
Minutes of the Open session of the first University of New England Council meeting for 2018, held at 8:30am, Friday 16th March, in the Council Room, Booloominbah and by teleconference.

PRESENT

Mr J Harris (*Chancellor and Chair*)
Ms J McClelland (*Deputy Chancellor*)
Prof A Duncan (*Vice-Chancellor*)
Prof N Reid (*Chair of Academic Board*)
Prof M Sims - *from 8.50am*
Dr J Hobbs
Dr R Muldoon
Mr D van Aanholt – *via telephone*
Mr R Evans
Mr R Finch
Mr C Hebblewhite
Ms R Leamon
Ms C Millis
Ms A Myers
Ms M Symons

IN ATTENDANCE

Prof M Choct (*Pro Vice-Chancellor External Relations*)
Prof P Creamer (*Chief Operating Officer*)
Prof H Daniel (*Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research*)
Prof T Walker (*Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor*)
Prof J Powles (*Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Innovation*)
Mr K Kauffmann (*Chief Financial Officer*)
Mr B Peet (*Chief Legal and Governance Officer*)
Mrs G Price (*Deputy University Secretary*), *minute recorder*
Mrs L Kettlestring (*Senior Secretariat Officer*)

1. * MEETING OPENING AND WELCOME COMMENTS

The Chair and Chancellor, Mr James Harris, welcomed members and attendees to the open session of Council, in particular Professor Todd Walker, Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who was attending his first Council meeting. The Chancellor also revealed that this was Professor Nick Reid's last Council meeting as the Chair of Academic Board, following Professor Reid's acceptance of the role of Head of School Environmental and Rural Science from 1 May 2018. The Chancellor acknowledged Professor Reid's substantial contribution to the Council since being elected the role of Chair of Academic Board in 2013.

1.1. * Acknowledgement of Country

The meeting acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land called New England and showed respect to their Elders past and present.

1.2. * Apologies

Nil.

1.3. * Council Member Conflict of Interest Disclosures

There were no conflicts of interest.

1.4. Disclosed Register of Interest

There were no register of interest updates.

1.5. * Order of Business (including adoption of non-starred items)

Council ACCEPTED the Order of Business and that non-starred items be adopted.

1.6. * Introduction - Professor Todd Walker

The Chair invited Professor Todd Walker, Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, to introduce himself to the Council.

Professor Walker explained that having been at UNE since January he did not feel “new” anymore and was quickly learning about UNE and his portfolio. He referred to his extensive experience in the University sector in senior leadership positions, including in a rural and regional Australian context. He explained he had been 10 years at Federation University which his most recent role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement, and prior to that had worked at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. Professor Walker had been encouraged by the warm welcome he had received at UNE and a compliment he received as guest at the recent Earle Page College dinner, as being “a human in a suit”.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1. Confirmation of Minutes from Meeting held on 24 November 2017

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2017 were confirmed on 16 January 2018.

2.2. * Matters Arising

Meeting/Item #	Action	Status
28 July 2017, Item 3.1. UNE Students Association Report to Council #17181	The Chief Legal and Governance Officer agreed to write to the new UNESA Board regarding a number of suggestions for the new UNESA Constitution.	In progress. Have been in touch with UNESA and awaiting further discussions regarding a possible Student Senate at UNE.

Meeting/Item #	Action	Status
16 September 2016 Item 3.3.Academic Board Chair's Report #16211	The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (PDVC) was asked to consider the scheduling of a review of the unit monitoring process in due course.	Complete. A review and timing of the Unit Monitoring Process has now been discussed at the University Teaching & Learning Committee.
24 November 2017, Item 4.2 Vice-Chancellor's report #17161	The Vice-Chancellor took on notice a query regarding the ability to employ UNE alumni who are based internationally for casual marking and similar academic support activities.	Complete. This is determined on a case by case basis via recruitment processes in Human Resources.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1. * University Activities in Focus #18191

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Annabelle Duncan, provided an update on the Respect.Now.Always campaign response and explained that UNE expected further media focus on this matter with the release of findings regarding sexual harassment in Australian university colleges. The Vice-Chancellor reiterated her previous comments that all feedback was helpful and taken seriously, as ensuring the safety of students was the key concern. The Vice-Chancellor observed the positive way UNE, the board and management of the externally owned and managed college at UNE, and students were working together to help address these issues.

