

UTS Council meeting report

18 February 2020

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 18 February 2020 meeting. The meeting was held at the UTS Tech Lab in Botany, and was followed by a tour of the facility.

**The Report structure replicates the flow of the agenda.*

Strategic items of business

Sustainability at UTS

One of the major elements of the UTS 2027 strategy is building a sustainable future, cultivating sustainability values in our students and staff, and striving for continual improvement in our practice, processes and systems, as such Council has a role to play in monitoring the implementation and development of UTS's sustainability strategy.

In addition to the focus an enterprise would normally bring to sustainability, UTS's role as a 'public good' organisation requires far more, and motivates us to prioritise three responsibilities: integration of sustainability practices into campus operations to minimise environmental impacts, enhance social equity, maintain long-term viability and importantly, to show leadership; advancing knowledge and research to contribute to a sustainable future and the support of community discussion; and delivery of successful learning outcomes through research-inspired education, to build fact-based understanding and societal responsibility.

Council discussed the UTS approach to sustainability and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), including embedding the goals and a sustainability mindset across the entire organisation; operations, teaching, research and partnerships & engagement. The breadth of activity in support of the SDG's was commended and Council advised that greater visibility throughout the community may be appropriate. Council also noted UTS' impact in influencing T-Corp in relation to fossil-fuel investment.

The 2019 UTS Sustainability Report will be presented to Council in June.

Operations and performance

Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor provides a report to each Council meeting containing updates on key developments and events that have occurred since Council's last meeting. Updates include; the implementation progress of the UTS 2027 Strategy, State and Federal Government issues, updates regarding the university sector and internal matters, particularly achievements and awards.

Council discussed possible partnerships with Western Sydney University. The partnerships strongly align with the Australian Government's 'Smart City' objectives to

transform the region's central business districts into vibrant hubs for employment, creative, entrepreneurial activity and industry engagement. TAFE are planning to develop a 'mega' campus at Bankstown and the Vice-Chancellor will be pursuing opportunities to partner with TAFE. Council will later discuss the broader relationship with TAFE, beyond the Western Sydney Strategy.

Coronavirus Update

The Vice-Chancellor gave an update regarding the UTS response to health and safety, student planning, supporting the learning needs of students still overseas and financial modelling. Council discussed possible scenarios, risks and the mitigation measures that may be employed to manage any financial impact. The health, safety and wellbeing of students and staff remain the priority of the University.

UTS has implemented health precautions and behaviours as a result of NSW Health advice, and these will remain in place as general health practices. UTS remains in contact with NSW Health and the Chief Medical Officer, and will respond appropriately to the latest advice.

UTS Corporate Plan 2019 - End of Year Performance Report

Council monitors the University performance throughout the year. The end of year performance report provides valuable oversight on how well the University has performed against the targets set.

In November 2018 Council approved the UTS Corporate Plan 2019, which outlines our strategic priorities for 2019 and the associated performance indicator targets to track progress against these priorities. The plan also outlined a range of initiatives demonstrating a commitment to achieving our institutional goals as per the new UTS2027 Strategic Plan and enhancing our reputation locally and globally.

The structure of the performance report follows the structure of the 2019 corporate plan and performance indicators in the context of the UTS2027 strategic plan.

Being the first year of our UTS2027 strategy, the priorities and activities that support the eight strategic initiatives throughout the year in order to ensure that we maintain our course to success have been refined and streamlined. Overall good progress has been made against our 2019 priorities but there is still work to do with many activities continuing into 2020 as we work to reposition, experiment and build towards real transformation.

Management and their teams were congratulated on both the results and the quality of the reporting, providing confidence as UTS moves into its second year of the UTS 2027 Strategy.

Workplace Gender Equity

Under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, UTS is required to submit a Workplace Profile and Questionnaire Report each year. This report must meet compliance requirements in order to proceed with our application for the WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation. The citation is a leading practice recognition program that aims to encourage, recognise and promote active commitment to achieving gender equality in Australian workplaces.

UTS is one of only three Australian universities to have been consistently recognised as an Employer of Choice. We have received citations as an Employer of Choice for Women each year from 2002-2013, and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice citation each year from 2014-2019.

In 2017 the Agency commenced a strategic review of the citation and the revised version has been developed and effective from 2019-20. This includes the Council receiving the application. UTS remains committed to gender equity in the workplace and will discuss citation requirements with the Workplace Gender Equity Office. UTS has been awarded the citation.

Reports from committees

Council has a number of committees, whose membership have particular expertise, to provide assistance and advice to Council on matters for Council consideration. These committees report back to Council.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee advises Council on matters relating to the distribution and supervision of university finances, and acts on behalf of Council in areas of delegated authority.

Council discussed the financial investment and progress for the UTS 2027 Strategy as at the end of December 2019. Council also noted that the strategic projects funded in 2019 continue to be largely on track to deliver the identified outcomes.

Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee recommends to Council candidates whom Council may, either nominate to the Minister for appointment as Council members, or appoint as Council members.

Council approved the nomination of Dr Lisa O'Brien as a Council Appointed Member for a term of 1 March 2020 to 31 October 2023.

Items for approval

None.

Items for noting

Council are provided papers for noting and include activity that has occurred between Council meetings.

- Chancellor's Report
 - Use of Power of Attorney, University Seal and Executive Action
 - Annual Declarations of Interest
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Items of General Business

Dean's Presentation

Council discussed the initiatives of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, and their alignment to the UTS 2027 Strategy. The focussed research (specialisation) strategy, concentrates on areas where UTS has strong expertise resulting in the commercialisation of research and strong industry engagement.

Council discussed the Faculty's ability to pivot into new areas of research within its range of expertise. The combination of teaching and research assists with this agility.

The strategic priorities of the Faculty are, centring on the 'Industry 4.0' government initiative and increasing partnerships with industry and government agencies. The external environment, opportunities and risks confronting the Faculty were also discussed.

Council commended the Dean, Professor Ian Burnett, on great results including; increase in student numbers both for undergraduate and post graduate, the strength of partnerships and contract research, and the social change programs through Wanago and Rapido.

Other reports

- Interim Student Admission and Enrolment Report 2020
- Work Health and Safety Report
- Audit and Risk Committee Report