

The University of Queensland
Minutes of a Meeting of Senate held on 26 October 2020 at 4:30pm
in the Senate Room, Level 5, Brian Wilson Chancellery, St Lucia

Minutes confirmed on 1 December 2020

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Attendance

Present: Mr P N Varghese AO (Chancellor), Ms T Dwyer (Deputy Chancellor), Professor D Terry AO (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, Professor B Lea, Mr R Lee, Mr G Murdoch, Dr S Pitkin (AVT), Ms G Starr, Ms M Tredenick (AVT), and Ms C Wake (AVT).

(AVT – audio visual technology)

Apology: Mr J Merrick.

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; Deputy President Academic Board, Professor C Franklin; Chief Financial Officer, Mr A Flannery; General Counsel, Ms C Seeto; Chief HR Officer, Dr A Jury; 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

The Chancellor welcomed members to the meeting and noted an apology from Mr Jamie Merrick.

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 October 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 none were made.

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 24 September 2020, having been circulated, were **confirmed**.

Sec.

6. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from previous minutes.

7. Update from the ChancellorReview of student disciplinary policy and processes

The Chancellor met with the external panellists who are conducting a review of the University's student disciplinary policy and processes. The review also covers the management of sexual misconduct complaints. The Report will come to the December Senate meeting.

Federal and State communication

A small group of Chancellors drawn from the University Chancellors Council have been meeting with the Government and the National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board. The Board provides a business perspective to Government on Australia's economic recovery. The relationship between the Government and the Higher Education Sector is improving and the Chancellor acknowledged the

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ongoing efforts of Universities Australia which Professor Terry chairs. The funding for research in the Federal Budget is welcomed.

The Chancellor suggested that it would be useful, following the State election, to contact the incoming government to explore ways in which UQ and other Queensland universities can strengthen the interaction with the State Government.

Closed Senate Sessions

The Chancellor flagged that in future some parts of the meeting may be closed to Management if considered appropriate. Members were invited to let the Chancellor know if there were any topics they would like discussed this way.

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.

Budget Summary

The 2020–21 Federal Budget includes an additional \$1.5 billion to the university sector which has been widely welcomed. The Vice-Chancellor outlined the main features of the Budget as they relate to the sector. It was noted that the \$298.5 million over four years for an additional 12,000 Commonwealth-supported places in 2021 will come from new funding.

Job Ready Graduates Package

Legislation to enact the Government's Job Ready Graduates package was passed by Senate on 8 October 2020.

Secure Corridor

The Northern Territory is the first jurisdiction to start a pilot Secure Corridor program. It is expected that 70 international students will travel to Darwin under this program, with quarantine arrangements to be put in place by the Territory Government.

The development of a proposal for Queensland will continue after the State elections. The University has the capacity to offer quarantine facilities to international students but this would need the agreement of the State Government.

Voluntary Separation Scheme

On 1 October 2020, the Vice-Chancellor outlined details of a Voluntary Separation Scheme that would be open to all continuing staff. Submissions of Expressions of Interest closed on 16 October 2020 and are currently being considered.

UQ Vaccine Update

On 12 October 2020 the Prime Minister, the Honourable Scott Morrison MP, visited the UQ vaccine project team at UQ and toured the laboratory facilities. The Australian Government has provided \$5m to this project.

Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel AO, also visited the facilities in October.

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Human Capital Management System (HCMS)

The go-live date for the HCMS system has been postponed from March 2021 to the end of May 2021. This is due to the impact of COVID-19, and ongoing work required to integrate with other systems. A Member noted the need to guard against further slippage.

University's Executive Governance Structure

Following discussions with senior colleagues, the University's executive governance structure has been reshaped.

The new UQ Senior Executive Team (USET) consists of the Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellors together with the Executive Deans of Faculties and one representative of the UQ's major research institutes. USET is focused on whole-of-university management, budget setting and strategic positioning.

The new UQ Senior Leaders Group (USLG) consists of USET, Directors of major institutes, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the President of the Academic Board, and eight senior leaders of major divisions across the University, including the CFO, CIO, and Chief HR Officer. The purpose of the group is to discuss key strategic priorities, share information for strategic alignment, provide briefings on major issues, and to carry out strategic and operational planning.

National Taiwan University Rankings

The National Taiwan University Ranking has published its latest Overall, 6 Field, and 24 Subject rankings of world universities based on the performance of scientific papers. In 2020 UQ has been ranked Overall 39 (improved one place from 2019). UQ continues to be ranked overall 3rd in Australia.

TEQSA Compliance Assessment

At the September Senate meeting Members discussed correspondence referring to an incident at a residential college in 2017. At the time, Professor Terry had verbally contacted TEQSA to ascertain the final finding of a review they had undertaken. Subsequently, a letter dated 20 October 2020 had been received from TEQSA's Director of the Assessment and Investigations Group. The letter advised that TEQSA has closed the compliance assessment having been satisfied that UQ had met its obligations under the Threshold Standards in regard to the matters raised. TEQSA was satisfied that UQ has a framework of policies, processes and activities in place to foster and maintain wellbeing and safety. In relation to sexual misconduct in particular, TEQSA was satisfied that UQ provides well-resourced and competent support to students who have experienced sexual assault and sexual harassment. TEQSA noted some areas for improvement which the University will work on.

As indicated at the September Senate meeting, Professor Terry indicated that she would invite the student to meet with her once the letter had been received, and this invitation will now be made.