The Vice-Chancellor outlined the progress UNE was making in implementing all of the Human Rights Commission's recommendations following the Commission's review of sexual assault and harassment in the university sector. The Vice-Chancellor explained the Commissioner and recently visited UNE, and had noted UNE's focus on promoting positive cultural awareness (including during "Wellness week"); empowering students to take a lead role in the response to the issue of sexual harassment; and willingness to call out poor behaviour, with a zero tolerance approach when students were found to have breached acceptable behavioral conduct expectations (including excluding students before the trimester classes commenced). The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that while cultural change will take time, UNE was committed to embedding a positive culture for the long term, starting immediately.

The Vice-Chancellor referred to the report outlining a number of the very positive activities underway at UNE, briefly highlighting:

- the progress on a range of programs that are helping UNE deliver its strategic priorities, including for example the curriculum development projects underway as part of Academic Innovation Strategic Initiative;

- that UNE had, as well as maintaining its 5 star rating for overall student, been rated as the top international student destination in 2017;
- the work of the Psychology clinic at UNE in supporting community members and students in the key area mental health issues and also counselling those impacted by sexual harassment or assault;
- that numerous UNE staff and students have been the recipients of awards or other recognition, including for example: Dr Jamie Barwick received the Wool Innovation Award; PhD student Darren Marshall has been acknowledged for his innovative research into feral pig management; Professor Anne Pender has been awarded a prestigious Fulbright Senior Scholarship; and Professors Anne-Marie Morgan and John Pegg have been granted a Department Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Fellowship for a workshop in applied development and research partnership in tertiary leadership and management with the Philippines National Network of Normal Schools; and
- the positive progress being made on the \$11.7m joint Australian-Indonesian IndoBeef research program and its sub projects PalmCow and CropCow, a program funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade funded.

The Deputy Chancellor, Ms Jan McClelland commented on the positive feedback she had received about UNE's approach to short course development at a recent conference for the superannuation industry. The Vice-Chancellor noted that students who enrolled in that new course were full fee paying students, had access to support, and would be assessed via online invigilated exams.

Council members:

- commented on the importance establishing a communication and brand strategy, which built on all of the positive UNE activities and aligned to UNE's research priorities, particularly in the current market where many Universities were undertaking significant investment in online learning;
- asked about the Respect.Now.Always program and whether there was any early indicators of an impact on student culture. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that while it was early days, change was happening, as evidenced in more reporting including of "lower level" incidents; increased by-stander reporting including through the anonymous reporting avenue that is available; and through improved behaviours of first and second year cohorts who had been introduced to UNE via Wellness Week;
- asked about the CkX project and possibility of achieving 100,000 students in 10 years, with Professor Jonathan Powles outlining the view that this was possible given it was a short skills based program delivered online; and
- discussed the online examinations trial results, and given the less experience of others as recently reported in the media, suggested that communications to help support innovative culture and taking considered risks.

Council members thanked the Vice-Chancellor for her report.

Council NOTED the University Activities in Focus discussion for the March meeting, report #18191.

4. LEADERSHIP REPORTS

4.1. * Chancellor's Open Report to Council #18164

Council NOTED the Chancellor's report to Council, report #18164.

4.2. * Vice-Chancellor's Report #18208

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Annabelle Duncan advised the Council of the lower than expected applications for Trimester 1, and the likely impact was lower enrolments of approx. 300 equivalent full time student load (EFTSL). The Vice-Chancellor explained that the reduced enrolments would have a financial impact this year, and that an investigation was underway into the factors contributing to this outcome.

Members queried the drivers of lower than expected enrolments, including for example:

- whether the trend was across the board or just in some courses/Faculty areas;
- whether UNE's move to the University Admissions Centre (UAC) had been a factor in the change to applications/enrolments, and whether the incentives and arrangements in place with UAC were favourable for UNE, in terms of students being encouraged to study UNE compared to another University; and
- for more details about the areas at UNE which were involved in the application process and where there any obvious contributing factors to this issue?

