

University of New England
OPEN Council Meeting
Campbell Howard Lecture Room, UNE Tamworth + Zoom Video Conference
Friday, 21 May 2021

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
Dr Melanie Fillios

Mr Phil Hess - **ZOOM**
Ms Rosemary Leamon
Mrs Jane Schmude - **ZOOM**
Ms Meredith Symons - **ZOOM**
Ms Emma Wellham
Mr David van Aanholt

In attendance:

Prof Peter Creamer, *Chief Operating Officer - ZOOM*
Mrs Gabrielle Price, *Director Governance and
University Secretary*

Mrs Anita Taylor, *Chief Financial Officer*
Prof Michael Wilmore, *Interim Deputy VC*
Mrs Libby Kettlestring, *Co-ordinator,
Secretariat (Minutes)*

Observers

Ms Amy O'Toole, *Specialist (Governance Liaison)*
Ms Elizabeth Taylor, *Chief of Staff - ZOOM*
Ms Sue Crew, *Strategy Management Specialist, Office of Strategy Management - ZOOM*
Prof Debra Dunstan, *Director, Place-Based Education and Research - ZOOM*
Mr Bryn Griffiths, *Associate Director, Communications and Events - ZOOM*
Ms Naomi Nielsen, *Project Director, STEM Precinct - ZOOM*
Ms Louisa Quiddington, *Student Consultative Committee member - ZOOM*
Ms Alicia Zikan, *Acting Head of Records, Policy and Governance - ZOOM*

1 MEETING OPENING

The Chancellor welcomed all to the second open session of Council for 2021 and acknowledged the successful networking event held the previous evening with members of Tamworth Regional Council and the Tamworth University steering group.

1.1 * 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

There were no apologies by Council members.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) was unable to attend the meeting.

1.3 * Conflict of Interest Declaration and Disclosed Register of Interest

Council members were asked to disclose any material interest, consistent with Schedule 2A Clause 5 of the University of New England 1993 Act (NSW). No conflicts of interest were declared.

Council members were asked to update their Disclosed Register of Interest with the Secretariat as required.

1.4 * Order of Business

Council accepted the order of business and adopted the non-starred items.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes

Members noted the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 were approved as a true and correct record via email on 28 April 2021 and that these minutes are available for viewing in the Convene Document Library.

2.2 * Action Items

Meeting/Item #	Action	Status
Open Council Meeting 31 July 2020; item 5.4 Council Member Induction & Development Plan 2020 #20117	Mr Harris as well as Council members Mr Evans, Ms Myers and Ms McClelland have agreed to trial the program in addition to the newly elected and appointed Council members, who will use the program upon their commencement.	Ongoing.

3 STRATEGIC ITEMS

3.1 * Chancellor's Open Report #21043

Members of Council had no questions or comments on the report.

Council NOTED the Chancellor's Open report to Council, report #21043.

3.2 * Vice-Chancellor's Open Report #21048

The Vice-Chancellor provided Council members with an update regarding enrolment expectations; suspension of several course offerings due to reduced student numbers; and the impact of changed employment landscape following COVID-19 lockdowns on student demand. Professor Heywood advised that additional funding has been provided for marketing activities to target marketing spend to align with specific course offerings and to support load acquisition.

The Vice-Chancellor commented on the 2021-2022 budget, referring to a recent federal budget report by Barton Deakin and the opportunity for grant funding of up to \$250 million to support activities which support Building Better Regions. Professor Heywood noted funding in this area will be pursued over the coming years.

Council discussed the status of funding arrangements for UNE's Tamworth campus and the ongoing challenge of having the two seats of Government required to agree to the release of the funding. Professor Heywood noted that from a jurisdiction point of view the NSW Government would provide funds for regional development but would not directly fund a University. Professor Heywood also noted opportunities are being explored with the new Minister, the Hon Alan Tudge MP, and that both governments were leaning into an agenda where funding allocated via key programs, such as Job Ready Graduates, might be used to support growth objectives.

Council NOTED the Vice-Chancellor's Open report to Council, report #21048.

3.2.1 * Focus Area: UNE Places and Spaces #21098

The Vice-Chancellor referred to a place-based design model which is part of UNE's response to address issues of aging infrastructure and ensure the efficient use of space relevant to places and spaces users.

Professor Heywood noted:

- many of UNE's facilities are showing the impact of age and lack of general upkeep. As competition for students is strong, some decisions are made based on the physical environment on offer and UNE needs to strategically invest in state-of-the-art infrastructure to help deliver leading edge programs;
- four key questions being addressed are *What defines UNE?*; *What are we delivering?*; *Who do we deliver to?*; and *How do we deliver?*;
- recognising how UNE will be distinctive and play a leading role as a regional university links back to the Future Fit strategic plan and the higher education standards;
- the implementation of future investments will be reviewed by an agreed decision matrix and each of the matrices speaks to an individual requirement.
- Critical in this matrix is an understanding of how proposals support staff and students or other stakeholders, i.e. are they CORE – impacting all students/staff; Generic (Majority) or Specialised or Bespoke and feeding this into decisions around strategic investment; and
- a facility utilisation map is important for all campuses to support UNE to realise better value from its current real estate.

The Vice-Chancellor referred to the STEM_Q concept and shared the vision statement to show the bringing together of what forms the decisions for investment in future STEM infrastructure.

Responding to a query regarding residential accommodation on campus not being prominent in the plans, the Vice-Chancellor advised that student accommodation remains present in the conversations, however, work remains in confirming the business cases required to prioritise in college investment. The current approach which allows for colleges cohorts to maintain their individual identity/culture but to move to a building with the requisite facilities is working well in this climate of reduced occupancy.

