council meeting report

15 February 2023

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 15 February 2023 meeting.

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

Strategic items of business

Strategic Briefing - Student Experience

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students, outlined the current data sources and instruments used to measure student satisfaction and student experience. When looking at the data available through a student-centered and student experience lens, four key domains can be identified: engagement; wellbeing; belonging; and partnerships.

The proposed UTS Student Experience Framework was discussed in the context of the key areas reflecting the quality of student experience.

Positioning students as partners was discussed and will be an important point of emphasis that will guide staff and student mindsets in terms of both student engagement and interaction. This will also impact upon the learning experience and will contribute to the four domains of student success as outlined in the Framework.

There was also discussion on understanding the needs and aspirations of different student cohorts at the University and developing appropriate responses.

Council noted the criticality of ensuring that the entire student cohort were provided with the opportunity to leverage the UTS campus experience.

UTS Digital Journeys

Council discussed the current state of UTS' digital environment and its impact upon staff and students.

UTS' digital environment has grown organically and incrementally over the last twenty years. The pandemic has accelerated students' and employees' desire and expectations for the personalized and flexible delivery of university services, including engagement, research support, learning, teaching and business services. All universities are now competing on the basis of their student and employee experiences.

Both the 2022 Student Satisfaction Survey and the Voice Your Views UTS Staff Survey call out the pain points and related opportunities to improve the experiences. The new Student Experience Framework will become an important means of integrating and prioritizing improvements for students; likewise, the use of a similar framework for

employees. Both frameworks will be used to ensure a human-centred approach to new systems and refinements to legacy systems.

The delivery of improvements in digital experience will be through the programs of the Digital Strategy, supported by the Data Strategy to ensure the approaches are data-driven and measurable.

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.

On Saturday 28 January the Chinese Ministry of Education's Overseas Study (MoE) Service Centre announced that it would abolish its special rules during the pandemic that provided certification/accreditation services for foreign diplomas and degrees effective immediately, requiring students enrolled in offshore degrees to return to face-to-face study in their respective education providers' countries.

UTS has responded by proposing a suite of 'Welcome Anytime' initiatives that will make it easier for international students to start Autumn 2023 online if necessary and transition to on-campus learning when they arrive in Sydney.

At the end of last year, UTS made a submission to the Australian Universities Accord Terms of Reference identifying areas that we considered to be priorities for the Accord Panel. We provided feedback to the panel on what could help the sector as a whole, followed by UTS's priority issues as they relate to each of the seven focus areas in the [Accord's Terms of Reference](#). The Accord Panel is expected to release a discussion paper in early 2023, followed by further opportunities to provide feedback before delivering an interim report to the Minister for Education by June. A final report is expected by December 2023. In addition, the Accord Panel has made time to meet with Vice-Chancellors at their next New South Wales Vice-Chancellors' Committee meeting on 9 February 2023.

The **Tech Central Research and Innovation Infrastructure Fund** allocations were discussed, with UTS securing a substantial part of an available \$8 million fund intended to support organisations developing research and innovation infrastructure to be located in, or strongly aligned to, the Tech Central precinct in Sydney.

UTS Corporate Plan 2022 - End of Year Performance Report

Council monitors the University performance throughout the year. The end of year performance report provides valuable oversight on how well the University has performed against the targets set.

In November 2021 Council approved the UTS Corporate Plan 2022, which outlines our strategic priorities for 2022 and the associated performance indicator targets to track

progress against these priorities. The plan also outlined a range of initiatives demonstrating a commitment to achieving our institutional goals consistent with the UTS2027 Strategic Plan.

Council commended the results overall, particularly highlighting the strength and resilience of our community and what we have been able to accomplish despite the continued socio-economic impact and disruption of the covid-19 pandemic (covid), ongoing financial constraints, recruitment and retention issues, and workload pressures as a result of a high vacancy rate.. Specific elements of the report were discussed, with particular focus on where there are opportunities for improvement.

Council noted the very positive performance outcomes for 2022 and expressed appreciation to the Vice-Chancellor, his senior team and the University community more broadly.

The Chancellor noted that the 2022 performance provides a strong base from which to build increasing momentum to deliver the UTS 2027 Strategy.

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. Not all of the Committee Reports are represented in this brief overview.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee advises Council on matters relating to the distribution and supervision of university finances, and acts on behalf of Council in areas of delegated authority.

Council discussed the end of year results as presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in conjunction with the Finance Committee, through the draft parent accounts.

Council acknowledged the effort, from the entire University, and success in achieving the results, with the actual deficit lower than the budgeted deficit.

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 line with the Committee's Terms of Reference and streamlined review process, the Finance Committee joined the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration of the Draft UTS Financial Statements (Parent).

The Committees were provided a detailed presentation on the UTS Financial Performance for year end 31 December 2022, to allow appropriate context for better consideration of the Financial Statements. The Committees discussed the Financial Statements and Financial Performance, with management responding to the questions

raised by the members. The members requested to further clarify information in the notes in the Statements. Management will include the requested changes in the Consolidated UTS Financial Statements.

The Consolidated UTS Financial Statements will be considered at the 23/2 Audit and Risk Committee meeting (28 March 2023) and then referred for approval at Council's 19 April 2023 meeting.

Items for approval

Appointments to the Insearch Limited Board

Appointment to UTS Global 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
 - Annual Declarations of Interest
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Items of General Business

Other reports

- Interim Student Admission and Enrolment Report 2023
- Work Health and Safety Report