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (PDVC), Professor Todd Walker, outlined that UNE had had positive engagement with the senior management of the University Admissions Centre, as had UNE's Marketing and Student Success areas. Appropriate service level agreements and performance standards were in place with UAC, and UAC had been responsive in looking into this issue. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Innovation (PVCAI), Professor Jonathan Powles explained that it was not yet clear the extent to which UNE's internal processes or UAC were a factor in the lower enrolments and this was being looked into as a matter of priority, as was the impact across specific courses. He also explained that the University had established a load allocation committee which was helping to review this issue.

Council members further queried whether the speed of processing applications and making student offers was a factor; whether the conversion rates on UAC applications compared favourably to our historical conversion; and if there was an opportunity to address this in the short term.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that as the outcome for T1 could not be reversed now that teaching had started, the management team was reviewing the admissions and enrolment processes, as well as taking other steps to reduce the overall impact. This included reviewing some expenditure savings, pursuing alternate revenue opportunities, and looking forward to both T2 and T3 intake periods, and particularly T1 intake for 2019.

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor explained that the commercial premise was for UAC to manage the end to end entry of students to Higher Education awards and reporting was also available.

The Chair and other members expressed concern about issues having arisen with this key UNE process, noting the longer term impact of reduced enrolments at this point in time, and expressed the view of the Council that this be a first priority. Council members also discussed:

- the importance of preparing now for the next enrolment period; and
- the planning for longer term, including the need to counter the extensive spending by others in the sector who are competing in the online market.

ACTION: The PDVC / PVCAI were asked to provide a more detailed report to the confidential Council meeting in May, or sooner if possible.

On other matters in the report, Professor Sims commented on the process of consulting with staff leading to loss of confidence, and it was noted by the Vice-Chancellor, that consultation processes were being followed.

Council NOTED the Vice-Chancellor's Open report to Council, #18208.

4.3. * Chair of Academic Board Report #18122

The Chancellor invited the Chair of Academic Board, Professor Nick Reid to speak to his report.

Professor Reid explained that there had been no major comments regarding the revised Academic Board terms of reference, nor those of the new Teaching and Learning Committee and Research Committee of Academic Board. There had been some suggested changes to the Curriculum Committee (which will replace the current University Academic Program Committee), with questions raised regarding the definition of what constitutes a "significant" course amendment. Professor Reid explained this had now been resolved and incorporated in the terms of reference attached to the papers, and provided to the Council for approval.

Professor Reid noted that there remained two other terms of reference which are yet to be addressed, being those for the Academic Board Standing Committee and Graduate Research Subcommittee, and these would be considered at the next Academic Board meeting and brought to the Council in May.

Professor Reid explained that work had commenced on the work plans and reporting that will support the Academic Board and committees, and that the focus would be on strategic academic priorities and also oversight of the key academic institutional benchmarks for the University, which were currently being reviewed in conjunction with the Senior Executive.

Professor Todd Walker reiterated comments made at the Governance Working Party meeting that the new terms of reference were designed to support an improved focus on strategic academic issues, appropriate subsidiary in terms of decision making by the Board's committees, and also skills-based membership. He explained that following the Academic Governance review and the suggestion to align to the Higher Education Standards

Framework (HESF), the new Terms of Reference had been drafted by Mr Brendan Peet, Chief Legal and Governance Officer, specifically around the standards.

Mr Peet explained that the approach taken would provide more assurance that the HESF and Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) standards are being met, that the terms of reference are fit for purpose.

Professor Reid explained that he would finish in his role as Chair of Academic Board at the end of April, and it was expected that the first meeting of the Academic Board under the new terms of reference would be in June.

The meeting discussed:

- that while the Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice had low enrolments, this was a trial (without marketing support) to test this new offering and iron out issues including recognition of prior learning; and
- that the CkX project to develop innovative short, non-award courses was positive and that success in innovations such as this, should be part of our communications.

Council members asked about the academic integrity results, including why some students had been able to breach the rules multiple times. The Chair of Academic Board explained that in the case where a student had multiple instances, this anomaly had occurred as a result of timing, with the findings of the initial plagiarism investigations only becoming available after similar investigations had commenced in the next Trimester for the same student. This matter has raised a process issue regarding academic integrity, which is to be addressed by policy review and supported by the appointment of an academic integrity manager in the Teaching and Learning area. Professor Powles explained that a key part of the approach will be supporting students in good academic practice to reduce unintentional integrity issues, but to take action on deliberate academic misconduct.

