

# UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

## ACADEMIC BOARD CONSTITUTION

### ROLE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1.1 **Role.** The Academic Board is established under the auspices of Section 15 of the UNE Act 1993 and Part 5 of the UNE By-Law 2005. The latter prescribes the role of the Academic Board as:  
*to report to the Council and advise the Council and the Vice-Chancellor on all developments and initiatives relating to and affecting the University's teaching and research activities and its educational programs.*
- 1.2 **Terms of Reference.** The Terms of Reference for the Academic Board are:
- a. to assess and monitor the quality of the University's academic programs; make academic decisions on new and existing academic programs and higher research degree programs;
  - b. to take responsibility for the development and review of academic policies;
  - c. to coordinate and oversee quality assurance processes, and coordinate and oversee the academic activities of the faculties and schools;
  - d. to encourage research and scholarship, and the development and maintenance of high standards and support for teaching and research;
  - e. to ensure that recommendations and decisions of the Board are consistent with the University strategic plan and other relevant University plans and to advise the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive on the University's strategic plan, other relevant University-wide plans and faculty plans, especially with respect to new academic developments and academic priorities and policy-related issues;
  - f. to advise the Vice-Chancellor and the Council following reviews of schools, research centres/institutes, faculties and courses;
  - g. to obtain and consider such reports, comments and information on academic activities as the Board may require from all areas of the University, and recommend appropriate action.
  - h. to advise the Council and the Vice-Chancellor on resource issues and academic staffing matters, including promotion, study leave, staff development, and honorary appointments;
  - i. to consult with relevant stakeholders and interested parties on any matter to be placed before the Board;
  - j. to advise on any matter referred to the Board by the Council or the Vice-Chancellor; and
  - k. to exercise such authority as may be delegated to the Board by the Council.

### MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 The voting membership of the Academic Board is:
- a. the Vice-Chancellor\*;
  - b. the Deputy Vice-Chancellors\*;
  - c. the Pro Vice-Chancellors\*;
  - d. the Faculty Academic and Research Directors\*;
  - e. the Heads of the Schools\*;
  - f. two elected academic representatives from each of the Schools;
  - g. three elected academics at the level of associate professors or professor from each of the Faculties
  - h. four elected Professors of the University (not already members of the Board) with equal gender balance whenever possible;
  - i. the University Librarian\*; and
  - j. two undergraduate students and two postgraduate students comprising an equal gender balance in each group, and comprising at least one on-campus student in each group.

\* *ex officio member*

- 2.2 The observer membership of the Board (who shall have the right of debate but not of voting) is:
- a. the Director of Student Administration and Services;
  - b. the Director of Research Services;

- c. the Director of International Marketing and Pathways; and
  - d. the Director of English Language and International Services.
- 2.3 The Chair may exercise discretion and invite other persons to accept observer status at one or more Board meetings, with the right to contribute to the debate
  - 2.4 **Gender representation on Board committees.** There shall be at least two women and two men on every Board committee. Each committee Chair is to ensure that gender representation requirements are met. Where necessary, the committee Chair will co-opt additional members to achieve gender representation.
  - 2.5 **Quorum.** The quorum for any regular meeting of the Board or its Committees shall be one-half of the voting membership plus one. The quorum for any special meeting shall be one-third of the voting membership plus one.
  - 2.6 **Ex-officio membership.** A person who vacates an ex officio position will no longer be eligible for Board membership in the capacity of that position, with the exception of the Board Chair and Deputy Chairs.
  - 2.7 **Casual vacancies of elected representatives.** Where an elected member resigns from the University, is granted leave of absence by the University (eg special studies program), is unable to attend meetings due to conflicting duties, or ceases to be an elected representative for any other reason, the casual vacancy will be filled for the remaining term by election or nomination from the appropriate constituency. The new representative shall have full voting rights.
  - 2.8 **Temporary substitution of ex officio members.** Where an ex-officio member is absent from a particular Board or Committee meeting, the person formally named as acting in that role may attend the meeting on the absentee's behalf and shall have full voting rights for the meeting attended. The Secretary to the Board is to be notified in advance of the substitute's attendance.
  - 2.9 **Temporary substitution of elected members.** Where an elected member is absent from a particular Board or Committee meeting, the absentee may nominate a substitute to attend the meeting on the absentee's behalf until the elected member's return. The nominee shall have observer rights for the meeting attended. The Secretary to the Board is to be notified in advance of the substitute's attendance.

