

Present:

Mr James Harris, *Chancellor & Chair*
Ms Jan McClelland AM, *Deputy Chancellor*
Prof. Brigid Heywood, *Vice-Chancellor & CEO*
Prof. Robyn Bartel, *Chair of Academic Board*
Ms Megan Aitken
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

Official Attendees:

Prof. Peter Creamer, *Chief Operating Officer*
Prof. Heiko Daniel, *Deputy VC (Research)*
Prof. Simon Evans, *Deputy VC*
Ms Meg McKechnie, *Acting Chief Financial Officer*

Mrs Gabrielle Price, *Director Governance and University Secretary*
Pamela Neil, *Specialist University Secretariat*

Approved Observers

Dr Joe Fraser
Ms Naomi Nielsen
Mr Bryn Griffiths
Ms Suzanne Crew
Ms Elizabeth Taylor
Ms Alicia Zikan

1. * MEETING OPENING

The Chair and Chancellor welcomed members, attendees and observers to the second open Council meeting for 2022 and introduced the new Council members Ms. Megan Aitken.

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

Nil

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.

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.

1.6 * Introduction: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

The newly appointed Council member Ms Megan Aitken and Pro. Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous, Dr Joe Fraser each gave a brief summary of their experience and background.

1.7 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Open Council meeting held on 28 January 2022 were approved as a true and correct record via email on 16 March 2022. A signed copy of the minutes is available in the Convene Document Library.

1.8 * Action Items

The Chair referred to the outstanding action items and noted that they had been completed.

Action	Due Date	Assigned To	Status
3.2 Vice-Chancellor & CEO's Report #21051 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. Response provided by Anthony Smith in slide pack titled, Prospective Student Conversion - Attachment 6 of VC & CEO Confidential Report #22025	28 Jan 2022	Anthony Smith & Shelley Kinash	Completed

Action	Due Date	Assigned To	Status
31/03/22 – Dealt with in the Vice-Chancellor & CEO's report #22062			

2. CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

2.1 * Chancellor's OPEN Report to Council #22056

The Chancellor took his report as read.

Council NOTED the Chancellor's OPEN Report to Council #22056.

3. MANAGEMENT REPORTS

3.1 * Vice-Chancellor & CEO's OPEN Report Verbal #22062

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

- Approval of UNE's new academic workload model:
 - The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that UNE remains in dispute with the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) over the approval of the new proposed academic workload model. UNE lodged a dispute with the Fair Work Commissioner (FWC) when conciliation with the NTEU could not be reached. The FWC directed the parties to reconvene in April 2022 in an effort to seek a resolution. Discussions are now underway; and
 - The Vice-Chancellor suggested, that the new academic workload model was the final stage in developing the infrastructure required to support the UNE academic transformation. The current model is inequitable and leads to a lack of transparency and fairness and does not enable workload mapping in a responsible and appropriate way. The Vice-Chancellor thanked everyone at UNE who had played a role in supporting the process.
- Federal Budget submission by UNE:
 - The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie's office, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education for the Federal government, has contacted universities including UNE and suggested that funding was available for unspecified regional projects and that the university was invited to submit relevant projects and is currently reviewing those opportunities.

- The deed with Tamworth Regional Council:
 - The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the deed had been formally signed and that a summit had been organised to progress the work from project development to project delivery.

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

Council NOTED the Vice-Chancellor & CEO's Confidential Verbal report #22062

3.1.1 * National Student Survey Update #22171

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

- Universities Australia's second survey was published early in March 2022. The work had been undertaken by an external provider;
- different questions were asked in the 2022 survey which made benchmarking the 2022 survey against the 2018 survey problematic. Contributors were asked, if at any point in their career they had experienced sexual harassment/assault. It was not possible for UNE to extrapolate from the data where that sexual harassment/assault had occurred and it was apparent from the survey responses that there was a gender engagement bias towards women;
- the data suggested that UNE does not tolerate diversity;
- a request from students, particularly male students, that education as to appropriate behaviour should be available for understanding boundaries in a social setting;
- an Armidale Safety Alliance has been created with the Armidale Regional Council and the Armidale Police Force to respond to outcomes from social activity in Armidale; and
- the proportion of the student population residing in colleges on campus at UNE is 45% as distinct from other HE institutions where it is 3-6%.

