

The University of Queensland
Minutes of a Meeting of Senate held on 1 December 2020 at 4pm
in the River Room, Customs House, 399 Queen Street, Brisbane

Minutes confirmed on 23 February 2021

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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 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, and Ms C Wake.

(AVT – audio visual technology)

Apologies: Mr J Merrick and Ms M Tredenick.

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; 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.

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 apologies from Mr Jamie Merrick and Ms Michelle Tredenick.

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 December 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 26 October 2020, having been circulated, were **confirmed**.

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The following circulating resolution dated 6 November 2020 was **noted as agreed**: Instrument of Delegation for the 2020 Voluntary Separation Scheme.

6. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from previous minutes.

7. Update from the Chancellor

Replacement of Governor in Council Senate Member

The Governor in Council had not yet filled the vacancy on the Senate before the State Government went into the caretaker period. Now that the elections are over, the Chancellor had followed up with the Minister for Education.

The University enjoyed a good working relationship with the State Government and looked forward to building and strengthening areas of mutual interest.

Conferral of Honorary Awards

The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor presented a Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* to Adjunct Associate Professor Merle Thornton AM, at an online ceremony on 14 November 2020. This was the first time that the University had conferred an honorary doctorate online. On the same day, the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, along with members of Senate, also attended an Honorary Awards Ceremony at Customs House and presented a further three honorary awards to: Adjunct Professor Guillermo Capati PSM, Sister Angela Mary Doyle RSM AO, and Auntie Lilla Watson.

Senate Secretary

The Chancellor advised that the Senate Secretary, Dr John Montgomery, would be leaving the University at the end of March 2021 after 10 years in the position. The Chancellor acknowledged the great work of Mr Montgomery as Senate Secretary. A suitable farewell would be arranged nearer his departure date.

8. Vice-Chancellor and President's Report

The Vice-Chancellor took the Report as read and commented on the following items:

Additional University Places and Job Ready Graduates package

The Government has called for applications for the 12,000 new undergraduate places announced in the October Federal Budget as well as the 50,000 short course places. UQ is requesting around 400 additional places at the Bachelor's level and approximately 1,200 places at the graduate certificate (short course) level, focussing on areas of strong demand and those that align with the Government's priorities.

Foreign Relations and Foreign Influence

On 5 November 2020, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee submitted the report on its inquiry into the Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Bill 2020 and Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2020.

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The report acknowledged the sector's concerns regarding both the workability of the proposed laws, which had the potential to cover thousands of agreements, and the deterrent effect they could have on international partnerships. The Bill has now been reintroduced into the House of Representatives with amendments that narrow the definition of institutional autonomy for foreign universities in the primary legislation (rather than being defined in the rules); and to provide scope for a further review of the operation of the Act.

The University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT) Guidelines were released in November 2019 after consultation with the University sector. UQ was actively engaged in the development of the guidelines and remains engaged in this process through membership of key committees.

The Terms of Reference for the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security have been released. The Committee will inquire into and report on national security risks affecting the Australian higher education and research sector. UQ will make a submission to the Inquiry.

Commonwealth Integrity Commission

The Australian Government has released the exposure draft of legislation designed to establish the new Commonwealth Integrity Commission (CIC). The proposed jurisdiction for the CIC includes investigating potential corrupt conduct perpetrated by higher education providers and research bodies (in some circumstances). Universities Australia is seeking further information about the inclusion of universities within the scope of the CIC.

Safe Return of International Students

The Federal Minister for Education has indicated that states and territories should submit plans for the safe return of international students by the end of November. These plans are required to provide for quarantine arrangements outside of hotels. The Queensland universities, supported by Study Queensland, are working to prepare a submission.

Academic Integrity

UQ courses are required to have two or more pieces of assessment, and modes of assessment vary widely from oral presentations to invigilated examinations. COVID-19 impacted on assessment, requiring the University to shift quickly to the use of online assessment and away from invigilated examinations.

Across the course of the year, the University has seen a spike in allegations related to academic integrity. These are being considered by disciplinary boards at various levels. They involve collusion as well as contract cheating and plagiarism. A full analysis is underway. Further details will be provided to the Senate once all disciplinary and appeals processes have been finalised.

In response to a number of issues experienced during this period, a special Assessment Task Force has been formed to consider the specific issues raised by COVID-19. The University is also implementing the recommendations under the current Academic Integrity Implementation Plan and has instigated a number of other actions to strengthen academic integrity.

