

University Council Minutes

The University Council met at the Inveresk Campus in Room 403a and by video conference (via Zoom) on Wednesday 30 August 2023 from 9.30am.

Members: The Chancellor (Ms Alison Watkins AM) as Chair, Vice-Chancellor (Professor Rufus Black), Professor Natalie Brown, Ms Karina Groenewoud, Mr James Groom, Ms Sarah-Jayne Hall, Ms Tara Howell, Ms Alicia Leis, Ms Ariane Moore, Associate Professor Ashley Townsend, and Ms Sheree Vertigan AM.

In attendance: Professor Ian Anderson AO (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic), Mr Craig Barling (Head, Student Services and Operations), Ms Kristen Derbyshire (Chief People Officer), Professor Anthony Koutoulis (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research) and Ms Kate Huntington (Executive Director, Strategic Communications) attended for all items other than members only. Ms Sally Paynter attended as University Secretary.

By invitation: Mr Brodie Emery (Remuneration and Performance Lead)
Mr Phil Leersen (Executive Director, Campus Services)
Professor Mitch Parsell (Deputy Vice-Cha
Mr Ben Rose (Chief Financial Officer)
Ms Michelle Weir (Chief Marketing Officer)

Apologies: Emeritus Professor Peter Dawkins AO has been granted a leave of absence.

1 MEMBERS ONLY

1.1 * Members Only

University Council met in closed session without the Vice-Chancellor in attendance and discussed the terms of reference and current membership of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee. Members resolved to review the membership of the Committee and to seek to expand the current composition to include more members. It was agreed that as part of the external review of University Council planned for 2024 that the composition and terms of reference of all Council committee would be reviewed to ensure best governance practice.

Vice-Chancellor Rufus Black and Kristen Derbyshire joined the meeting at 9.55am

The Vice-Chancellor and Chief People Officer provided University Council with a confidential update on a matter involving a former employee. Members noted that an immediate outcome of the investigation included a review of workplace culture in the relevant academic unit and that the relevant controls are in place to ensure serious complaints are actioned and managed appropriately as required by the University's policies and procedures.

1.2 * Items to be starred / Motions on Unstarred Items

The motions relating to the remaining unstarred items were passed in a block:

- Item 1.3.2 University Council Committee Membership
- Item 1.5.1 Amendment to Qualifications and Certification Policy
- Item 1.5.3 Nomination for Honorary Degree
- Item 1.5.4 Nomination for a Fellow of the University
- Item 1.5.5 Amendment to Honorary Academic Title Policy and Procedure
- Item 1.5.6 Nomination for Professor Emeritus
- Item 1.5.7 Recognition through Naming
- Item 5.3 Research Training Ordinance

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.2

University Council **adopted** the recommendations and reports presented as unstarred items without discussion.

Brodie Emery joined the meeting at 10.19am

1.3 * Report from Remuneration and Nominations Committee

1.3.1 * Senior Manager and Executive Remuneration Model

University Council considered a Senior Manager and Executive Remuneration Model and discussed the principles that guide the University's remuneration decisions and the proposed process for regular monitoring, reporting and oversight of the remuneration model long term. Members considered the proposed minor amendments to the Remuneration and Nomination Committee terms of reference to provide for a strengthened oversight role on remuneration matters and providing regular check in opportunity between the Chief People Officer and the Remuneration and Nominations Committee.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.3.1(1)

University Council **approved** the Remuneration Model including:

- Remuneration principles that guide the University's remuneration decisions, which promote pay for purpose, equity, continuous development, financial sustainability, and transparent governance.
- A classification structure for senior and executive positions.
- Key indicators for regular reporting and oversight to support effective management of remuneration over the long term.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.3.1(2)

University Council **approved** proposed amendments to the Remuneration and Nominations Committee's Terms of Reference to reflect the role of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee in governance of the model.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.3.1(3)

University Council **noted** the remuneration model project update and implementation plan.