Committee members discussed:

- behaviours which could be considered sexual harassment / assault in a social setting that could lead to trauma for others.
 - The Vice-Chancellor & CEO suggested, that more could be done on prevention in a college environment to support student's understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment / assault in a social setting.
- the staff / student engagement context;
 - The Vice-Chancellor & CEO confirmed that the data does not suggest there is a problem in the area of staff / student engagement.
- an approach in the UNE community to encouraging a positive response to diversity not diversity expressed as tolerance:

- The Vice-Chancellor & CEO confirmed that respectful communities was designed around positive recognition of diversity. UNE has 37 different nationalities on campus supported by 32 different societies.
- the percentage of students harassed/assaulted who are prepared to make a formal complaint (2.8%)
 - The Vice-Chancellor & CEO confirmed that the data suggested, that a higher number would complain than actually do complain. An influencing factor being the manner in which a complaint has to be registered to enable the university to investigate the complaint under UNE's processes. Processes which have been vetted externally; and
 - The Student Consultative Committee meets again in April 2022 with new membership.
- Members suggested that the Vice-Chancellor & CEO report to Council on this matter semiannually.

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

Council NOTED the National Student Survey Update and proposed UNE response, report #22171

4. * CHAIR'S REPORT ACADEMIC BOARD

4.1 * Chair's Report – Academic Board #22002

The Chair of Academic Board, Prof. Robyn Bartel took the report as read and confirmed, that Freedom of Speech (Resolution 5) and Code of Conduct (Resolution 7) were not being considered at this meeting. Additional feedback had been received and both would be brought back to Council on 27 May 2022.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Academic Calendar 2023 – limited revision had been made for 2023 with focus on changes for 2024;
- compression of workload issues between T3 2021 and T1 2022 which had now been addressed in minor amendments;
- traditional ceremonies – an extended program of graduations and graduation ceremonies was now being orchestrated; and
- Academic Board now has full membership, with no vacancies.

Committee members discussed:

- the size of the report (171 pages) submitted to Council by the Academic Board and how the information could be more efficiently shared with Council members in the future.

- The Chair, Academic Board mentioned work being progressed to uplift performance on the analysis of information by Academic Board for reports required to be seen by Council.

The Chair thanked the Chair, Academic Board for the report. Council agreed an amended resolution, deferring the original Items 5 and 7.

Council:

- 1) APPROVED the UNE 2023 Principal Dates #AB22053;
- 2) APPROVED amendment to the UNE 2022 Principal Dates #AB22064 re: Trimester 3 2022 end-date;
- 3) APPROVED amendment to the UNE 2022 Principal Dates #ABSC22432 re: additional Autumn graduation celebrations;
- 4) APPROVED amendment to the:
 - a. Graduation Rule;
 - b. Graduation Guidelines (formally Graduation Procedures); and
 - c. Graduation Certification Form (Associated Document to Graduation Guidelines/Procedures).
- 5) APPROVED the revised Human Research Ethics Committee Terms of Reference;
- 6) NOTED the amended 'last date to withdraw without academic penalty' from 02 May 2022 to 27 May 2022 (#ABSC22421) as approved by the Vice-Chancellor on 20 March 2022 (VCM22-03); and
- 7) NOTED the Chair of Academic Board's report to Council, report #22002.

