Minutes of Senate held on 18 April 2023
at 4:30pm in the Senate Room, Level 5
Brian Wilson Chancellery

Minutes Confirmed on 27 June 2023

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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), Ms J Alroe, Ms S Atkinson AO, Ms C Chalmers, Ms A Cross AM, Dr L Duffield, Ms E Scott, Professor C Franklin, Professor G Hainge, Mr P Hennessy AO, HHJ N Jarro, Mr R Jones, Mr R Lee, Professor K Lyons, Mr G Murdoch, Dr M Naidoo, Adjunct Professor Dr S Pitkin AO, Ms C Wake and Dr D Willox.
In attendance: Provost, Professor Aidan Byrne, Chief Operating Officer, Mr A Flannery; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Kris Ryan; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor M Blows; Vice-President (Advancement & Community Engagement), Ms Jennifer Karlson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement), Professor Bronwyn Fredericks, Chief Financial Officer, Ms G Jukes; General Counsel, Ms C Seeto; Marketing and Communication Officer, Ms Kelly Robinson; Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President, Ms Joanne Connah.
Secretary: Ms S Spencer.

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 respects 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 everyone to the meeting. No apologies were noted.

3. Request for Approval of Starred Items
The Chancellor noted the intention to discuss developments regarding the Voice referendum under Other Business (Item 24) on the agenda, and the appointment to the UQ Endowment Fund (Item 21).

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 for April 2023 were circulated with the agenda and noted.

The Chancellor provided Members with an opportunity to advise of any changes to the interests circulated. Professor Lyons advised that she had stood down from Solar Citizens.

The Chancellor provided Members with an opportunity to declare any perceived, potential, or actual conflict with any of the meeting agenda items. It was noted that Professor Franklin would leave the room for Item 12 (Extension to the Term of the Academic Board President).

5. Confirmation of minutes
The minutes of the confidential meeting, and meeting, held on 21 February 2023, having been circulated, were confirmed.

6. Matters arising from previous Senate meeting
The report on matters arising from previous meetings was noted.

7. Update from the Chancellor
The Chancellor discussed the following during his update:

- The University Chancellors’ Council (UCC) made a submission to the Australian Universities Accord Discussion Paper, which was compiled by Professor Stephen Parker from the perspective of Chancellors, and was intended to supplement other submissions to the Accord Panel, with a focus on governance and financial sustainability.

- At its recent meeting, Governance Committee discussed the statutory obligations in place for universities and the implications for institutional autonomy. This had been prompted by correspondence with the Queensland Government about the alignment of the University’s strategic plan to the Government’s objectives for the community, and its consultation regarding the potential application of the Building Policy Framework to statutory bodies. Given the range and complexity of obligations on the University (with more than 400 pieces of legislation), it was agreed that a case-by-case approach would be implemented, and the University would engage directly with government on specific issues where there was a likely impact on university autonomy.

- The UCC plenary meeting will be held on 20 April 2023 in Sydney. Members from the University Accord panel will be speaking at the event. UCC also planned to commission a research paper on the reputational and societal impacts of universities, noting that the role and contribution of universities is often dominated by the economic contribution and employment benefits, rather than the broader enrichment of societies and communities. The paper will be designed to encapsulate this impact for use in public advocacy. UCC also planned to discuss the Voice with respect to the importance of universities in promoting a considered discussion of the issues.
• At its recent meeting, Governance Committee also discussed the self-evaluation of Senate to take place this year. Senate undertook an independent formal evaluation in 2020, as required under the TEQSA Threshold Standards. This year, a self-evaluation will be conducted to draw on the views of Senate and how it is functioning.

8. **Vice-Chancellor and President’s Report**

The Vice-Chancellor raised two proposed changes to senior staff titles to Senate, as follows:

i. The appointment of Professor Bronwyn Fredericks (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Engagement) to the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement) to reflect Professor Fredericks’ achievements over the past five years; and UQ’s commitment to Indigenous engagement across all activities.

ii. An update to the title for Ms Jen Karlson (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Advancement and Community Engagement) to Vice-President (Advancement and Community Engagement) for alignment with current practice across other Go8 universities and the United States.