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Voluntary Separation Scheme

The University is in the process of finalising a Voluntary Separation Scheme, whereby employees voluntarily separate from the University and are provided an ex gratia payment. The scheme was available to all continuing staff (academic and professional). The application deadline for submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) was 16 October 2020.

School of Architecture – Change Proposal

A 'Proposal in Relation to Major Organisational Change' for the School of Architecture was released for consultation in November. The School of Architecture has enjoyed a strong reputation in the discipline for many years, however, it remains one of the few Schools in the country with a narrow architecture focus. The recommendations from the 2019 Septennial School Review highlighted the need for the School to broaden its academic profile to include the disciplines of architecture, design and urbanism.

The Proposal has been drafted in accordance with the procedure for Consultation in Relation to Major Organisational Change as outlined in the Enterprise Agreement. In response to a question from a Member, the Provost assured the Senate that the whole process was being conducted in strict accordance with the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

UQ Indigenous Research Strategy

A project team consisting of representatives from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement) areas have been working on the development of the UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Innovation Strategy. Consultation on the strategy has been extensive. The strategy will be launched in December 2020. It sets out a vision for UQ to leverage research as a tool of empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations. The strategy action plan is structured around three pillars: Research Excellence and Impact; People and Opportunities; and Enabling Environment.

Comments on the Dashboard

The following comments were made about items on the Dashboard –

The return of Higher Degree Research students will be slow. The possible slowing down in the pipeline has been taken into account.

Strengthening UQ's reputation will be a high priority next year.

The following matters were also in the Vice-Chancellor and President's Report –

Sector Update

- Campaign to Inspire Indigenous University Students
- Appointment of the Australian Chief Scientist
- Appointment of the TEQSA Commissioner

UQ Update

- UQ COVID-19 Vaccine

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- Conferral of Honorary Awards
- Southern Queensland Rural Health – Opening of Charleville Facility
- UQ Highly Cited Researchers 2020
- Australian Research Council Outcomes
- 2020 Universities Australia Marketing and Communications and Development Awards – UQ COVID-19 Vaccine Fundraiser
- Australian Financial Review Higher Education Awards

Strategic Matters

- Review of Student Disciplinary Policy and Process
- Other Organisational Changes
- P3 Update
- School Leadership, Capability and Development (SLCD) Project
- Age-Friendly University Global Network

Major Capital Works

- Andrew N. Liveris Building
- Student Services Centre
- Warwick Solar Farm
- UQ CBD – 308 Queen St
- Health and Recreation Centre Program
- Student Residences Project

Recent Activities

- NAIDOC Week
- Young Achievers Program Welcome and Celebration Event – 21 October 2020
- Courting the Greats – 28 October 2020
- Global Business Challenge Awards – 30 October 2020
- All Staff Forum – 5 November 2020

Rankings

- U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings 2021 Results
- Times Higher Education Reputation Ranking 2020
- Times Higher Education World University Rankings by Subject 2021

Executive Appointments and Structural Matters

- Research and Innovation Portfolio
- Chief Operating Officer

Strategic Matters

9. Report on review of student disciplinary policy and processes

Adjunct Professor John McKenna QC and Emeritus Professor Carol Dickenson AM (Panellists) attended the meeting for this item.

The Chancellor advised that Governance Committee had considered the first draft of the report at a special meeting on 16 November 2020. The Panellists had also attended this meeting. The Governance Committee endorsed the Report save for a small number of recommendations which required further clarification.

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These changes have now been made and were incorporated into the Report which was circulated with the agenda papers.

The Chancellor commended the Panellists for a clear and cogent report which comprehensively deals with the subject matter and which focuses on principles.

Professor Dickenson then presented on the Report and the following discussion took place –

The Chair of the Senate Disciplinary Appeals Committee supported the recommendations.

It was noted that the Senate Student Academic Appeals Committee (SSAAC) ought also not be a Senate Committee. For clarification it was noted that the SSAAC hears appeals relating to academic decisions. It does not hear misconduct matters.

The recent Senate evaluation had shown that students favoured that SDAC and SSAAC are Senate committees as this conveyed an independence from Management. There would be a greater need to demonstrate the independence of the appeal boards once they ceased being Senate committees.

The case was made by the Panellists to maintain an element of flexibility to enable the system to deal with difficult cases.