5. ASSURANCE REPORTS

5.1 * Due Diligence Obligations (WHS) Report #22074

The Chief Operating Officer, Prof. Peter Creamer introduced the report. Prof. Creamer noted the point raised in the discussion on sexual harassment and assault in Item 3.1.1. National Student Survey Update #22171 and said these would be dealt with in an appropriate way. The following key points were highlighted from the Due Diligence Obligations report:

- Hazards data – the reduction in data could be explained by the number of staff who remain off-campus due to Covid-19;
- Slip, trip and falls - the impact from the weather and the campus layout contributes to this as a continual hazard;
- Child protection – good work is being undertaken in this area including the Respectful and Safe Communities work being undertaken;

- Hazardous substances – 85 legacy gas bottles have been disposed of. An audit is being undertaken of safety procedures for all on-site chemicals to ensure spills can be neutralised.
- Fire drills – are now being conducted on a regular basis;
- Sick Leave – has increased on each category by area. Most appear to be Covid-19 related;
- Dashboard –
 - Lag indicators – sick leave has decreased from 6.7 & 5.3 to 4.7. The latter due to staff working from home not necessarily reporting they are unwell;
 - Test and tag – 00 because it was recently restarted in 2022;
 - RCD (residual current tests) testing is continuing;
 - Subject to prevailing weather conditions, trees are progressively being rendered safe, with 43 currently high risk;
 - Benestar report – an external provider of welfare to UNE staff, the number are declining possibly due to staff working from home where they are supported by family and friends; and
 - Covid-19 Governance Framework – was regularly amended in response to government updates;

Committee members discussed:

- Presenting the information for the outliers on the sick leave bar chart, being Faculty of Science, Business and Law, differently to ensure issues impacting the data could be identified (cultural etc.).
 - The Chief Operating Officer offered to amend the analysis to more accurately reflect the relative data comparatively by faculty.

ACTION: The Chief Operating Officer to consider presenting the information for the outliers on the sick leave bar chart by faculty.

The Chair thanked the Chief Operating Officer for the report.

Council NOTED the Due Diligence Obligations (WHS) Report #22074

6. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS / PROGRAMS

6.1 * Thematic Focus / Spotlight – Academic #22151

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof Simon Evans introduced the report and discussed how each initiatives being proposed aligned with the commitments in the Future Fit Strategic Plan.

- Future Fit priorities through the academic portfolio lens;
- Our course profile will be sustainable, relevant and exceptional;
- We will set the benchmark for delivering digital-first higher education with impact;

- Building resilience through growth in student load;
- We will support, nurture and provide access to career growth opportunities for staff;
- Our research will support personalised student journey, empower communities and build resilience;
- Enablers; and
- Growth.

The Acting Chief Financial Officer is reviewing the cost of delivering the portfolio to support decision making about programs which deliver a strong return on investment (RTI) and programs which are more-costly than rewarding so they can be optimised or retired.

Committee members discussed:

- Co-relation of the proposed growth numbers in the presentation with the Sydney Campus' footprint growth target of 16k EFTSL.
 - The Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the numbers in the presentation form part of the future budget forecast and reflect the journey to 16k; and
 - The Vice-Chancellor & CEO confirmed, that whilst in 2022 UNE is tracking below the targeted 16k the opportunities on the Sydney Campus were in growing the nursing and the law programs. The current market was very competitive due to reduced unemployment. UNE is responding quickly to an increased demand for post-graduate micro-credentials and short courses;
- The significant governance risks associated with managing the large number of complex components in the plan and being confident that work on the enablers progresses at a rate that ensures delivery on the plan. Members suggested that a review of progress be undertaken at the end of 2022 on each measure and that a draft plan for 2023 be reported to Council.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for the report.

Council NOTED the Thematic Focus / Spotlight – Academic Report #22151

COUNCIL OPERATIONS

8.1 * Council Policies Report #22068

The Director Governance & University Secretary, Mrs Gabrielle Price mentioned that the report proposed the policy hierarchy be amended. The decision to make the amendment had been based on a risk / mitigation approach.

Council members discussed:

- The absence of any reference to legal obligations in roles and responsibilities -

- The Director of Governance & University Secretary agreed that legal obligations should be more explicit.

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

Council NOTED the Council Policies Report #22068.

9. GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair wished the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Heiko Daniel well in his future endeavours.

10. MEETING FINALISATION

10.1 * Next Meeting and Close

The Chancellor and Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions. The date of the next meeting scheduled for 27 May 2022 was noted. With there being no further business, the Chancellor declared the confidential session closed at 10:35.

Signed by Chair:



Mr James Harris, Chancellor

20 June 2022

Date