Brodie Emery left the meeting at 10.50am

1.3.2 * University Council Committee Membership Update

University Council did not discuss this item.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.3.2(1)

University Council approved the extension of the current term for Deputy Chancellor James Groom as Chair of the Strategic Resourcing Committee to conclude on 31 December 2024.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.3.2(2)

University Council approved the extension of the current term for Council member Tara Howell to membership of the Strategic Resourcing Committee to conclude on 1 April 2024.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.3.2(3)

University Council approved the extension of the current term for Council member Professor Peter Dawkins to membership of the Strategic Resourcing Committee to conclude on 1 June 2024

1.4 * Report from Extended Nominations Committee

University Council unanimously supported the recommendation from the Extended Nominations Committee for the appointment of a new member of University Council in the category of University Council appointed member., Members noted that an announcement would be made once the official term for the new member commenced on 1 November 2023.

Reference-

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.4

1.5 * Report from the Ceremonial and Honorary Degrees Committee

1.5.1 Amendment to Qualifications and Certification Policy

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.5.1

University Council **approved** the proposed amendments to the University's *Qualifications and Certification Policy*.

1.5.2 * Revocation of Honorary Degree

University Council unanimously approved the recommendation to revoke the Honorary Degree conferred upon Peter Rathjen in 2017 noting that the revocation of the honour is necessary to protect

the integrity of the award where the recipient has been found to have behaved in a manner that is contrary to the University's values and a commitment to ensure a workplace free of sexual assault, bullying, harassment and retaliation. Members confirmed that Peter Rathjen would be advised in writing of the decision and all references to the conferral of the award will be removed from the University's website.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.5.2

University Council **revoked** the Honorary Degree Doctor of Letters (DLitt) from Peter Rathjen, effective immediately.

1.5.3 Nomination for Honorary Degree

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Reference- Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.5.3

1.5.4 Nomination for a Fellow of the University

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Reference – Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.5.4

1.5.5 Amendment to Honorary Academic Title Policy and Procedure

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.5.5

University Council **approved** the proposed amendments to the University's *Academic Promotions, Honorary and Adjunct Titles Policy* and *Honorary Academic Titles Procedure*.

1.5.6 Nomination for Professor Emeritus

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.5.6

University Council **approved** the nomination of Professor Andrew McMinn (Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, College of Sciences and Engineering) for Professor Emeritus.

1.5.7 Recognition through Naming

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-1.5.7

University Council **approved** the renaming of Meeting Room 212 at IMAS Tarooma to 'the Harrison Room', in honour of Mr Tony Harrison.

2. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Ian Anderson, Craig Barling, Kristen Derbyshire, Kate Huntington and Anthony Koutoulis joined the meeting at 11.05am

2.1 * Introductory Items

Welcome and Apologies

The Chancellor welcomed members and noted one apology from Emeritus Professor Peter Dawkins AO.

Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest noted.

Minutes

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-2.1(1)

University Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meetings held on 28th June 2023 as a true and accurate record.

Actions

Council noted the update on action items.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-2.1(2)

University Council **received** the report showing progress on all outstanding items from previous Council meetings.

University Council agreed to consider agenda items out of order as follows:

4. STANDING ITEMS

4.1 * Community and Stakeholder Engagement Update

The Chancellor invited members to share their insights and any identified themes through various engagement opportunities and conversations with stakeholders and highlighting any specific areas requiring strategic focus and communication. Key themes discussed included strengthening industry connections and workforce engagement, responding to the changing workforce, measuring community sentiment, and strengthening the communication of the University's strategic mission. Members noted that the October meeting of Council would provide opportunity to explore these themes through the strategic planning process and to determine how best to communicate the University's future strategic direction.