The external review of student disciplinary policy and processes was something that UQ undertook to carry out as part of TEQSA's consideration of this matter. Members also noted that the appeals judgement on a recent court case meant

that UQ was able to proceed with any amendments of policies flowing from this external review. In the case of Student Y v UQ, student Y sought orders preventing the University from holding a disciplinary proceeding in relation to alleged misconduct involving the student. The Court's original decision was that the University should be restrained from holding a hearing into the misconduct allegations concerning the student as the allegations involved criminal acts of a sexual nature. On appeal, the Supreme Court of Queensland determined that student Y's original application should have been dismissed by the primary judge. However, the Court's decision was that UQ should be restrained from proceeding further against student Y because student Y had now graduated.

The external review of student disciplinary policy and processes will take into account implementation of the policy and procedures, including training and support.

Other items in the Vice-Chancellor's Report

Other items in the Vice-Chancellor's Report were:

- 2020 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes
- 2020 Enterprise Planning Meetings
- 2020 Women in Technology Award Winners
- Foreign Relations and Foreign Influence
- Independent Review of Adoption of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom
- Mental Health Week
- Merle Pledge
- National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund
- Queensland Women in STEM Prize Award Ceremony
- Review of Student Disciplinary Policy and Process
- School Leadership, Capability and Development (SLCD) Project
- Survey of Commercial Outcomes from Public Research – 2019 Report
- UQ's Annual Giving Day held on 21 October 2020

Strategic matters

9. Enhancing digital learning at UQ

Dr Greg Winslett, Deputy Director (Digital Learning), Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation joined the meeting for this item.

Professor Joanne Wright, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), and Professor Doune Macdonald, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), presented on Enhancing Digital Learning at UQ.

COVID-19 has accelerated UQ's efforts to provide flexible learning experiences. Significant progress has been made towards the provision of digital teaching capabilities required to support learning remotely, and the understanding of staff of what may be the future expectations of students and new markets has improved. The pandemic continues to present pedagogical challenges and opportunities, driving rapid shifts across curriculum, teaching modes, support practices, and physical and virtual infrastructure. Whilst the migration to online of learning activities, resources and assessment has been significant, there is room for improvement in the provision of consistently high quality resources, building

digital literacy skills of students and staff, and the integration of University systems.

Increased online delivery will be important for UQ going forward and the DVCA's team is working on ensuring that the balance between online and on-campus experiences is optimum.

The following points were made during discussion:

Online assessment has proved challenging, however the University is improving its capabilities in this area. The main challenges are technical issues, training staff to set assessments appropriate for an online environment, and challenges faced by students in taking the assessments.

The move to digital learning requires a reassessment of the function and purpose of a physical campus. Students strongly support the need for a physical campus. Academic staff and management need to assess how best to apply funding and infrastructure to support digital learning. There is, for example, a much higher demand for spaces for collaboration whereas the demand for traditional lecture theatre space has declined. An audit of teaching spaces is currently underway and the results will help inform what physical and digital infrastructure is needed. An immediate starting point should be that there is adequate audio and visual equipment in all teaching spaces as some AV is inadequate. This matter has been identified and is being rectified.

Consideration needs to be given to the cultural changes required to underpin and sustain the move towards digital learning. The Vice-Chancellor indicated that the consultation taking place in preparation for the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan is taking this into account.

All students have been understanding and tolerant to date but competition is fierce and should not be underestimated.

It is likely that UQ will offer blended learning for most courses, with only some courses lending themselves to be fully online. It will be important to ensure that any fully online degrees were of equal quality. Careful consideration would also need to be given to whether fully online degrees should be available to international students.

The Chancellor thanked Professor Wright and Professor Macdonald for their presentation.

10. 2021 UQ Budget Assumptions

The Chief Financial Officer took Members through the assumptions informing the 2021 UQ Budget.

11. UQ staffing profile

The Chief Human Resources Officer spoke to his presentation which included a number of indicators and metrics on the current staff workforce.

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The number of casual staff for this year is slightly lower than the last two years but still reasonably consistent with previous years. There are no plans to change the balance between casual staff and continuing and fixed-term employees.

The outcome of the Voluntary Separation Scheme will be monitored in order to make sure that gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mixes are maintained. Future reporting to the Senate will include these ratios.

CHRO

There has been a slight increase in employees accessing the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) although the reasons are not necessarily work related. EAP figures will also be included in future reporting.

CHRO

Academic Matters

12. Update from the Academic Board President

Professor Adams noted that ensuring high levels of academic integrity in student work is a particular challenge in a time of increased use of online and remote assessment. The Deputy President of the Academic Board, Professor Craig Franklin, is leading a group implementing the 13 aspects of an Academic Integrity Framework that covers education, prevention of breaches, detection and enforcement of academic integrity. The University recently participated in a global international day of action against contract cheating, running a session involving staff and student leaders.

Governance matters

13. Honorary Awards Policy amendment

Senate **resolved** to amend the Honorary Awards Policy by deleting Section 2.1.4 (UQ Gatton Gold Medals).

Sec.

Senate Committee Reports

14. Advancement Committee

The University's Giving Day was on 21 October 2020 under the theme "The Good Doesn't Stop". Upwards of \$600,000 raised with matching funds. Some 70% of gifts will go towards student hardship efforts, which was the focus for this year. The considerable staff participation was noted with appreciation.

It was also noted that in 2020 there were the most number of donors than in any other year of the Campaign, and that in 2019 UQ raised more funds than any other Go8 University.

Other Matters for Noting

15. UQ Significant Litigation Report

The Significant Litigation Report dated 15 September 2020 was **noted**.

16. Senate Annual Calendar

The Senate Annual Calendar was **noted**.

17. Meeting Dates 2020-2022

The UQ Senate meetings 2020-2022 were **noted**.