

## SABL Faculty Research Advisory Committee Strategy Document

Version February 2020

### Section 1 – Vision Statement

The vision statement agreed by the FRAC members is:

*“SABL is recognised for individual and collective research success, solving problems and innovating in a changing world.”*

### Section 2 – Mission Statement

The mission statement agreed by the FRAC members is:

*“Supporting a research ecosystem and culture that enables individual and collective enterprise; to solve problems and innovate in a changing world.”*

### Section 3 – Committee Values

- Integrity
- Positive
- Supportive
- Impartial
- Ethical
- Trusting and trustworthy
- Versatility
- Transparency
- Professionalism
- Inclusive
- Respect
- Committed
- Quality – support initiatives that lead to quality outcomes

### Section 4 - Expectations of Committee Members

The expectations of FRAC members' behaviours and attitudes:

- The committee will be inclusive and representative of the faculty
- Members will respect others inputs and opinions
- Members are honest in their actions and views
- Everyone contributes through positive engagement with discussion, input and questioning
- Meetings will hold structure yet provide the space to think and speak
- Members will act with integrity and not push private agendas
- Members will be committed and engaged i.e. pre-reading and other preparation is done prior to attending meetings
- The committee will have a unified voice – when an agreement is reached within the committee via inclusive and open discussion with all members, individual members should not attempt to undermine decisions

- The committee will be outcome and action focused not a “talk fest”
- That committee members will be “*present*” in meetings and not engaged with emails, phone calls or other business

#### **4(b) Meetings Operations**

The committee agreed the following key points regarding the operation of meetings:

- Meetings for 2020 will be timed from 1:00 – 2:30 pm, starting on Tuesday 4 February and thereafter will be held every 8 weeks.
- Special Interest Meetings can be called in the interim if matters requiring urgent attention arise.
- The agenda will include a 15 minute allowance for each of the recurring items that relate to the Strategic Goals (i.e. Process; Investment; Quality; Communication) plus 15 minutes for invited speaker/s and 15 minutes for other business.
- FRAC members will be asked to nominate their interest in leading the discussion for each of the Strategic Goals for the coming calendar year.

#### **Section 5 – Strategic Plan**

The committee went through a number of exercises during the retreat aimed at clarifying/determining the committee’s values and expectations, operations in relation to meetings, the committee’s strengths, stakeholders and threats.

##### **5(a) Strengths**

The committee has several key areas of strength:

- Each individual member brings an excellent contribution to research and care about developing research within SABL
- Interacting well as a committee works when we all know each other as a community
- Within SABL we hold ourselves to a high standard when it comes to research outputs
- Understanding the internal and external frameworks, discussing the hard issues and how our competition views the strength of the Faculty

##### **5(b) – Stakeholders**

The committee identified the following internal and external stakeholders:

- **Internal stakeholders** within the university community include: senior executive through to faculty staff, including approval committees, our research infrastructure entities (CART, SRI and SMART Farm), post- and undergraduate students, and alumni.
- **External stakeholders** include our funding bodies found at local government (town with gown), state, federal and international, Research Development Corporations, private companies and Industries.

### 5(c) – Environment

The committee identified a range of environmental factors that can impact the committee and how it operates.

- Within UNE University such as budget, strategy from senior executive and the integration of the four School Research Committees. The state of technology and infrastructure are key impacting factors for the committee and wider is the issue of interoperability of UNE systems.

### External

- **Compliance** including the 2023 TEQSA Audit, Federal government policy and regulations, the potential change in focus of ERA (2023-2024) to Research Impact and a changing HDR landscape and what “modern” Higher Degree Research programs should offer.
- **Funding** impacts include the rapidly changing funding landscape (incl. number and focus of funding bodies; RDC review).
- **Students:** the changing demographic of the “*typical UNE student*”, access to international students and the balance of intake and scholarship funding and the quality of these students.
- **Other:** climate and social licence, local and regional economic conditions and the ability to attract people into a research career.

### Section 6 – Goals

Recognising that the FRAC fulfils a governance rather than an operational role, our goals are aimed at enabling and supporting the SABL research ecosystem that in turn is consistent with Faculty and UNE strategies.

The committee agreed four key themes for goals:

- Process
- Investment
- Quality
- Communications and Feedback

These are the current goals as determined by the committee:

#### Process

- Work with central directorates to ensure that our research systems provide data that is accessible, accurate and up to date e.g. Library, Human Resources Services, Research Services etc.

- Work with the library and Research Services to ensure SABL researchers are publishing strategically to increase research impact
- Clarify processes and responsibilities for research support and leadership within the Faculty
- Improve whole of university research related administrative processes to ensure they are clearly articulated, easily accessible, efficient for researchers and administrators, responsive and overall being fit for purpose

#### Investment

- The FRAC contributes to decisions about capital expenditure that supports Faculty research initiatives through representation on the School-based Technical or equivalent Advisory Committees
- Develop a strategy for packaged scholarships within the Graduate Research School, Post-doctoral Fellows and research initiatives/centres
- Identify and develop capability to support staff to improve their skills for proposal development, network building to enhance career progression (ECR, professional /technical staff and academics)
- Develop a framework for how we develop initiatives that support innovation and address problems for a changing world (including priorities as well as partnerships and alliances)

#### Quality

- Research integrity
  - Ensure dialogue with Research Services and other stakeholders on developments around research integrity and communicate these to SABL research staff to ensure our staff are able to produce high-quality outputs
  - Communicate the FRAC's expectations regarding professional development of our research and support staff
- Support and promote research quality that will be recognised in benchmarking processes (ERA, E&I or other)

#### Communications/Feedback

- Develop mechanisms to identify and understand the research related “pain points” across the Faculty
- Identify ways to build trust and community across the Schools and Faculty as a whole while encouraging staff to engage directly with the Faculty
- Lobby internally for the communication process to be harmonised across schools and showcasing of research
  - Better communicate our research strengths and collaborations to potential funders and external partners outside our current sphere
  - Minimising the number of communication channels
- Define a mechanism to communicate to the faculty and schools regarding research opportunities and deadlines
- Update the website

## **Agreed Areas of Priority in the next 12 months**

### **Process**

- Improve whole of university research related administrative processes – 4 votes from 8

### **Investment**

- Identify and develop capability to support staff to improve their skills for proposal development, network building to enhance career progression (ECR, professional /technical staff and academics) – 6 votes from 8

### **Quality**

- Support and promote research quality that will be recognised in benchmarking processes (ERA, E&I or other) – 8 votes from 8

### **Communications**

- Define a mechanism for improved communications (internally and externally) – combining all the sub-points in this goal