4.2 * Chair Academic Senate Update and Report

The Chair, Academic Senate updated members on the major items considered by Academic Senate at its meeting on 30 June including a presentation from the Director of Higher Education Integrity at the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) on academic integrity. The three areas of focus for the TEQSA Academic Integrity Unit included contract cheating, cyber security, and generative artificial intelligence (AI). Members noted that the use of generative AI and its impact on learning and teaching is disruptive to the sector and that UTAS was considered well prepared in terms of how it had responded to the challenges to date and was well placed to inform the national response to the use of generative AI.

Members noted that the TUSA President had advised Senate that student feedback received for semester 1 had been positive, particularly in relation to increased student presence on campus and student satisfaction with classes but that students were also experiencing ongoing food and housing insecurity and difficulty balancing work and study demands, including those students experiencing financial hardship due to their participation in professional placements as part of their degree. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic advised that he was co-designing with TUSA potential options to address accommodation and food insecurity for students and that this work was intended to be completed by December with members requesting an update on the work for the December meeting of Council.

Action: The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic to provide an update to University Council meeting on 4 December 2023 on outcomes of the co-design work with TUSA on options for students experiencing accommodation and food insecurity.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-4.2

University Council **received and noted** the report from the Academic Senate meeting held on 30 June 2023.

4.3 * Vice-Chancellor's Update

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update as part of the Members Only discussion at item 1.1 on this agenda.
Mitch Parsell joined the meeting at 12.33pm

4.4 * University Performance Report

The Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Executive invited questions and comments from members on the University Performance Report and the following was noted during discussion:

- Members noted the Australian Government's plans to revise migration policies to deliver a high volume of international students interested in settling in and contributing to Australia presented both challenges and opportunities for the University. This change along with factors such as the outcome of the Accord process, the talent acquisition policy in China which continues to encourage students to study at top 100 universities and regulatory adjustments are all contributing to a different international recruitment landscape.
- Members noted that the University is well positioned to respond to these challenges, through its commitment to the access agenda, influence on policy and diversification of international markets already underway.
- India continues to be the biggest opportunity to attract international students for the University and the most complicated market, with a focus on South India and strengthening the management of the University's agent network, to work to decrease the level of attrition and build continuing load going forward.
- The 2024 budget process is underway, with the University currently working through the implications of the extension of the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) Guarantee to the end of 2025 and the longer term, post-guarantee horizon that the University is planning for.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-4.4

University Council **received and noted** the University Performance Report for August 2023.

Mitch Parsell left the meeting at 12.45pm

3. COUNCIL EXECUTIVE WORKING DISCUSSION

3.1 * Universities Accord

University Council held a working discussion on the Universities Accord Interim Report, noting that stakeholders had been invited to prepare a submission in response to the Interim Report, focusing on the priority areas from their perspective. The Vice-Chancellor updated University Council on preparations for the University's response with key themes discussed including options for funding models for higher education that considers equity priorities and systemic solution to accommodate the significant increase in students as identified through the interim report. Members noted that in addition to the submission of the University's response, due on 1 September 2023, the University would also be preparing responses to other consultation processes linked to the Accord, including the Support for Students Policy and the upcoming discussion paper on University Study Hubs and continuing to engage locally about the Accord process to lead conversations on how to achieve positive outcomes for Tasmania.

3.2 * Right Size Research

University Council considered options for a 'right size research' approach to sustain the University's research excellence and impact noting that the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report outlined the changing landscape and emerging priorities and had highlighted the constraints on fragmented research funding bodies. Members discussed the opportunities for the University to develop a programmatic and partnered approach to create positive impact and the importance of strengthening the University's focus on tackling critical issues for the state, nation, and planet. Council reflected on the positive impacts from partnering with industry and the significance of the work of UTAS InVent and of appropriate planning to improve infrastructure efficiency to better leverage internal investments to secure external funds.

3.3 * Collegiate Model

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic led a discussion on the vision and values for a University of Tasmania Collegiate Model for residential living to significantly enhance the student experience. Key themes discussed included opportunities for high quality experiences offered to students in residence, definitions of equity and access for student accommodation and the culture of residential living and college life. Members noted the historic challenges to ensuring student residences remained safe and inclusive and acknowledged the ongoing commitment by the University to work to promote positive and supportive communities.