## **ELECTIONS AND TENURE OF OFFICE**

### **Elections - Chair and Deputy Chairs**

- 3.1 The Board Chair and two Deputy Chairs are elected by the Board from among the elected Board members who are Professors or Associate Professors.
- 3.2 The election of the Chair will be held every second year at the last Board meeting of that calendar year) and will assume office at the beginning of the first Board meeting of the new calendar year.
- 3.3 The election of one Deputy Chair shall be held each year at the first Board meeting of the calendar year and will assume office immediately upon election.
- 3.4 Both genders and both faculties must be represented among the Chair and the two Deputy Chairs.
- 3.5 Once elected, the Chair and Deputy Chairs remain Board members for the duration of their terms of office (provided they remain University employees) irrespective of any changes after election to the status that originally entitled them to Board membership.

### **Elections - Elected representatives**

- 3.6 Elections for Board membership shall be held annually in October/November with membership starting at the first Board meeting of the new calendar year. Whenever possible, elections will be rotated to ensure that there is a balance between continuity and renewal of elected Board membership. The rotation shall be made by the Secretary and notified annually to the Board for the ensuing three years.
- 3.7 Elected representatives who are employed on fixed-term contracts are required to have sufficient service remaining to fulfil their period of office.

### **Tenure**

- 3.8 Tenure of the Chair and Deputy Chair is two years.
- 3.9 Elected Board members' tenure is three years.

### **Conduct of elections**

- 3.10 Elections of Board office-bearers and representatives on Board committees will be conducted by the Secretary to the Board by secret ballot as determined by the Board's Standing Orders.

### **Mandated vacancy by an elected representative**

- 3.11 An elected position becomes vacant automatically if:

- a. the representative is absent without prior leave from four consecutive Board meetings; or
  - b. the representative loses his/her original qualification for election.
- 3.12 A compulsory vacancy shall be filled similarly to the provisions of paragraph 2.7 of this Constitution.

#### **BOARD EXECUTIVE**

- 4.1 The Executive of the Academic Board shall be the Chair and the two Deputy Chairs.
- 4.2 The office of Chair or Deputy Chair of the Academic Board may not be held by one person for more than three consecutive terms (however, this limit shall not apply to a Deputy Chair who is elected as the Chair, who may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms in either or both offices).
- 4.3 A Deputy Chair may stand for the office of Chair.

#### **Chair's responsibilities**

- 4.4 The Chair is the University academic spokesperson to the Vice-Chancellor and to the Council and represents the academic community on the Council as an ex officio member and on the committees of the University Senior Executive as the Vice-Chancellor determines.
- 4.5 The Chair (or nominee) is an ex officio member of all professorial, senior executive and decanal selection committees. The Chair is empowered to nominate an academic staff member, normally from the Board's membership, to serve as a Board representative on relevant University and ad hoc committees.
- 4.6 The Board and its committees may empower their respective Chairs to act on their behalf on routine matters.
- 4.8 In the absence of the Chair, or if the office of Chair is vacant, all powers or duties of the Chair will be exercised and discharged by the Deputy Chairs.
- 4.9 The Chair may appoint from the members of the Academic Board:
- a. an Acting Chair when the Chair and Deputy Chairs are absent;
  - b. an Acting Deputy Chair when the Deputy Chairs are absent.

#### **Temporary vacancy through the Special Studies Program**

- 4.10 Where the Chair or a Deputy Chair is absent for up to one teaching period on Special Studies Program leave, the Chair will be replaced for this period by one of the two Deputy Chairs. A Deputy Chair will be replaced for the same period by a temporary Deputy Chair elected from the floor of the Board by secret ballot. Gender representation on the executive will be maintained.

#### **Relationships with Chairs of other universities' Boards and Senates**

- 4.11 The Board Executive will maintain a working relationship with the Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards/Senates in NSW the Federated Territories, and the national group of Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates, for purposes of benchmarking and keeping abreast of developments and changes in Academic Board activities at both the state and national level.

#### **BOARD COMMITTEES**

- 5.1 The Board may establish such committees as it deems necessary to carry out its business and will establish terms of reference for such committees consistent with this Constitution.
- 5.2 Gender representation on all committees shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements of University policy for gender representation.
- 5.3 Elected members of Board committees of the Board are elected at such times and for such periods as the Board determines.
- 5.4 All Board committees should be chaired by a member of the Board and normally by members at Professor or Associate Professor level. Board committees may include University members who are not Board members but at least 60% of the membership of any committee shall be from the academic staff unless departure from this principle is approved by the Board.

#### **Standing Committee**

- 5.5 The senior Board committee is the Standing Committee, which has the authority to:
- a. co-opt additional members for ad hoc purposes; and
  - b. at the discretion of the Chair, grant approval to a member of the Board nominated by an absent member of the Standing Committee, to attend that Standing Committee meeting in the absentee's stead.

**ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS' ROLE**

- 6.1 Elected Board members are encouraged to:
- a. engage in the Board as representatives of the academic community rather than delegates of their constituencies;
  - b. exercise their own judgment in Board discussions and decisions rather than present exclusively the views and recommendations of their constituencies; and
  - c. facilitate communication between the Board of the academic community.