

Present:

Mr James Harris, *Chancellor & Chair*
Ms Jan McClelland AM, *Deputy Chancellor*
Prof Brigid Heywood, *Vice-Chancellor & CEO*
A/Prof Robyn Bartel, *Chair of Academic Board*
Mr Russell Evans
A/Prof Melanie Fillios

Mr Phil Hess
Mr Col Murray
Mrs Jane Schmude
Ms Meredith Symons
Ms Emma Wellham
Mr David van Aanholt

In attendance:

Prof Peter Creamer, *Chief Operating Officer*
Prof Heiko Daniel, *Deputy VC (Research)*
Ms Meg McKechnie, *Acting Chief Financial Officer*
Mr Steve Warburton, *Executive Principal, Education Futures (Interim) & Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor*
Mr Peter Forster, *Director, The Consultancy Bureau (Guest)*

Mr Bryn Griffiths, *Strategic Partnerships Development Manager*
Ms Suzanne Crew, *Strategy Management Specialist*
Mrs Gabrielle Price, *Director Governance and University Secretary*
Pamela Neil, *Specialist (University Secretariat)*
Ms Amy O'Toole, *Specialist (Governance Liaison)*

1. MEETING OPENING

The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the sixth open session meeting for 2021, including Director, The Consultancy Bureau, Mr Peter Forster, who was observing at the meeting as part of the external review of Council.

1.1 * Reconciliation Action Plan - Acknowledgement of Country

The University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, programs and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture. In doing so, UNE values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land we call New England and pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this meeting takes place.

1.2 * Apologies

Prof Michael Wilmore, *Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor*.

1.3 * Quoracy

The Chair declared the meeting quorate.

1.4 * Conflict of Interest Declaration and Disclosed Register of Interest

Members were asked to disclose any material interest, consistent with Schedule 2A Clause 5 of the University of New England 1993 Act (NSW). None were disclosed.

Emma Wellham declared a potential conflict, as a current JMP student, in relation to the JMP schedule approval in item 3.2.1 and confirmed she would abstain from voting on this item. Members were also reminded to update their Disclosed Register of Interest with the Secretariat as required.

1.5 * Order of Business

Council ACCEPTED the order of business and ADOPTED non-starred items.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the Open Council meeting held on 24 September 2021 were approved as a true and correct record. These minutes are available in the Convene Document Library.

2.2 Action Items

There were no actions from previous meetings.

3 STRATEGIC ITEMS

3.1 * Chancellor's Open Report #21046

The Chancellor introduced the report.

Council NOTED the Chancellor's report to Council, report #21046.

3.2 * Vice-Chancellor and CEO's Report #21051

The Vice-Chancellor and CEO, Professor Brigid Heywood, introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

- Supercell event
- Covid-19 update
- Environmental scan and an update re cost of delivery
- International students
- TEQSA
- Key operational performance targets
- Student load
- Progress on the four pillars – including business case approvals for key projects
- Executive appointments

Council members thanked the Vice-Chancellor for the update and asked about:

- use of the Wright Centre for Child Care provision:
 - The Vice-Chancellor explained that UNE had sought approval to use this site following storm damage to the current Centre. The Wright Centre building, with minor modifications, has now been approved by the NSW Department of Education;
- the impact on UNE of taking the option to extend the time until TEQSA re-registration.
 - The Vice-Chancellor noted that UNE had, during 2021, been focused on quality assurance and pre-registration activity. The opportunity for extension was welcome

- due to the significant external events impacting operations, but UNE was opting for a smaller extension than offered to help reduce the risk that the positive momentum of current review and improvement actions might be lost;
- the rates of student conversion (offer to application) and whether UNE could improve this process to secure the high level of student interest. Council members and management discussed:
 - meaning of ‘Sticking rate’ was confirmed as an internal indicator being from enrolment to census (census being the date after which a student cannot withdraw without incurring a financial penalty);
 - The Vice-Chancellor confirmed, often students who depart before the census have determined they have made poor choices in the selection of a course, or have enrolled in too high a load (registered for too high a number of units);
 - the progress to UNE’s goal of 16,000 EFTSL, the metrics in place to track progress to this goal and the retention rate, which will play a significant role in achieving this goal;
 - The Vice-Chancellor proposed that metrics would be reported to Council in 2022.
 - opportunities to improve student retention (particularly moving students who have applied to and admitted to a course of study through to the stage of enrollment in a unit of study).
 - Council members and management discussed:
 - Opportunities for the Student Experience Team to engage early with admitted students, from the point of offer and before enrolment. It was noted that this worked well given the student cohort (being a non-traditional / mature age student); and
 - Members noted the Marketing Team manage the pre-enrolment space, but agreed the opportunity to start for the student experience team, who have the knowledge capability and skills to engage the student and connect with them in terms of future experience, could be having a negative impact on the conversion rate. Historically the Marketing Team has retained all contact with student teams before enrolment; and
 - Business Plan & Budget 2022 and the likelihood that the necessary investment is made to system upgrades in 2022.

The Chair and the Vice-Chancellor & CEO thanked the Council members for their contribution to an engaged discussion on student retention; and professional and academic staff performance delivery.

ACTION: Anthony Smith, Executive Principal Brand, Partnerships and Business Development and Shelley Kinash, Executive Principal, Student Experience to provide a report on student retention to Council on 28 January 2021 including to consider opportunities for process changes to enable future students marketing teams and student experience to work in parallel for improved experience for students and conversion from offers to enrollment.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor & CEO for the report.