6. FOR NOTING

6.1 * Academic Division Objectives

University Council noted the update on the work ongoing by the Academic Division to define objectives to help guide the direction of strategic planning for 2024. The proposed objectives had been informed by discussions with colleagues and reflected the University's rebalancing towards its academic mission. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic highlighting that these objectives reflected a transition to new approaches and priorities, specifically in delivering distinctive, equity driven outcomes for students and improved student experience and outcomes.

Members discussed the planning for a 4–5-year horizon to fulfill the strategic objectives for student outcomes and for closing equity gaps and the challenges and opportunities to be considered. These included meeting the aspirations of diverse communities and improving access, utilising predicative analytics to inform and guide student success strategies and managing the complexities of financial constraints.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC- 6.1

University Council **noted** the objectives for the Academic Division in preparation for the upcoming strategic planning process.

Michelle Weir joined the meeting at 2.40pm

6.2 * Commencing and Lost Student Survey Results

University Council was updated on the Commencing and Lost Student survey results noting that the survey had been running each year since 2018 (except in 2020 during the pandemic) and tracks key attitudes and preferences related to the decision-making process across key cohorts and markets. The resulting research focuses on understanding drivers and barriers of commencing and lost students.

Members noted that the latest results indicated that for commencing students off-island applicants value the University's unique selling propositions, but for Tasmanian cohorts, more needed to be done to understand student journey and build the University's reputation for student experience and enhance student satisfaction and perceptions. For lost students surveyed, more work was required to understand how Tasmanian school leavers and influencers perceive the University and its image and to continue to focus on removing barriers to enrolling such as complex systems and communication issues.

During discussion members noted the importance of continuing to monitor the preferences of off-island and Tasmanian student cohorts and ensuring that the University is seen as a great choice for Tasmanians, noting also that whilst the University was scoring well for interstate and international student cohorts, for Tasmanian students there was no benchmark locally and there was a perception that universities off-island provided a better student experience despite strong evidence to the contrary. Management advised that an update on the enrolment system project would be shared with Council at a future meeting with members agreeing that there was opportunity to think more deeply around the student experience as Council began to process of developing the future strategic direction of the University.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC- 6.2

University Council **noted** the insights from the Commencing and Lost Student Survey.

Michelle Weir left the meeting at 3.00pm

5. FOR DECISION

Ben Rose joined the meeting at 3.00pm

5.1 * Investment Portfolio Structure

University Council considered proposed options to separate the University's investment portfolio into short-term and long-term funds with different investment objectives, noting that the proposed structure gives certainty of investment time horizons and allows for more focused planning and rebalancing of the investment portfolio and is a model replicated by many other universities in the sector. During discussion it was noted that medium term investments had been explored but were not recommended as the timing of these returns did not align with the funding schedules for the University's current and future capital projects and that it did not make sense to split investments too many ways. University Council resolved as recommended in relation to the proposed changes to the Investment Portfolio Structure.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC- 5.1

University Council **approved** the separation of the University investment portfolio into a short-term fund and a long-term fund with separate investment goals and **approved** the allocation of \$70m to the short-term fund.

Phil Leersen joined the meeting at 3.07pm

10.1 * Northern Campus Developments Budget Update (Late Paper)

University Council discussed the northern campus development budget noting that throughout the duration of the project the construction industry had experienced inflation driven cost escalation and supply chain disruption that had resulted in price escalations. Members noted that aspects of the original Council approved budget needed to be adapted to ensure the best possible campus outcome. University Council requested that management provide a final scope and budget to Council later in the year once greater cost certainty for the remaining projects are known.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC- 10.1

University Council **noted** the cost pressures on the northern campus developments and the approval by the Vice-Chancellor of an increase to the purchase order relating to variations of \$2.75m for the West Park campus, to be funded from the Council approved \$363.5m budget.

