

Confirmed on 29 April 2025

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Attendance:

Present: Mr P N Varghese AO (Chancellor), Ms T Dwyer (Deputy Chancellor), Professor D Terry AC (Vice-Chancellor and President), Ms J Alroe, Ms S Atkinson AO (via Zoom), Ms C Chalmers, Ms A Cross AM, Dr L Duffield, Professor G Hainge, Mr P Hennessy AO, HHJ N Jarro, Professor L Kavanagh, Mr R Jones, Mr R Lee, Professor K Lyons, Mr J Marsh, Mr G Murdoch, Ms C Wake (via Zoom) and Dr D Willox.

Apologies: Dr M Naidoo and Mr J Titman.

UQ In Attendance:

Present: Provost, Professor M Blows; Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor P Bonnington; Vice-President (Advancement & Community Engagement), Ms J Karlson; Chief Financial Officer, Ms G Jukes; General Counsel, Ms C Seeto; Director of Communications, Ms S McMullins; Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President, Ms J Connah; and Mr J Trinder, Associate Director, Workplace Health & Safety Division (for Item 13).

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 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

2. Welcome and apologies

The Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting, and welcomed Professor Lydia Kavanagh to her first meeting of Senate as the President of the Academic Board

The Chancellor noted apologies from Ms M Naidoo and Mr J Titman.

The Chancellor noted the apology from Mr Jaafar Jabur who would be in attendance at Senate this year as the UQ Union President and looked forward to welcoming Mr Jabur to the next meeting.

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 were circulated with the agenda and noted. Updates to interests were noted for Ms A Cross, Mr G Murdoch and Dr D Willox. The Chancellor provided members with an opportunity to advise of any changes to the interests circulated.

The Chancellor provided Members with an opportunity to declare any perceived, potential, or actual conflict with any of the meeting agenda items.

5. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2024, having been circulated, were **confirmed**.

6. Matters arising from previous Senate meeting

There were no new matters arising from the previous Senate meeting.

7. Update from the Chancellor

The Chancellor noted that the university sector was moving into 2025 facing increased external scrutiny. The Parliament of Australia Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment announced two inquiries into the sector this year conducted by its Legislation Committee.

The 'Quality of governance at Australian Higher education providers' inquiry would consider a range of corporate governance issues. UQ intended to make a submission to this inquiry emphasising that effective governance could not be separated from effective performance. The submission would highlight its effective performance in a number of areas and would also point to the compliance burden on universities, noting that UQ was subject to 420 state and federal legislative controls and regulatory requirements. The increasing compliance burden on universities risked impacting the ability of universities to deliver on their core purpose.

The second inquiry related to the *Tertiary Education Legislation Amendment (There for Education, Not Profit) Bill 2025* proposed by Senator Jacqui Lambie which proposed setting a statutory limit on the remuneration of Vice-Chancellors of Australian universities. While UQ had not planned a submission to this inquiry, the Chancellor noted concern regarding the mechanism of using regulatory agencies to achieve the objective of placing a cap on senior executive salaries. Universities operated in a public space, and should be accountable, however there is a need to ensure that universities can exercise autonomy while operating in accordance with regulatory frameworks.

The Chancellor briefed Senate on the joint workshop of Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors which was held in February to discuss the issue of social licence facing the sector with agreement to establish a Steering Committee on this issue.

8. Vice-Chancellor and President's Report

The Vice-Chancellor's written report and dashboard reports were **noted**. Taking her reports as read, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following items:

- Congratulations to Professor Tracey Bunda, Professor of Indigenous Education, who had been honoured with a Career Achievement Award recognising her leadership over her 35-year career in Indigenous education and research.
- In 2024, UQ ranked first nationally on the prestigious Nature Index Research Leaders (up from 2nd position in 2023). The Nature Index is a measure of global high-quality research output and collaboration, based on contributions to articles published in top-tier natural science and health science journals.
- UQ secured the highest amount of Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) funding nationally in 2024 with 31 successful applications receiving 17.3% of the total amount awarded to universities (\$92.3m).
- UQ has received \$237m in funding to host the Solutions for Manufacturing Advanced Regenerative Therapies (SMART) CRC working with 63 partners across industry and government. The SMART CRC will assist Australian biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies to manufacture treatments that will cure diseases by repairing and regenerating human cells, tissues or organs. Congratulations to Professor Justin-Cooper White and Professor Simon Cool (School of Chemical Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology) and Dr Sarah Costanzo (UQ's Strategic Partnerships Office), as well as the many other contributors from around UQ.
- The Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Sciences (HMBS) came into effect on 1 January 2025. The University welcomed Professor Danny Liew, the Executive Dean of HMBS, on 20 January 2025. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged staff across the University involved in the planning and establishment of the new Faculty.
- An update was provided on enrolments for semester 1, noting a growth in domestic and international student enrolments.
- The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights had finalised its inquiry into antisemitism in Australian universities and provided recommendations for the sector. The University is on track to implement its recommendations.
- The Department of Industry, Science and Resources is undertaking a strategic examination of the research and development (R&D) system in Australia. The review sought input on how the Australian Government could strengthen Australia's R&D performance to drive productivity and foster economic growth. UQ will be making a submission to the review, re-iterating a number of points made to the Universities Accord process.

Members discussed the Vice-Chancellor's update. In response to a question from a member, the Vice-Chancellor noted that the Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) had been monitoring the impact of changes to US research grant funding at UQ.

Strategic Matters

9. 2024 Strategic KPI Report and Draft 2025 Plan on a Page

The Vice-Chancellor referred to the 2024 Strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Report circulated in the agenda. The report detailed UQ's progress against these KPIs for 2024.