There needs to also be an emphasis in preventing misconduct cases from arising in the first place.

Senate could be assured of consistency of application across UQ by approving a suitable policy and framework, and through a comprehensive online reporting system to assist with Senate analysing trends. The reporting system would also allow faculties to compare with each other for consistency.

The Chancellor provided Members with an opportunity to raise any final comments and none were raised.

The Senate –

1. **Endorsed** the substance of the report, and
2. **Requested** that the Vice-Chancellor prepare an Implementation Plan to be provided to a future meeting of Senate.

10. Plan for development of 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

The Vice-Chancellor presented a 'Plan for the Development of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan'.

The current University Strategic Plan concludes at the end of 2021. The Vice-Chancellor provided Members with an indication of the timeline for the development of the new Plan, identification of key elements for review, and the consultation and communication strategy. Consultation will take place both within UQ (mostly with staff) and with key external stakeholders, including alumni.

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The development of the new Plan will provide an opportunity to refresh the Mission Statement and provide an opportunity for UQ to differentiate itself.

The Senate **noted** the proposed scope and timeline for the development of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan.

Academic Matters

11. Update from the Academic Board President

The Chancellor asked the President of the Academic Board if he would like to comment on academic integrity. Professor Adams replied that it was extremely difficult to achieve academic integrity in the online teaching and assessment space despite concerted efforts. Online teaching at universities is likely to continue and expand, and enhanced academic integrity must be addressed as a priority.

12. Professorial Confirmation and Promotions Report

The Professorial Confirmation and Promotions Committee Report dated 1 December 2020 was **noted**.

13. Academic Board Report

The Academic Board Report for the meeting held on 19 October 2020 was **noted**.

Financial / Operational Matters

14. UQ Preliminary Budget 2021

The Chair of the Finance Committee advised that the Finance Committee had resolved to recommend that Senate approve the UQ Preliminary Budget 2021 subject to:

1. Final confirmation of the financial impact of the VSS including expected savings going forward and discipline around the replacement process;
2. Clarity around how the additional \$96 million in research funding is to be utilised, including its possible use for proposed Liveris fit out, research infrastructure (e.g. Plant Growth Facility) and other research based costs;
3. Clarity around semester one 2021 student revenue, in particular international tuition fees;
4. Finalising the major capital projects for 2021 including holding of funding commitments on a number of projects until the outcome of the 31 March census is known; and
5. Protocols relating to hiring of staff and discretionary spend remain in place to some extent.

The Senate **approved** the UQ Preliminary Budget 2021, as circulated with the agenda papers, subject to the provisos applied by the Finance Committee.

15. Health and Recreation Centre Revised Business Case

Mr Fabby Ernesta, Director of the Property & Facilities Division, and Dr Jaques Liebenberg, Director of the Strategic Project Office joined the meeting for this item.

The Chief Operating Officer spoke to the Health and Recreation Centre Revised Business Case.

In December 2019, the Senate approved the business case for the Health and Recreation Centre with a budget of \$64.5 million. Post Senate approval, the design of the approved scheme continued and construction was intended to commence in the second half of 2020. However, in March 2020, the former Vice-Chancellor announced that construction (along with a number of other capital projects) would be put on hold until the impacts of COVID-19 on the University could be understood.

Given the review of UQ's capital programs due to COVID-19 impacts, and also considering the ongoing structural issues with Building 25, options that would deliver the intended benefits of HARC, at a lower (or staged) capital cost, have been considered.

UQ has also made changes to teaching and learning, invested in additional flat floor teaching space (ModWest and Liveris Building) and a proposal was developed to invest in the UQ Centre to overcome current limitations to transform the space for teaching. In 2019, UQ determined that investment in teaching space should be on a purpose-built facility, rather than retro-fitting the Exhibition Hall.

When the HARC Program construction was paused consideration was given to options that would achieve the program benefits at a lower capital cost and with greater utilisation of existing assets. These changes presented an opportunity to revise the HARC design and consider other options that will maximise utilisation of existing infrastructure (i.e. the UQ Centre).

The Senate **resolved** –

1. To proceed with the design, procurement and construction of the revised Health and Recreation Centre scheme, which is expected to be operational from the late 2022/early 2023;
2. For the design outcomes, including for the façade, to be subject to a competitive design process, with designs to be presented to the Campus Infrastructure Committee;
3. For UQ Sport to begin shared use of the Exhibition Hall in the UQ Centre in 2022; and
4. Accordingly, for the capital cost of the Health and Recreation Centre program to be revised from \$64.9 million to \$51.15 million.

Dir. P&F

Following the Senate's approval, the project will go into the design phase which will include student consultation and consultation with the Indigenous Design Working Party.

16. UQ Future Fund - additional investment

The Senate –

1. **Approved** the transfer of, in aggregate, up to \$200 million from UQ's short and medium-term pools to the long-term pool i.e. the UQ Future Fund; and
2. **Authorised** the Chief Financial Officer to give effect to this decision.

CFO

17. Fair Work Ombudsman concerns regarding underpayment in universities

A letter dated 3 November 2020 had been sent from the Fair Work Ombudsman to Vice-Chancellors and Chancellors across Australia, advising that the Fair Work Ombudsman was investigating a number of universities for wage underpayments. In response, the Chief Human Resources Officer had prepared a paper dated 20 November 2020 for the Senate.

The paper outlined a plan to undertake an audit of casual academic work and pay arrangements. Appropriate external expert advice will be sought.

CHRO

18. UQ Finance Report - September 2020

The UQ Finance Report for the quarter ended 30 September 2020 was **noted**.

19. 25 Year Service Awards

Senate recorded its appreciation in recognition of long service to members of professional and research staff.

Governance Matters

20. Senate and Academic Board Elections Policy

A Member queried the deletion of 5.7 in the Electoral Code. The question was taken on notice.

Sec.

The Senate **approved** the Senate and Academic Board Elections Policy, as circulated with the agenda papers, subject to the question on notice being answered to the satisfaction of the Member.

[The question was subsequently resolved and the Policy and Code were published as per the version circulated with the agenda papers.]

21. Amendment to Finance Committee Terms of Reference

The Senate **resolved** to update the Finance Committee Terms of Reference, as outlined in the agenda papers.

Sec.

22. Appointment to Senate Committees

The Senate **resolved** that Dr Catherine Lawrence and Ms Gabrielle Starr be appointed to the Advancement Committee with effect from 29 October 2020.

Sec.

Senate Committee Reports

23. Advancement Committee

The Advancement Committee Report for December 2020 was **noted**.

The Chair of the Advancement Committee advised that \$85.17m had been raised so far this year, taking the *Not if, When* Campaign total to \$588.71m. The original target was \$500m but indications are that the campaign may reach \$600m before the end of the year.

The Committee welcomes the opportunity to activate partnerships through Senate networks.

On behalf of the Advancement Committee, Mr Crommelin welcomed Ms Gabii Starr and Dr Catherine Lawrence as members. Mr Crommelin also thanked Ms Jennifer Karlson, PVC (Advancement) and the Advancement team for their immense effort during this difficult year.

24. Campus Infrastructure Committee

The Campus Infrastructure Committee Report for the meeting held on 11 November 2020 was **noted**.

25. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report for the meeting held on 9 November 2020 was **noted**.

The Chair of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee noted that the recent external Senate evaluation had recommended that the Senate consider making the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee a committee of management reporting to the Vice-Chancellor. However, there was widespread consensus that the Committee should remain a Senate Committee. The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor for her interest and support in the work of the Committee.

The Chair encouraged Members to register for the Core Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Learning online course. The course aims to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability of organisations and employees. Members may contact the PVC (Indigenous Engagement) if they are interested.

Members

26. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee Report for the meeting held on 24 November 2020 was **noted**.

27. Governance Committee

The Governance Committee Report for the meeting held on 12 November 2020 was **noted**.

28. Risk and Audit Committee

The Risk and Audit Committee Report for the meeting held on 24 November 2020 was **noted**.

Other Matters for Noting

29. UQ Significant Litigation Report

The Significant Litigation Report dated 18 November 2020 was **noted**.

30. Senate Annual Calendar

The Senate Annual Calendar was **noted**.

31. Any Other BusinessFarewell to Chief Operating Officer

The Chancellor noted that the Chief Operating Officer, Mr Greg Pringle, would be leaving UQ in December. Since joining UQ in January 2016, Mr Pringle played a key role in managing the many professional services that are the backbone of this institution and has overseen a number of major capital projects that will position the University well for future success. On behalf of the Senate, the Chancellor thanked him for his contribution and wished him all the best for the future.

32. Meeting Dates 2021-2022

The UQ Senate meetings 2021-2022 were **noted**.