Ben Rose and Phil Leersen left the meeting at 3.11pm

5.2 * Update on the Governance Instruments Framework

University Council discussed the update on the Governance Instruments Framework noting that the complete suite of governance instruments including procedures was being finalised and that the implementation of the framework had been successful. Members noted that embedding the processes for amendment and confirmation of currency and managing this process centrally was working to ensure that the instruments remained current and affective.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC- 5.2

University Council **noted** the Governance Instruments Framework Update Report, and that the framework is

ensuring our governance instruments are compliant with the requirements of the Governance and Accountability Standards of the Higher Education Standards Framework.

5.3 Research Training Ordinance

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC- 5.2

University Council **approved** the revised *Research Training Ordinance 2023*.

7. MONITORING – COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 * Audit and Risk Committee

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee advised that at its meeting held on 21 July the Committee had considered the Executive Risk Presentation from the Division of the Vice-Chancellor and the Process Risk Presentation from the College of Health and Medicine that had provided an overview of the College's response to issues identified by the Staff Engagement Survey. It was noted that the Committee had discussed the risk management approach adopted by the recent Change Program, particularly in relation to potential risks of loss of capability, impact on culture, and business continuity and had been assured that the comprehensive risk management approach that had been adopted focused on ensuring that the right leaders were in place to support ongoing cultural evolution across the University with the levels of capability required.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-7.1

University Council **received and noted** the report from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 21 July 2023.

7.2 * Project Aurora

University Council noted the update on progress on Project Aurora Phase 1 focusing on the process and payment of remediation payments and communicating with affected staff and confirmed support for the overall risk-based approach to the Project and the outcomes of the Risk Assessment completed in preparation for Phase 2 of the Project.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-7.2

University Council **noted**:

- The update on the progress of Phase 1 remediation payments to affected staff (Appendix 1); and
- The summary of outcomes of the Risk Assessment for Phase 2 of the project and the associated high-level draft Program of Work (Appendix 2).

7.3 * Compliance Report

University Council considered the Compliance Report and noted the detailed update on activities of the Safe and Fair Communities Unit (SaFCU) and a proposed development of a "Compliance Culture Barometer" to aid the University's approaches to tracking and improving compliance, noting that the focus was on accountability at the individual level with compliance rules set as guard rails, and that the University's Risk Appetite Statements provided further guidance with appetite for higher risk in some areas if suitable mitigations were in place.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-7.3

University Council **received and noted** the Compliance Report.

7.4 * Strategic Resourcing Committee

The Chair of the Strategic Resourcing Committee advised that in addition to an update on the investment portfolio performance to 30 June 2023 the Committee had considered the proposed approach for the external review of the investment function, noting that the focus for the review would be on governance, operating model, policy, and performance. Members had discussed the financial implications of the recently released Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, including the two-year extension of the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) Guarantee and the Committee would be reconvening in the next week to reflect on the implications for the University's capital funding structures to support current and future project.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-7.4

University Council **received and noted** the report from the Strategic Resourcing Committee meeting held on 30 August 2023.

7.5 * University Foundation Committee

The Vice-Chancellor advised that the Committee had begun to reach a natural conclusion to its focus on compliance and that it was the right time to consider reframing the intention of the Committee towards the significantly expanding the University's philanthropic ambitions. Members noted that once finalised, a proposal for amendment to the terms of reference for the University Foundation Committee would be provided to a future meeting of University Council.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-7.5

University Council **received and noted** the report from the University Foundation Committee meeting held on 21 July 2023.

8. GRADUATIONS

8.1 * Conferral / Reissue of Awards

University Council conferred awards to the student/s listed in the agenda.

Resolution 30-08-2023-UC-8.1

University Council **reissued** the awards listed in the agenda.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Other Business, Confidential Items and Future Meetings

There were no items of other business raised.

The meeting concluded at 3.22pm