The Vice-Chancellor’s written report was noted. Taking her report as read, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following items:

• Key achievements for UQ included:
  − Dr Poh Wah Hillock (School of Mathematics and Physics) was awarded the University Teacher of the Year 2022.
  − UQ ranked in 50 subjects on the 2023 QS World University Rankings by Subject, which showed genuine capability across these areas.
  − UQ received the highest amount of funding nationally in the 2022 Australian Research Council (ARC) National Competitive Grants Program, securing 18 per cent ($177m) of the national funding pool.

• UQ’s response to the Australian Universities Accord Discussion Paper had now been published on the Department of Education’s website. Around 300 submissions were received across a broad range of stakeholders including students, staff, unions, peak bodies, policy experts and other universities.

• UQ recently participated in two senior executive missions. This included the Australian Ministerial delegation to India which provided the opportunity for UQ to renew the Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. Members of the senior executive also travelled to China and Hong Kong, which included meeting with partners across a number of universities.

• The Premier announced the Paralympic Centre of Excellence on 22 March at the 2032 Legacy Forum. UQ will finalise the business case for presentation to Senate, including the planned philanthropic strategy. The centre will be a genuine legacy for UQ, with opportunities for synergy with the Health and Recreation Precinct.

• The Vice-Chancellor provided a financial update following Census Date on 31 March 2023. As noted in the report from Senate Finance Committee, UQ’s position was better than expected with respect to domestic undergraduate students, and international student intake have returned to 2019 levels. However, the increased international load target was not realised. In addition, the Research Block Grant was less than anticipated. The Chair of the Finance Committee provided an update on the predicted EBITDA for 2023, noting the intent to identify cost efficiencies to support a sustainable position going forward. The Vice-Chancellor added that senior staff from across the University came together on 5 April 2023 and discussed a 3-year plan to return to 10% EBITDA. This plan has been articulated in a program of work titled Project 2025.
9. Development of UQ’s Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

Professor Bronwyn Fredericks (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Engagement) presented on the development of UQ’s Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This addressed the five dimensions of Reconciliation, the core pillars of Reconciliation, and Reconciliation Australia’s RAP Framework. Professor Fredericks also provided an overview of UQ’s Reconciliation journey, following the development of UQ’s Innovate RAP which commenced in 2017, and highlighted key achievements which included procurement practices, and improved Indigenous employment and enrolment numbers.

Professor Fredericks provided an overview of the development process for UQ’s Stretch RAP. It was noted that consultation workshops had been held across UQ’s campuses and online which received strong interest.

The Chancellor thanked Professor Fredericks for her update to Senate.

Academic Matters

10. Update from the Academic Board President

The President of the Academic Board referred to his written report which covered the notable items from the 3 March 2023 Academic Board meeting.

At the March meeting, a discussion was held with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (DVCA) on generative artificial intelligence (AI). It was noted that the University was dealing with AI in a coherent manner in response to the challenges it presented. This included communications from the DVCA to students about the use of AI and plagiarism, as well as a review of assessment practices, policy and procedures. A member noted from a risk management perspective, the need for the AI risk review to extend to the broader operations of the university. The Vice-Chancellor agreed that this would be worked through with management together with the Senate Risk and Audit Committee.

11. Academic Board Report

The Academic Board Report was noted.

12. Extension of Term of Academic Board President to 2024

Professor Craig Franklin left the room for this discussion.

The Chancellor noted that formal approval from Senate was sought to extend Professor Craig Franklin’s term as President of the Academic Board to 31 December 2024. This would be the maximum term of three years under the UQ Act. The Chancellor noted that the requirements of the Academic Board policy had been met which allowed for Senate oversight of the appointment, and for Academic Board to ratify that decision.

No objections were raised, and pursuant to section 35A of The University of Queensland Act, Senate approved the appointment of Professor Craig Franklin as President of the Academic Board to 31 December 2024.

Governance Matters

13. Modern Slavery Statement

The Vice-Chancellor noted that Senate approval was sought for UQ’s Modern Slavery Statement for the financial year ended 31 December 2022. This would be UQ’s third statement in this important area. The statement was reviewed and endorsed by Senate Governance Committee.