Professor Heywood also advised Council that opportunities for co-partnering and using hybrid accommodation is being investigated, including the models used in the Netherlands, Germany and the United States such as cohabiting with aged care residents which provides work-integrated learning sites as well as important social engagement.

Options of rebuilding some colleges, developing the hybrid model with a third party and potential co-investment in accommodation in the Armidale town centre were also being explored. Council noted the ongoing challenge of balancing investment in colleges with wider student recruitment and capturing the importance of the cultural aspects of college accommodation.

Council discussed:

- the importance of executing the proposed plans (given the quantum) and managing expectations of delivery in a realistic and timely manner. Members noted the importance of the identifying the key projects and in mapping the plan to a clear framework; and
- the capability in-house of delivering planned projects with existing resources or the need for buying in relevant expertise. The Vice-Chancellor advised that as part of the *Time for Change* program, the Estate & Built Environment team is now a reduced number of staff with specialised skills who will contract required resources for large project implementation. Council Members noted this method of working allows for agility in projects as required and provides knowledge transfer among contracted teams and existing staff.

A Council member reiterated the importance of a very strong financial model to underpin the project plan and the high degree of sensitivity to revenue required to be managed to maintain financial outcomes. Members also noted the importance of understanding of how each project will be implemented alongside business as usual operations on campus. Professor Heywood agreed the need to balance security for business as usual operations and investment in technology for business systems renewal, as well as an asset review to ensure each infrastructure project is properly positioned relative to the UNE master plan.

Professor Heywood noted that dashboards to address the evolution of each project plan and timeframes will be provided during Q3 and Q4 of 2021.

Council NOTED the presentation on UNE Places and Spaces, report #21098.

4 RELATED BUSINESS REPORTS

4.1 * Student Consultative Committee Constitution #21197

Ms Emma Wellham, current Student-elected member, advised the Student Consultative Committee's (SCC) revised Constitution has been developed in partnership with University staff with extensive research, networking and engagement with stakeholders throughout the process, including in-depth discussion at Academic Board Ms Louisa Quiddington, former Student member, also spoke to the proposed Constitution noting that once endorsed by Council, the Constitution will be implemented by the SCC under their revised model of partnership.

Members agreed this to be an exciting opportunity for awareness-raising and engagement between the student body and the University academy.

Noting some minor editorial requirements and acknowledging legacy issues, the Chair of the Academic Board, Associate Professor Robyn Bartel, reiterated the importance of ensuring the success of the SCC and with constant open communication, they should not be stymied by minor issues building along the way.

The Vice-Chancellor advised Council that this document provides for appropriate governance and engagement and that the SCC will be supported by the architecture of UNE Life's wellbeing and advocacy services. Further, that funding provided via the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) will provide support for further governance training and resourcing for SCC members.

Members heard that the student body is energised by knowing they have a freshly re-established committee with a voice and an appropriate avenue for expressing issues. Further, that this is an opportunity for UNE to receive students' input and feedback on projects and for management to be kept abreast of issues with open and healthy lines of communication.

Council members congratulated the SCC team for their work in bringing forward the Constitution and noted they look forward to receiving reports on what is important to the students being provided to future meetings.

Council:

- 1) NOTED the Student Consultative Committee Constitution was endorsed by the members of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee on 12 May 2021;
- 2) ENDORSED, in principle, the Student Consultative Committee Constitution #21197; and
- 3) NOTED the Student Consultative Committee will convene a meeting to approve the Council endorsed Constitution.

4.2 Council Policies #21073

The Chancellor noted a working party will be convened to discuss Council policies under review. All members are invited to express their interest and be involved.

ACTION: The Director Governance and University Secretary is asked to arrange a working party for the express intent of addressing Council policies.

Council NOTED the report on Council Policies, report #21073.

5 BUSINESS AS USUAL REPORTS

5.1 * Chair Academic Board Report #21023

The Chair of the Academic Board, Associate Professor Robyn Bartel, welcomed questions regarding her report, noting the Research Committee Terms of Reference are provided for approval and a review of the Curriculum Committee's process for approval of graduation lists is underway to ensure integrity of the lists going forward.

Associate Professor Bartel referred Council to the Academic Risk Register and invited comment on the structure and format of the report.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Deputy Chancellor, Ms Jan McClelland, noted the benefits having visibility on risk associated with academic business and queried whether this will be incorporated into the wider risk framework. The Director Governance and University Secretary commented that the intention of the enterprise risk management solution is to house key risks in one system to allow review for all risk areas across the institution.

Members noted the importance of academic quality assurance aligning with overall performance in meeting TEQSA requirements and that a robust risk management instrument will allow for emerging risks and flags to be identified in a timely manner.

The interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mike Wilmore, noted the terms of reference for the [Academic Portfolio Executive Committee \(APEC\)](#) have been reviewed and thanked the Director Governance and University Secretary for her input into the review. Professor Wilmore noted this body provides rigorous oversight of risk and management is kept informed of appropriate control and action around risks for business-as-usual academic portfolio activity.

Council:

- 1) APPROVED the revised Research Committee of Academic Board Terms of Reference; and
- 2) NOTED the Chair of Academic Board's report to Council, report #21023.

5.2 UNE Council WHS - Due Diligence Obligations #21078


Council NOTED the UNE Council WHS - Due Diligence Obligations report, #21078.

6 * GENERAL BUSINESS & MEETING FINALISATION

There were no matters of General Business raised.

The Chancellor noted the next open session of Council is scheduled to be held on Friday, 30 July 2021.

There being no further business, Chancellor Harris thanked all in attendance for their contributions and declared the meeting closed at 9:35am.



Chancellor James Harris
Chair

29 June 2021

Date