

The University of Queensland
Minutes of a Meeting of Senate held on 13 May 2020 at 5:30pm
By Audio-Visual Technology

Minutes confirmed on 25 June 2020

Index

| | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Acknowledgement of Country | 2 |
| 2. Welcome and apologies | 2 |
| 3. Approval of items <i>en bloc</i> | 2 |
| 4. Declaration of interests | 2 |
| 5. Confirmation of minutes | 2 |
| 6. Matters arising from the minutes | 2 |
| 7. Update from the Chancellor | 2 |
| 8. Vice-Chancellor and President's Report | 3 |
| Strategic Matters | 4 |
| 9. COVID-19 Impact | 4 |
| 9.1 Update from Provost and CFO | 4 |
| 9.2 Update from DVC(Academic) | 4 |
| 9.3 Update from Director of Human Resources | 5 |
| 10. 2019 Strategic Key Performance Indicators Annual Progress Report | 5 |
| Academic Matters | 6 |
| 11. Update from the Academic Board President | 6 |
| 12. Academic Board Reports | 6 |
| 13. Posthumous conferral of an award | 6 |
| Senate Committee Reports | 6 |
| 14. Advancement Update | 6 |
| Other Matters for Noting | 6 |
| 15. Any Other Business | 6 |
| 16. Significant Litigation Report | 6 |
| 17. Senate Annual Calendar | 6 |
| 18. Meeting Dates 2020-2021 | 6 |

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, Ms R Hurst, Mr E Johnson, Mr R Lee, Mr J Merrick, Mr G Murdoch, Mr D Pavlou, Dr S Pitkin, Associate Professor T Roberts, Ms M Tredenick, 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), Professor D Macdonald; Chief Financial Officer, Mr A Flannery; General Counsel, Ms C Seeto; Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Ms K Robinson; Director, Governance and Risk, Mrs S Chand; and Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President, Ms J Connah.

Observer: President UQ Union, Mr E Van Roo Douglas.

Secretary: Dr J Montgomery.

The University of Queensland Senate Minutes: 13 May 2020

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

The Chancellor welcomed members to the meeting.

3. Approval of items *en bloc*

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

4. Declaration of interests

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

The Chancellor provided Members with an opportunity to advise of any changes to the interests circulated. The following declaration was made:

Professor Peter Høj AC

The Australian Cancer Research Foundation, appointed an honorary Board Trustee on 13 March 2020.

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 minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2020, having been circulated and as amended at the meeting, were **confirmed**.

The following circulating resolution dated 11 April 2020 was **noted as agreed**:
Appointment of UQ Holdings Chair.

6. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from previous minutes.

7. Update from the Chancellor

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 continued to put into the affairs of the University during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ad Hoc Senate Committee on Covid-19

The Committee is meeting weekly with Management to act as a sounding board for immediate as well as medium to long-term issues facing the University. These issues are being brought to the attention of the Senate for consideration, as

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The University of Queensland Senate Minutes: 13 May 2020

evidenced by some of the agenda items at this meeting. Federal and State discussions are taking place, particularly around how universities might put together a framework for bringing international students into Australia while still complying with quarantine and other public health requirements.

Senate Evaluation

The Governance Committee, which met earlier in the week, agreed to proceed with an external review of the Senate. It is a TEQSA requirement that an external review of the governing body takes place regularly and it was noted that such a review had not yet been undertaken. Further details would be provided to Senate members shortly.

Confidentiality of UQ Senate documents and discussions

The Chancellor referred to statements made recently in the Federal Parliament by Senator Paterson under parliamentary privilege which suggested that there was something improper about the performance payment paid to the Vice-Chancellor. Senator Paterson said that a whistleblower from the University had given him a copy of last year's senior staff remuneration report from which he quoted selectively. The Chancellor will issue a statement which will set out the considered process for determining the Vice-Chancellor's performance bonus, and that the Remuneration Committee stands by its decision that the bonus is an acknowledgement of achievements across a number of performance indicators.

The Chancellor reminded Senate members of their obligation to maintain strict confidentiality of both Senate documents and of discussions which take place at Senate and committee meetings. Any breach of the obligation to respect the confidentiality of Senate discussions and papers was unacceptable. The leaking of information has a corrosive effect on the extent to which Members engage in discussion. It is essential to the good governance of the University that Members feel free to engage in full, frank and robust discussion, and not have to worry that it would find its way into the media.

8. Vice-Chancellor and President's Report

The Vice-Chancellor's Report to Senate, which had been circulated with the agenda, was taken as read.

Secure Corridor for International Students

The Group of Eight Board has developed a framework to consider the logistical and safety measures of a secure corridor back into Australia for international students later this year or early in 2021. This would need the support of the National Cabinet and State approval if it were to go ahead. A pilot program may be an option.

Update on Program Architecture 2 (PA2)

Progress is still being made on PA2 despite resources being diverted to deal with the pandemic. It is estimated that in the order of 20% to 25% of the more than 3,000 courses may meet the criteria to be retired but no decision had been taken.