The Chair asked if there needed to be a transition period before the implementation of the new terms of reference noted in the resolution, and it was agreed that this would be the case.

The meeting agreed the amended resolution as below.

Council:

- 1) NOTED the Chair of Academic Board Open report to Council, #18122(1);
- 2) Regarding the Academic Board and Committee Terms of Reference:
 - a. APPROVED the revised terms of reference for:
 - i. Academic Board, #18122 (2.a.i)
 - ii. Teaching and Learning Committee, #18122 (2.a.ii)
 - iii. Curriculum Committee, #18122 (2.a.iii); and
 - iv. Research Committee, #18122 (2.a.iv);with a transition period from today until the June Academic Board meeting; and
 - b. AUTHORISED the Chief Legal and Governance Officer and University Secretary, to do all things necessary to implement the new Terms of Reference, including conduct of elections and appointments; and
- 3) NOTED the Annual Academic Board Report to Council for 2017, #18122(3).

5. STRATEGIC MATTERS

5.1 * Approval of Annual Report (Year Ended 31 December 2017) #18116

The Chair of Finance and Infrastructure Committee, Mr Robert Finch queried whether the table on page 26 of 30 of the draft Annual Report narrative, which outlined the budget and structural surplus was a requirement or was necessary given that effectively the same information was presented.

ACTION: The Chief Financial Officer was asked to review the Annual Reporting obligations and advise if the table as presented was required.

Members asked about the diversity report information outlined on page 21 and asked if a general update on this might be provided to the next Council meeting.

ACTION: The Vice-Chancellor was asked to talk to the Diversity Framework 2017 at the next Council meeting.

Council APPROVED, subject to confirmation re format of budget information, the Annual Report (Year Ending 31 December 2017), report #18116.

5.2 * Approval of Annual Financial Statements Year Ending 31 Dec 17 #18115

The Chair of the Finance & Infrastructure Committee, Mr Robert Finch, spoke to his item, explaining that the Finance and Infrastructure Committee had held a joint meeting with the Audit and Risk Committee on 22 February 2018, to review the draft financial statements and any audit issues.

The committee was advised that the Auditor General's office had not identified any major issues in the review of the financial statements, which was a positive result.

Mr Finch outlined that the net result being a surplus of \$13m had been better than anticipated at the commencement of the previous year, though noting the reduced capital expenditure over the period rather than higher revenue.

Council APPROVED the signing of the Financial Statements of the University of New England for the year ending 31 December 2017, report #18115.

In accordance with Section 10(1) of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act, 1984, and Sections 34 and 41C (1B) and (1C) of the Public Finance and Audit Act, 1983, Council AUTHORIZED the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor, being Councillors of the University, to sign the Financial Statements and to state on behalf of the University Council that:

- 1) The financial reports represent a true and fair view of the consolidated financial position of the University and its controlled entities at 31 December 2017 and the result of their operations and transactions of the economic entity for the year then ended;
- 2) The financial reports have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the New South Wales Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the Public Finance and Audit Regulations

- 2010 and the "Financial Statement Guidelines for Australian Higher Education Providers for the 2017 reporting period" issued by the Australian Government Department of Education;
- 3) The financial reports have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, including the Australian Accounting Interpretations, and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board;
 - 4) We are not aware of any circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial reports to be misleading or inaccurate;
 - 5) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the University will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due;
 - 6) The amount of Commonwealth financial assistance expended during the reporting period was for the purpose(s) for which it was provided; and
 - 7) The University has complied in full with the requirements of various program guidelines that apply to the Commonwealth financial assistance identified in these financial reports.

6. GENERAL ITEMS

6.1. Chair of Governance Working Party Report #18135

Council NOTED the Chair of Governance Working Party report #18135

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

8. MEETING FINALISATION

8.1. Work Plan

Council NOTED the 2018 Open Council work plan, #18113.

8.2. * Next Meeting

The next open meeting of Council is scheduled for 25 May 2018 and will be held in the Council Room, Booloominbah.

8.3. * Meeting Close

The Chancellor declared the open session of Council closed.



18/5/18