Members discussed the KPI report. In response to questions from members, the Vice-Chancellor noted that:

- UQ's Queensland Commitment Roadmap outlined 58 strategic actions to improve equitable access to education by 2032. In line with the Roadmap, the University planned to increase philanthropic support towards needs-based scholarship support for students from underrepresented groups.

- To enhance the 'sense of belonging' in students, the University would continue its focus on participation in extra-curricular activities. Review of the qualitative survey data would also allow nuanced approaches in local operating areas. Additional initiatives for students in generalist degree programs would be delivered, where it was harder to engender a sense of belonging as the student population was more diffused.
- The University had commenced work on the next Strategic Plan (2026 – 2029) and discussions would be scheduled to upcoming meetings with Senate regarding the key themes (objectives, strategies and performance measures).

The Vice-Chancellor presented the draft 2025 Plan on a Page to Senate. Members had an in-depth discussion regarding the strategies and made contributions to strengthen the 'Pillars' and 'Enablers' set out in the plan. This included incorporating references to the University's focus on sense of belonging; research to address contemporary and future challenges; contributions to national and regional engagement; and leadership development offerings for staff.

10. **Go8 definition on combatting antisemitism**

The Vice-Chancellor noted that as Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, Jillian Segal had been working in consultation with the Go8 on two major pieces of work: 1) The development of a shared definition of antisemitism as it related to the sector; and 2) The development of antisemitism training packages for university leaders and relevant staff. The Go8 definition was circulated to Senate in the agenda. Universities Australia had unanimously agreed to adopt the Go8 definition. The University was also working to finalise the the Anti-Racism Commitment, and as part of this work would continue liaison with the Special Envoy to combat Islamophobia.

Senate resolved to:

- **Endorse** the Go8 definition on combatting antisemitism as part of UQ's Anti-Racism Commitment; and
- **Note** that an additional body of work will be undertaken to determine how best to implement the Anti-Racism Commitment at UQ, with further updates to be provided to Senate.

Academic Matters

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

The President of the Academic Board provided a verbal update to Senate, noting the following:

1. The President held discussions with members of the University Senior Executive Team (USET) at the start of semester and discussed the growth in first preferences for UQ and planning for the increased demands on teaching facilities and laboratories. USET was developing the Space Management Strategy which would seek to address these challenges.
2. The number of examination sittings for semester 1 was estimated to increase to 24,000 (up from 15,000) due to the increase in domestic student numbers and use of examinations as a verified assessment tool in response to the impact of generative AI.
3. A review of the Academic Board Standing Committee was being undertaken to address recommendations from the review of Academic Board.
4. The President welcomed a two-way dialogue with Senate on emerging topics that could benefit from input from the Academic Board.

Financial / Operational Matters

12. UQ 2024 Annual Report and Financial Statements

12.1 UQ 2024 Annual Report

The Vice-Chancellor referred to the 2024 Annual Report circulated in the agenda, which had been provided for Senate input. The report set out UQ's operational performance for the year against the reporting requirements set by the Queensland Government for statutory bodies. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Annual Report had been compiled through contributions across the University, with particular thanks to the Marketing and Communications team.

12.2 UQ Financial Statements 2024

The Chair of Senate Risk and Audit Committee noted that the committee met on 19 February 2025 and recommended for Senate to approve the 2024 Financial Statements and authorise signatures to the Management Certificate. At that meeting, the committee conducted a page-turn of the financial statements. The Committee confirmed that the financial report has been approved by management.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Chief Financial Officer and the Finance and Business Services team who had worked closely with the Queensland Audit Office on the preparation of these statements.

The Chancellor thanked the Chairs of Finance and Audit and Risk Committees, as well as the Chief Financial Officer and the Finance and Business Services team for delivering the financial statements.

Senate **resolved** to:

- **Note** the 2024 Annual Report.
- **Approve** the 2024 Financial Statements; and
- **Authorise** the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer to sign the Management Certificate of the audited statutory Financial Statements for 2024.

Governance Matters

13. 2024 Health, Safety and Wellness Annual Report and HSW Goals Report

Ms Jennie Trinder, Acting Director, Health, Safety and Wellness in attendance for item.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Health, Safety and Wellness (HSW) Annual Report and HSW Goals Report were provided to Senate annually. The annual report outlined the University's health, safety and wellness performance in 2024. The KPI report set out the University's performance across a range of indicators in line with the HSW Strategy (2022 – 2026). USET reviewed the reports and agreed its response to areas of focus and improvement this year. The University had performed well in areas such as mandatory training, review of local safety risk registers, auditing risk assessments, local wellness initiatives, and safety walks. The University would also maintain its focus on psychosocial risk with further work to continue this year to embed risk management approaches across the University.

Senate **noted** the 2024 HSW Annual Report and HSW Goals reports.

Senate Committee Reports

14. Risk and Audit Committee and SRAC Annual Report

The Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee thanked the Director of Governance Risk and the Risk Management team, for uplifting the maturity of the University's risk processes in 2024. In particular, the enhanced reporting on psychosocial risk, which allowed the University to consider and address associated risks.

The report of the Risk and Audit Committee was **noted**.

The 2024 Annual Report of the Risk and Audit Committee was **noted**.

Other Matters for Noting**15. Senate Elections 2025 – Additional Information**

The additional information regarding the administration of the Senate elections in 2024 was **noted**.

16. Senate Annual Calendar 2025

The Senate Annual Calendar 2025 was **noted**.

17. UQ Significant Litigation Report

The Significant Litigation Report for February 2025 was **noted**.

18. 2025 Meeting Dates

The 2025 Senate meeting dates were **noted**.

19. Any Other Business

The meeting closed at 7.05pm

The next meeting of Senate is scheduled for Tuesday, 29 April 2025.