Enterprise agreement variation framework

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and four Vice-Chancellors were trying to negotiate an enterprise agreement variation framework in which

The University of Queensland Senate Minutes: 13 May 2020

university staff would take pay cuts in exchange for limits on job losses. The Vice-Chancellor provided a summary of what was envisaged. Oversight would be by a joint university-NTEU panel. Legal advice was being sought to determine whether a university could share its governance authority in this way. It appears that, from an administrative law perspective, such an arrangement is fundamentally flawed. A number of members at the meeting agreed.

The situation was very fluid and universities might be asked to make a decision quickly. The Chief Human Resources Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and General Counsel were working through the details. It appeared at this stage that the arguments against agreeing to the variation were stronger than the arguments for agreeing to it. The Chancellor summed up the sense of the meeting by saying that as the situation stood it appeared that the Vice-Chancellor was more likely to say no to the deal than yes. If that assessment changed then the Senate would need to convene on short notice to consider ratifying the decision. However, if the Vice-Chancellor did not wish to participate in the arrangement, Senate would be comfortable with that position and no further action would be required of the Senate.

Turnaround times for student applications

In reply to a question from a Member, the DVC (External Engagement) said that there had been a significant improvement in turning around student applications and that the average time was now down from an average of 21 days in 2017 to about eleven days. That was, however, an average across programs and the turnaround times were faster where faculties had delegated authority to make decisions on admission on their behalf. Work was being done to improve the turnaround time on postgraduate coursework and HDR applications. The admission systems also affected the turnaround time, but these systems are being continuously improved.

Strategic Matters

9. COVID-19 Impact

9.1 Update from Provost and CFO

[Mr Andrew Flannery, Chief Financial Officer, presented this item.]

The Chief Financial Officer took Members through the 2020 Financial Forecast. The presentation covered:

- the forecast 2020 cash position excluding endowment investments,
- capital changes,
- the 2020 indicative financial position,
- revenue, and
- a demonstration of the pipeline impact.

9.2 Update from DVC(Academic) including evaluation of online courses

[Professor Joanne Wright, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), and Professor Doune Macdonald, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), presented this item.]

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), took Members through a presentation which covered:

- Student experience reporting framework,

- Semester one timeline,
- Post-census withdrawals,
- Blackboard course engagement,
- Blackboard assessment engagement,
- Student Voice: 24/7 feedback and social media,
- Student services – hardship fund and support,
- Library support for students and staff,
- ProctorU engagement,
- Mid-semester student experience Pulse Survey, and
- Semester two.

The following points were raised by Members and noted – Information Technology Services are undertaking a thorough stress testing of the online examination software and process.

There is a need to ensure that long-term quality assurance takes place. Professor Wright acknowledged this point and said that several processes were in place to monitor quality assurance on an ongoing basis.

Students are being offered significant psychological support, however this should be strengthened.

UQ's Learning Management System is being investigated to update or replace the current LMS which is outdated and does not have the required functionality.

The President of the Academic Board noted that all universities, including UQ, will need to do more work on evaluating the effectiveness of learning and academic integrity of assessment before mainstreaming online teaching and assessment.

9.3 Update from Director of Human Resources

[Dr Al Jury, Chief Human Resources Officer, presented this item.]

The Chief Human Resources Officer covered the following items:

- staff support measures,
- cost saving measures, and
- an update on the implementation of the Human Capital Management System.

10. 2019 Strategic Key Performance Indicators Annual Progress Report

The 2019 Strategic Key Performance Indicators Annual Progress Report was **noted**.

The following points were raised –

Any correlation between a decrease in income and a possible decline in international rankings would only be reflected after 2021.

A request was made to reflect on all the KPIs at the Senate Retreat in August in order not to lose focus on the whole range of KPIs, and the extent to which the University's strategy may need to change significantly in the aftermath of Covid-19.

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Academic Matters**11. Update from the Academic Board President**

Professor Adams noted that the Academic Board, the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, and the Office of the DVC (Academic) were working together effectively and constructively to ensure sound academic governance and rapid decision making. Professor Adams also expressed appreciation of the work being done by the Vice-Chancellor and his immediate team which in the view of Professor Adams had led to very sound decisions being taken in areas such as early movement on shifting to online courses. The Chancellor fully endorsed this observation.

12. Academic Board Reports

The Academic Board Reports for 10 February 2020 and 16 March 2020 were **noted**.

13. Posthumous conferral of an award

The Senate **approved** the posthumous conferral of a Doctor of Medicine on Matthew Hamilton (44705699).

Endorsements from the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the Academic Registrar supported the recommendation.

Senate Committee Reports**14. Advancement Update**

An update in the Campaign for Quarter 1, 2020 was **noted**.

Other Matters for Noting**15. Any Other Business**

In response to a question, the Vice-Chancellor advised that the 20% contribution that he is making out of his salary to assist needy students is being donated to the UQ Financial Hardship Scheme.

16. Significant Litigation Report

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

17. Senate Annual Calendar

The Senate Annual Calendar was **noted**.

18. Meeting Dates 2020-2021

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

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