With respect to the risks in the supply chain, a member recommended tracking UQ’s percentage of spend against the procurement categories year-on-year. Subsequent to the meeting, it was confirmed that this occurs.
Senate resolved to:

- **Approve** UQ’s Modern Slavery Statement for the financial year ending 31 December 2022; and
- **Authorise** the Vice-Chancellor to sign the Statement on behalf of UQ.

14. **Review of the Delegation from Senate to the Vice-Chancellor**

The Chancellor noted that a review of Senate’s delegation of powers to the Vice-Chancellor had been undertaken to ensure that it was fit for purpose. Senate had been asked to lift the financial delegation from $30m to $35m to reflect the increased cost of goods and services. However, Senate would reserve the approval of: (a) business cases for major capital projects and programs of work; and (b) the power to establish, disestablish and rename UQ’s Faculties and Institutes.

Senate considered the revised Instrument of Delegation (Instrument). In response to a question from a member regarding the deletion of references to the previous section 34 of the UQ Act from the Instrument, the Chancellor noted that this provision relating to the establishment of colleges was repealed from the UQ Act (together with other Queensland public university Acts) with effect from 2018. The Chancellor noted that an amendment to the proposed Instrument would be made to address this deletion and retain Senate oversight of the establishment and disestablishment of educational colleges, and Senate’s relationship with the residential colleges.

Senate resolved to:

- **Approve** the amendments to the Delegations Policy;
- **Approve** the updated Instrument of Delegation to the Vice-Chancellor of Senate’s Power, subject to the amendment regarding Senate’s relationship to the colleges as discussed at the meeting; and
- **Authorise the Chancellor** to sign the updated Instrument of Delegation, as amended.

15. **UQ Governance and Management Framework**

The Chancellor noted that proposed amendments to the UQ Governance and Management Framework had been circulated. The policy was reviewed under the regular policy review cycle and had been endorsed by Governance Committee.

Senate approved the revised UQ Governance and Management Framework.

**Senate Committee Reports**

16. **Advancement and Community Engagement**

The Advancement and Community Engagement Committee update was **noted**.

17. **Campus Infrastructure**

The report of the Campus Infrastructure Committee was **noted**.

18. **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

The report of the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee was **noted**.

19. **Finance Committee**

The report of the Finance Committee was **noted** and discussed during Item 7 (Report from the Vice-Chancellor).

20. **Governance Committee**

The report of the Governance Committee was **noted**.
Other Matters for Noting

21. Notice of Appointment of Responsible Person Director to Board of UQ Endowment Fund

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the UQ Endowment Fund was established in 2010 by Andrew Brice and Graeme Wood, the Wotif.com founders, as a private ancillary fund established in 2010. It has been a vehicle for benefactors to contribute to UQ, and of great importance to the University. It is governed by its own constitution which included representation from UQ on its board for strategic alignment. A vacancy had arisen on the board of directors, and was proposed for Ms Rebecca Brice to be appointed. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the board of directors supported this nomination. The constitution of the UQ Endowment Fund required consultation with Senate on the proposed nomination.

No objections were raised, and Senate noted the appointment of Ms Rebecca Brice, as a responsible person director to the board of UQ Endowment Fund.

22. UQ Significant Litigation Report

The Significant Litigation Report for February 2023 was noted.

23. Senate Annual Calendar 2023

The Senate Annual Calendar 2023 was noted.

Other Business

The Chancellor recalled Senate’s resolution passed on 22 September 2022 on its position with regard to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and its call for a First Nations Voice. The Chancellor queried whether there had been any developments since September that would require Senate to revisit this position.

Senate discussed the Voice at length, and a range of views were expressed. This included agreement that the University as an institution had a role to play in promoting debate and discussion regarding the issues as to what a Voice enshrined in the constitution would mean.

Senate also noted the relevance of the issue to the University’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

It was noted that the wording of the referendum had not yet been decided, and the Chancellor suggested that Senate continue the discussion as the proposed form of the question becomes clearer.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm