

The University of Queensland
Minutes of a Meeting of Senate held on 1 April 2020 at 5:30pm
By Audio-Visual Technology

Minutes confirmed on 13 May 2020

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Attendance

Present: Mr P N Varghese AO (Chancellor), Ms T Dwyer (Deputy Chancellor), Professor P Høj AC (Vice-Chancellor and President), Professor P Adams, Ms J Alroe, Associate Professor D Cavaye, Mr T Crommelin, Ms A Cross AM, Adjunct Associate Professor D Dornan AO, Professor G Hainge, Mr P Hennessy AO, Mr E Johnson, Mr R Lee, Mr J Merrick, Mr G Murdoch, Mr D Pavlou, Dr S Pitkin, Associate Professor T Roberts, and Ms M Tredenick.

Apologies: Ms R Hurst and Ms C Wake.

In attendance: Provost, Professor A Byrne; Chief Operating Officer, Mr G Pringle; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor J Wright; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor B Harch; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement), Mr R Li; Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor T Dunne; Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Advancement), Ms J Karlson; Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement), Professor B Fredericks; Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning),

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Professor D Macdonald; Chief Financial Officer, Mr A Flannery; General Counsel, Ms C Seeto; Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Ms K Robinson; and Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President, Ms J Connah.

Secretary: Dr J Montgomery.

1. **Acknowledgement of Country**

On behalf of the Senate, the Chancellor acknowledged the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which the meeting took place, and paid respect to their Ancestors and their descendants.

The Chancellor confirmed the Senate's ongoing commitment to the University's Reconciliation Action Plan.

2. **Welcome and apologies, and protocol for holding the meeting online**

The Chancellor welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies from Ms Rebecca Hurst and Ms Cecile Wake.

For the record, it was noted that this was the first time that the Senate had met entirely by means of audio-visual technology and that the reason was because of strict requirements on physical gatherings to try and manage the spread of the Coronavirus. The Chancellor explained the suggested protocols to run the meeting. He confirmed that there were no legal issues in convening a Senate meeting virtually.

3. **Approval of items *en bloc***

Having provided Members with an opportunity to star any additional agenda items, it was **resolved** that Senate approve or note *en bloc* all items which were not starred.

4. **Declaration of interests**

Members' interests as at April 2020 were circulated with the agenda and **noted**.

The Chancellor provided Members with an opportunity to advise of any changes to the interests circulated and Associate Professor Tony Roberts declared an interest which was **noted**.

The Chancellor also provided Members with an opportunity to declare any perceived, potential, or actual conflict with any of the meeting agenda items and none were made.

5. **Confirmation of minutes**

The general minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2020, having been circulated, were **confirmed**.

6. **Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising from previous minutes.

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7. Update from the ChancellorContinuity planning for Senate roles

The Chancellor outlined the continuity planning for certain Senate roles in the event that these roles cannot be fulfilled. The Deputy Chancellor will deputise for the Chancellor, the Senate will determine who will occupy the position of Deputy Chancellor, the Provost will take on the role of Acting Vice-Chancellor, and the Director of the Office of the Vice-Chancellor will fulfil the role of the Senate Secretary.

Ad Hoc Senate Committee on COVID-19

In consultation with the Vice-Chancellor, the Chancellor advised that he had established a small Ad Hoc Senate Committee on COVID-19 which will initially meet weekly to work with the Vice-Chancellor and his team as the University deals with all aspects of COVID-19. The Chancellor outlined the proposed terms of reference and membership composition. He emphasised that the ad hoc committee would have no decision-making authority but would act as a sounding board for Senior Management. The Senate will be kept informed of the outcomes.

Vote of thanks

On behalf of the Senate the Chancellor acknowledged the extraordinary time and effort that the Vice-Chancellor, his team, and many members of staff have put into packing months of work into weeks and in ensuring the robustness of our online systems.

8. Vice-Chancellor and President's Report

The Vice-Chancellor's Report to Senate and the UQ Latest News, which had been circulated with the agenda, were taken as read.

UQ's response to COVID-19

The Vice-Chancellor began by expressing his deep gratitude to the large number of UQ staff who have consistently worked long hours over the last nine weeks, and who continue to do so. We are all operating in a constantly changing situation and there are numerous components to take into account. The announcements made by the National Cabinet have to be interpreted and implemented within UQ with no time to spare, and communications to students, staff and the wider community have to be made promptly and accurately. The Senior management team and staff have responded to the crisis magnificently.

A decision had been taken to pause teaching for one week in order to try to get as many courses online as possible. Of the 1,529 coursework courses offered in Semester 1, 2020: 92% (1405) have transitioned to a fully online delivery, and 7% (102) will be partially delivered online due to face-to-face requirements such as practicals, labs and workshops. These courses will utilise additional teaching weeks under an adjusted academic calendar to schedule activities intensively. This extension of the semester will require the postponement of the July graduations. Only 13 courses cannot be delivered online and faculties and schools are working to find alternative solutions for these students. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the DVC (Academic), Professor Joanne Wright, and staff involved in this tremendous effort.

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Early indications of the results of the census date of 31 March are that domestic student numbers are on target. The census date is the deadline for students to finalise their enrolment for the semester. Details of international student enrolments had not been finalised but early results are promising, with a likely drop of just 20% the international load for Semester 1. This is an indication that students have accepted the online format, if not ideal, and that they are using the opportunity to study and upskill. It is more than likely that the international student numbers for Semester 2 will be lower than anticipated. The situation is likely to be exacerbated by the inability of some international students to fulfil their English language entry requirements and limited international travel. If borders remain closed we anticipate a major loss of revenue which will pipeline into 2021 as well.

The vast majority of staff have transitioned to working from home if they can. The Vice-Chancellor also gave an account of the small number of students and staff who had presented with COVID-19 symptoms and the swift and immediate steps which had been taken to contain the spread and identify people with whom they had come into contact. The steps which have been implemented, such as restricting access to the campus and social distancing, have been successful in curtailing any new instances.

Universities Australia have been lobbying the federal government, but it appears unlikely that any specific federal assistance to universities will be forthcoming.

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on the University's part in developing a vaccine for COVID-19. The Queensland Government has agreed to allocate \$10M under its Advance Queensland strategy in order to try and fast-track a vaccine in a project led by UQ's School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences. Securing this funding is largely attributable to the CEO of UniQuest, Dr Dean Moss, working with the Queensland Government. The Australian Government has pledged \$3M. A target of \$23M has been set and contributions from other sources have been secured, thanks to the PVC(Advancement), Ms Jen Karlson, and her team. The funding will provide support to UQ and partners such as the Doherty Institute and CSIRO. Clinical trials on the vaccine may commence as early as July in Queensland. The funding will also support advancing large-scale manufacture with industry partners both locally and overseas. UQ has signed a contract with a major multinational company which is prepared to help produce the vaccine.

The following arose out of questions and comments –

Confirmation will be sought that the means by which students in China access online UQ courses is compliant with Chinese regulations.

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Once the crisis is over, the University should assess how it has emerged in comparison to other national and international universities. It may be that other universities have responded in different ways which will affect their rankings going forward.

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The likelihood that Year 12s might not leave school with an ATAR score on which universities can rely has been anticipated. Other university entry pathways are being considered, as well as ways in which students can catch up in their first year of study if need be.

The Chancellor again thanked the management team and staff for their contribution.

Inner City South Secondary College

The Vice-Chancellor updated Members on progress to date on the Inner City South Secondary College.

At the 30 May 2019 meeting of Senate, Members had discussed the percentage of students identified for the selective entry cohort and the ambition to specify a proportion of places for disadvantaged students to align with UQ's strategic priorities. Senate had supported the articulation of a preferred target of 50% selective entry with a lower limit of 30%.

Due to population growth, however, the Department of Education now requires that 80% of students be sourced from the catchment area, and it has therefore not been possible to negotiate more than 20% of select entry students. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), however, allows for additional selective entry enrolments if capacity permits after considering all in-catchment enrolments.

Given that the Senate preferred the term "In association with The University of Queensland" instead of "UQ High School", the Vice-Chancellor's view was that it is reasonable to sign the MoU with a 20% selective entry, with the option of increasing the proportion of students if feasible. It was noted that the MoU does not involve any exchange of funds and does not otherwise cover any matters reserved for Senate.

The Chancellor reminded Members that the signing of the MoU is within the delegation of the Vice-Chancellor and thanked the Vice-Chancellor for apprising the Senate. There being no contrary views expressed by Members, it is the Vice-Chancellor's intention to now sign the MoU.

Strategic Matters

9. COVID-19 Impact: Financial Modelling

The Chief Financial Officer took Members through a presentation on the financial impact of COVID-19.

The situation remains dynamic therefore a range of scenarios have been developed from best to worst case, with a range of situations in between. Under these circumstances UQ is focused on preserving maximum cash by minimising costs and capital. The CFO outlined the work done to date and the medium-term risks. Apart from lost revenue in tuition fees, other examples of lost revenue are from the Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education (ICTE) which is not offering English tuition, reduced revenue from campus parking, and Customs House which is temporarily closed. The closure of ICTE will also affect the

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pipeline of students who have met the English language requirements for enrolment in Semester 2.

Costs have been cut but not to the extent that they would impede activities when the rebound occurs. The CFO outlined the capital costs which the University is committed to under the capital plan. Modelling on the extent of the financial impact in 2021 is also being done although it is difficult to calculate as it depends on how long the restrictions last.

The following comments and questions were raised –

The assumptions underpinning the anticipated number of students in Semester 1 and Semester 2 were explained. The number of students as at the 30 March census date is better than anticipated and will therefore improve the Semester 1 numbers. The Semester 2 student numbers depends to a very large extent on when the travel ban is lifted.

The University is working closely with the UQ Union. As with all other businesses, the UQ Union is not free of the consequences of what is happening.

A Member emphasised the importance of introducing a feedback loop to gauge the response from students to the changes which were being made, e.g. the transition to online learning. It was also important to maintain academic quality. Members were advised that such mechanisms are in place. In particular, the Academic Board and the DVC(Academic) Office are working together to address feedback and monitor academic quality.

An explanation was provided on the requirements of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

The University owns assets that it could sell if required, but low cost of debt would be more attractive.

The federal government's JobKeeper wage subsidy scheme may apply to UQ Sport Ltd.

As part of its COVID-19 response, the Queensland Government allowed certain businesses to apply for a refund for January and February 2020 payroll tax paid and defer the remaining payments until January 2021. UQ applied for and has subsequently received a \$9m refund for the January and February payment and received approval to defer its remaining payments until January 2021.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Chief Financial Officer for his presentation.

Academic Matters

10. Update from the Academic Board President

Professor Peter Adams said that at a time such as this, it is natural that we focus on the urgent, acute issues. But he took the opportunity to speak about the heart and soul of academic institutions.

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It is common for people to characterise universities, the people in universities, and the sector more broadly, as being problematically conservative. We are often described as being resistant to change and very slow to move. However, it is said that of the 85 oldest institutions (including systems of government) in the world, 70 of them are schools or universities. Universities have survived World Wars, depressions, revolutions and centuries of plagues with death rates 10 times that of our current pandemic.

There is something special that has enabled educational institutions to be so enduring, and not just to survive, but to thrive. It is a mistake to conflate questioning, seeking an evidence base and skepticism of lofty claims or humbug, with problematic conservatism. By our nature, Universities are leading at the forefront of change, and these are exactly the ways of thinking and acting that enable us to do so.

We have seen at UQ, and across the international sector, that when our people encounter the need for action supported by good evidence, they will achieve extraordinary things.

These things range from moving all teaching online, to giving governments the best health and economic advice that is available, to training the front-line responders, and to developing the tests and vaccines that will save humanity.

These are not the actions of conservative monoliths, but instead show the rigorous agility that is core to the heart and soul of academic institutions.

Professor Adams hoped that we can remember this when the current situation is resolved.

Governance Matters

11. Honorary Awards Committee

The Honorary Awards Committee met on 10 March 2020 and recommended the nominees below for honorary awards.

11.1 Sister Angela Mary Doyle AO

Senate **resolved** that Sister Angela Mary Doyle AO be invited to accept an Honorary Doctorate of the University from The University of Queensland.

11.2 Ms Merle Thornton AM

Senate **resolved** that Ms Merle Thornton AM be invited to accept an Honorary Doctorate of Literature from The University of Queensland.

11.3 Aunty Lilla Watson

Senate **resolved** that Aunty Lilla Watson be invited to accept an Honorary Doctorate of the University from The University of Queensland.

11.4 Mr Guillermo Capati PSM

Senate **resolved** that Guillermo Capati PSM be invited to accept a UQ Fellowship from The University of Queensland.

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12. Governance Committee Terms of Reference

As part of the process to appoint University representatives onto College Councils, the Governance Committee recommends the establishment of a Nominations Sub-committee of the Governance Committee which will recommend the names of University representatives for appointment by the Governance Committee onto College Councils.

The change of the Terms of Reference of the Governance Committee is intended to give effect to this change.

Senate **resolved** that the Governance Committee Terms of Reference, as set out in the agenda papers, be approved.

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13. Senate Committees – Membership ChangesAdvancement Committee

Noting the resignation on 31 December 2019 of Ms Kathy Hirschfeld AM as Chair, Senate **resolved** that Mr Tim Crommelin be appointed Chair of the Advancement Committee with effect from 1 April 2020.

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Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Senate **resolved** that Mr Drew Pavlou be appointed a Member of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee with effect from 1 April 2020.

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14. UQ Annual Report 2019

The final version of the UQ Annual Report 2019, as submitted to Queensland Parliament, was **noted**.

Senate Committee Reports**15. Advancement Update**

The April 2020 Advancement Update was **noted**.

16. Campus Infrastructure Committee

The Campus Infrastructure Committee Report of March 2020 was **noted**.

17. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Minutes dated 12 March 2020 were **noted**.

18. Governance Committee

The Governance Committee Report of March 2020 was **noted**.

Other Matters for Noting**19. Significant Litigation Report**

The Significant Litigation Report dated 19 March 2020 was **noted**.

20. Senate Annual Calendar

The Senate Annual Calendar was **noted**.

21. Meeting Dates 2020-2021

The UQ Senate dates 2020-2021 were **noted**.