Council NOTED the Vice-Chancellor and CEO's report to Council, report #21051.

3.3 Chair Academic Boards Report #21026

The Chair Academic Board, Associate Professor Robyn Bartel introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

- recent appointment of Deputy Chair;
- the recently closed national student survey conducted by the AHRC;
- the work being undertaken by the Academic Board Executive on committees' Annual Reports and a revised Work Plans 2022;
- a review of all Academic Board committees' Terms of Reference and work under taken against those Terms of Reference (role and remit); and
- withdrawal with Academic penalty.

Council members discussed:

- scholarship outcomes for students, ensuring none were discriminated against by identifying any relevant students/student cohorts including a review of outdated scholarship conditions;
- the academic calendar and the timeline for completion of the calendar, currently in a third phase consultation. External Consultants will be commissioned in 2022;
- the routine capture of feedback from students and academic staff on courses as an early warning signal to student retention;
- the relationship between the Student Grievance report and student retention in particular the assessment of unit evaluation data in the relevant trimester, for the academic staff;
 - The current format of the student grievance report does not accommodate a link to student retention;
 - Currently, the Head of School has no visibility over a student grievance; and
 - The Vice-Chancellor & CEO assured members that as a total percentage of the UNE student population, complaints are low in number.

The Chair thanked the Chair Academic Board for the report.

Council:

- 1) APPROVED amendment to the Terms of Reference - Academic Board Standing Committee - Annex A to the Academic Board Terms of Reference;
- 2) NOTED an amendment to the UNE 2021 Principal Dates altering the "Withdraw Without Academic Penalty" date for Trimester 3 from 13 December 2021 to 04 February 2022; and
- 3) NOTED the Chair of Academic Board's report to Council, report #21026. NOTED the Chair Academic Board's Report #21026.

3.2.1 * JMP 2022 Academic Calendar #21289

The Chair Academic Board, Associate Professor Robyn Bartel introduced the report and confirmed that the JMP 2022 Academic Calendar was endorsed by the Academic Board on 18 October 2021.

The Chair thanked the Chair Academic Board for the report.

Council:

- 1) APPROVED the 2022 Bachelor of Medicine (BMed) JMP Academic Calendar;

- 2) APPROVED the 2022 Bachelor of Medical Science/Doctor of Medicine (BMedSc/MD) JMP Academic Calendar; and
- 3) NOTED the JMP 2022 Academic Calendar and Principal Dates report, #21289.

4 RELATED BUSINESS REPORTS

4.1 * Student Consultative Committee Report #21091

The Council Student Representative, Ms Emma Wellham introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

- the challenges experienced by the Student Consultative Committee (SCC) in 2021;
- approval of the constitution by the SCC;
- the progress on 2021 committee student elections;
- promotion of the social media sites and student engagement;
- interaction with external committees in 2021 including;
- Universities Australia conference on international student's safety survey;
- promotion of UNE to the wider community; and
- committee attendance rates and attrition, with most meetings not meeting quorum.

Council members discussed:

- Committee members awareness of members responsibility to engage and their obligation to attend meetings, particularly new committee members; and
- SSAF (Student Services and Amenities Fee) and the adaptiveness or accessibility of the allocation for external students.

The Chair thanked the Ms Wellham for the report.

Council NOTED the Student Consultative Committee Report, #21091

5 BUSINESS AS USUAL REPORTS

5.1 * Use of University Seal and Signing Documents Rule #21076

The Director of Governance & University Secretary, Mrs Gabrielle Price introduced the report and explained the proposed changes to this policy.

The Chair thanked the Director of Governance & University Secretary for the report.

Council APPROVED the amendments to the Use of University Seal and Signing Documents Rule, #21076.

5.2 * WHS - Due Diligence Obligations #21081

The Chief Operating Officer, Professor Peter Creamer, introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

- an incident where leaking of nitric acid had revealed that UNE did not have the relevant handling equipment and the Armidale Fire Brigade also did not have the relevant kit for an appropriate response to this type of hazard. While this has now been secured by UNE, a review is now being undertaken of all hazardous materials on the UNE site to ensure that any issues which emerge can be resolved by either UNE or the Armidale Fire Brigade.

Council members discussed:

- Hazard categorisation, in particular clarity as to what was held in the 'other' category (21 items), as stipulated by Work Health & Safety;
- Water egress to electrical cables and underground pipes due to flooding on campus:
 - The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that a standard protocol for checking electrical status was in place before any work was undertaken in buildings and across the campus generally;
- Chemical storage - what dangerous goods are held on the UNE site, what storage facilities are in place and whether UNE insurance policies accommodated storage of these chemical on site;
 - The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that UNE had appropriate hazardous storage with relevant equipment on site to treat any leak. A hazardous work health and safety expert is employed by UNE; and
- Impact of the Employee Assistance Program and regular publication of the anonymised aggregated data.

ACTION: Chief Operating Officer was asked to include in the next report detail of those hazards which might fall into the 'other' category.

The Chair thanked the Chief Operating Officer for the report.

Council NOTED the WHS - Due Diligence Obligations, report #21081.

6 * GENERAL BUSINESS & MEETING FINALISATION

The Chancellor and Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions. The date of the next meeting scheduled for 28 January 2021 was noted. With there being no further business, The Chancellor declared the open session closed at 10:45.

Signed by Chair:



Mr James Harris, Chancellor

Date: 25 January 2022