

University Council Minutes

University Council met in Room 216 in the Library, Inveresk Campus and by Zoom on Thursday 17 October 2024 from 9.00am.

Members: The Chancellor (Ms Alison Watkins AM) as Chair, Vice-Chancellor (Professor Rufus Black), Professor Emeritus Peter Dawkins AO, Ms Karina Groenewoud, Mr James Groom, Ms Sarah-Jayne Hall, Associate Professor Kristyn Harman, Ms Tara Howell, Ms Alicia Leis, Ms Ariane Moore, Dr Tania Price, Associate Professor Ashley Townsend and Ms Sheree Vertigan AM.

In attendance: Mr Craig Barling (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Services and Operations), Ms Kristen Derbyshire (Chief People Officer), Professor Martin Grimmer (Acting Deputy Vice-chancellor, Academic) 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: Ms Jane Beaumont (General Counsel / Executive Director Legal and Risk)
Doctor Angela Castles (Executive Dean, College of Sciences and Engineering)
Ms Andrea Durrant (CEO, Boards Global)
Ms Anna McKay (Associate Director, Project Enablement)
Professor Nicholas Farrelly (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Campus Life Southern Tasmania)
Ms Poppy Fay (Director Campus Futures)
Mr Rick Inglis (Executive Director Strategy)
Ms Jill Ribbons (Director Risk)
Mr Ben Rose (Chief Financial Officer)
Ms Michelle Weir (Chief Marketing Officer)
Mr Mark White (Engineering Services and Systems Manager)

Apologies: None

1 MEMBERS ONLY

1.1 * Members Only

University Council met in closed session without the Vice-Chancellor. Members discussed the plan for the next two days of Council and the Chancellor thanked Professor Peter Dawkins for leading a small working group of Council to develop a series of key questions and specific target areas for consideration by divisions and academic units for the upcoming strategy day. Members agreed that the model had worked well and that the quality of the planning and preparation of information would encourage greater engagement and was a model that should be used again.

Members discussed the success of the InVent Research Showcase held the night prior and the significant impact of the research shared, noting the emerging opportunities for development. Members recognised the excellent work of those involved and reflected on the benefits to Council of seeking out more opportunities to speak with staff and students and hear more about their work.

Vice-Chancellor Rufus Black joined the meeting at 9.10am

Council noted that the Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive and Deputy Chancellor, Alicia Leis had attended a second hearing of the public accounts committee inquiry into the University's financial position on 2 October 2024 where the University had provided further clarity on the policy landscape and its impact on the University's financial position, specifically in relation to the federal government's policy on international student numbers. Members acknowledged the work undertaken to prepare for the hearing and response to questions on notice and thanked the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Services and Operations and their teams for their efforts.

1.2 * Items to be starred / Motions on Unstarred Items

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

- Item 1.4 Report from Ceremonial and Honorary Degrees Committee
- Item 1.5 University Council Annual Planner / Workplan for 2024
- Item 5.4 Assuring the Integrity of our Awards: Generative Artificial Intelligence and Student Learning Action Plan 2024 – 2027
- Item 5.5 UTas Properties Pty Ltd (UPPL)
- Item 7.2 Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs – Deed of Variation #5
- Item 7.3 University Foundation Ordinance Amendments

Agenda item 7.4, Commencing and Lost Survey and Tasmanian Brand Sentiment Research Result, was starred for discussion.

Agenda item 7.3, University Foundation Ordinance was withdrawn and deferred for consideration at the December meeting of Council.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-1.2

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

1.3 * Report from Extended Nominations Committee

Members Professor Emeritus Peter Dawkins AO, Mr James Groom, Ms Sarah-Jayne Hall and Ms Alicia Leis left the room due to a conflict of interest at 9.16am

The Chancellor outlined the recommendations from the Extended Nominations Committee to re-appoint the four Council appointed members Professor Peter Dawkins, James Groom, Sarah-Jayne Hall and Alicia Leis for the new terms as outlined, noting that the Committee had agreed that it was unnecessary to advertise these vacancies as it was felt that the skills and capabilities provided by these members met the requirements as per the University Council Skill Matrix. It was further noted that Council members had been contacted prior to this meeting to seek their individual feedback to ensure that there was support for the continued membership of these members. During discussion, Council confirmed their support for the re-appointments, noting that it is well served by the calibre and commitment of these members and that their re-appointment provided Council with the right balance of knowledge, experience and stability.

University Council unanimously supported the proposed recommendations.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-1.3(1)

University Council **re-appointed** current member Professor Emeritus Peter Dawkins AO to University Council for a further 2-year term to conclude on 31 March 2027

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-1.3(2)

University Council **re-appointed** current member and Deputy Chancellor, James Groom, to the University Council for a further 2-year term to conclude on 31 December 2026

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-1.3(3)

University Council **re-appointed** current member Sarah-Jayne Hall, to the University Council for a further 3-year term to conclude on 31 December 2027

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-1.3(4)

University Council **re-appointed** current member and Deputy Chancellor, Alicia Leis, to the University Council for a further 3-year term to conclude on 31 December 2027

Members Professor Emeritus Peter Dawkins AO, Mr James Groom, Ms Sarah-Jayne Hall and Ms Alicia Leis returned to the room at 9.20am

1.4 Report from the Ceremonial and Honorary Degrees Committee

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-1.4

University Council **received and noted** the report from the Ceremonial and Honorary Degrees Committee meeting held on 26 September 2024.

1.5 University Council Annual Planner / Work plan for 2024

University Council agreed to include a session in 2025 to consider short- and long-term succession planning for the senior executive roles which would be led by the Chancellor and Chief People Officer.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-1.5

University Council **noted** the University Council Annual Planner for 2024.

Craig Barling, Kristen Derbyshire, Kate Huntington and Anthony Koutoulis joined the meeting at 9.21am

2. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

2.1 * Introductory Items

Declarations of interest

No additional interests were declared.

Minutes

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-2.1(1)

University Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meetings held on 30 August 2024 and 9 October 2024 via circular as true and accurate records.

Actions

University Council noted the action items circulated.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-2.1(2)

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

3. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY COUNCIL AND ACADEMIC SENATE

3.1 * Boards Global University Council and Senate Review Report

The Chancellor invited members to reflect on the recently circulated Draft Report on the Independent Review of University Council, noting that whilst the review of Academic Senate had also been completed, a separate Report had been provided directly to Chair, Academic Senate, Associate Professor Kristyn Harman and would be discussed with Academic Senate at its meeting in November with their feedback brought back to Council for consideration at a later date.

The Chancellor commented that she had been pleased with the Report and that whilst it proposed some good, practical recommendations for Council to consider, it was not too detailed and was overall positive in its commentary regarding the relationship between Council members and called out the strength of the working relationship between Council and management. In response to a question raised regarding whether the review was a requirement for the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA), it was noted that TEQSA would likely want to see evidence of the results of such a review and the consequent actions taken as part of the University's next renewal of registration cycle. It was further noted that it was stipulated in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) that every University undertake periodic independent reviews of the effectiveness of its governing body and academic governance processes every seven years.

Andrea Durrant joined the meeting at 9.30am

Andrea Durrant, Managing Partner of BoardsGlobal, presented the Draft Report on the Independent Review of University Council, noting that the score card for the Council indicated that it was within the top quartile for Board performance across Australia. During the presentation the following key insights were raised and discussed:

- Council as a group of individual members provided the skills, experience and unique viewpoints to bring a level of diversity to Council and are well aligned as a group and willing to challenge management as appropriate. There is a shared commitment to the University and to Tasmania and it is important to seek out opportunities to come together informally to continue to build the alignment as a group.
- Council members reported that there was a high level of trust, respect and humility between the Council and that this created a level of safety that was shared amongst members and this enabled them to challenge each other and management in a way that was constructive.

- Management reflected through the report that they see the value in the feedback and contributions made by Council. Decision making by Council is informed by timely and high calibre papers and this leads to informed decision making.
- The suggestion of consolidating the Council meetings and sub-committee meetings to fall within the same week was discussed, noting the benefits of a more immersive experience but highlighting the greater impost of paper preparation and consideration for Council and management.
- Reflecting on the number of sub-committees, whether they addressed the right areas and had good delineation between responsibilities, members noted that overall, this was positive but highlighted potential shift in focus and membership expansion for the Remuneration and Nominations Committee and discussed the importance of people and culture and stakeholder engagement and where this most appropriately sat in relation to Council and/or its sub-committees.
- Members supported a recommendation proposing the continued development of Council's knowledge of the University's staff and students and their experiences through opportunities to observe university activities and more informal interactions. Members agreed the importance of focusing on student and staff engagement, noting that opportunities to engage in smaller groups of Council and in less formal ways would be of greatest benefit. Council would focus on planning for visits to Elliott farm, IMAS Tarooma and the Rozelle Campus amongst other engagement opportunities in 2025.
- Council considered the question of whether current members were too collegial to appropriately challenge each other and discussed the positive impacts of the diversity of thought and viewpoint around the Council table that help to mitigate this risk.

The Report highlighted that the average proportion of executive team time spent on Council related work was 40 per cent with members noting that the recommended number was 10 per cent. Following discussion on why this was higher than recommended, it was noted that the commitment to ensuring Council papers were of high quality took time, further examination of the frequency and cadence of Council sub-committee's was an opportunity to potentially cut time spent however management reiterated the benefit of using Council sub-committee's for strategic guidance and important, clear feedback on key strategic issues and that this enabled better discussion and decision making at Council. It was agreed that to sustain the level of alignment between Council and management a more realistic target of time spent was around 30 per cent of executive team time.

Members noted the preliminary actions based on the proposed recommendations including ensuring there was enough time at meetings to test and verify concepts and explore risks, consider the balance of delegation to sub-committees, prioritise timing on strategic issues and explore rationalising reporting to Council and agreed a plan for providing an initial action plan to Council at its meeting in December.

Action: *The Chancellor and University Secretary would consult with a smaller working group of Council on suggested actions against the recommendations in the Report and provide an initial report to the Council meeting on 6 December 2024.*

Andrea Durrant left the meeting at 10.42am

4. CURRENT OPERATING POSITION

4.1 * Chair Academic Senate Report

The Chair Academic Senate, updated members on the meeting on 3 October noting that Senate had approved the removal of restrictions on Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students who are on a University of Tasmania scholarship and cannot undertake a part-time award. Council noted that previously these students were not able to work more than eight hours per week and that removing this barrier created more autonomy for students, particularly as financial challenges for these HDR candidates were raised as major barrier to their success. Council also noted that Mr Jack Oates Pryor had been elected as the incoming TUSA Student President, with his term formally commencing at the end of November and expressed their support for continuing the positive working relationship between Council and the TUSA Student President in 2025.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-4.1

University Council **received and noted** the report from the Academic Senate meeting held on 3 October 2024.

4.2 * University Performance Report

The Vice-Chancellor provided Council with an update on the Australian Government's proposed limits on new overseas student commencements for the higher education sector and the impact of the current delays in student visa processing with members discussing the impacts across the sector and the responses from

universities across the country. An update was also provided regarding recent changes to casual employment laws including a new definition of a casual employee and a new pathway to permanent employment. Members discussed the potential impacts for health disciplines such as medicine and nursing where doctors and nurses choose to engage in casual work with the University for professional development and to supplement their income, with often no desire to become permanent employees. Council would be provided with further update as details were worked through.

The University Performance Report was taken as read with the following additional updates highlighted for Council:

- Some large Australian universities continued to recruit international students at numbers above the proposed quotas established as part of the Australian Government's proposed legislation on new overseas student commencements for the higher education sector. As a result of this and the slowing of visa processing for international students, the impact on net migration for Tasmania would be significant.
- Members noted that the University had been named as a finalist in the industry-leading marketing B&T awards for the Semester 1, 2024 campaign, "Study is an Adventure". The campaign had been recognised in the Best Regional Media Campaign category. Following a question about whether this had led to more student enrolments from the regions, management advised that whilst applications were up there remained the challenge of ensuring that these were successfully converted into enrolments, so it was too early to determine the impact of the campaign.
- In response to a question on the budget and program issues for the Forestry Building and the Tasmanian Agricultural Precinct, it was noted that known cost escalations remained a risk that was being carefully managed.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-4.2

University Council **received and noted** the University Performance Report for October 2024.

4.3 * Vice-Chancellor's Update

This item was considered under item 4.3 above.

5. MONITORING

5.1 * Report from the Audit and Risk Committee

The Chair, Audit and Risk Committee provide an update in addition to the written report to Council, noting that the Committee had been pleased to receive the Executive Risk Presentation from the College of Health and Medicine, noting the challenges and risk mitigation in areas such as curriculum design and quality research, quality alignment and sustainability and maintaining strong partnerships and noting the high level of capability in the College. Members were also updated on the findings from the ServiceNow Penetration Test and from the annual review of University's insurances, which had included analysis of claims versus premiums over time.

Members also noted the proposal to hold a session on strategic asset management planning for significant non-building assets, such as information technology systems and research infrastructure, to be considered at a future combined meeting of Audit and Risk and the Strategic Resourcing Committee.

In response to a question asked about how assured Audit and Risk Committee were on the University's preparedness for the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) and whether this was appropriately captured in the risk profile, members discussed the options of forming an advisory group focused on these specific risks including cyber security with specialist experts to provide advice to the Audit and Risk Committee. It was further noted that the monitoring of academic integrity in the use of GenAI was being undertaken by the Academic Division, with members discussing the ways in which staff and students were supported to use GenAI in their learning and teaching and how the use of AI could be integrated in the planning for assessments, noting that this topic was a strategic session at the October Academic Senate meeting.

Council requested further information on the use of GenAI at the University and that it be added to the Council Workplan for 2025.

Action: Council requested an update on the current and future use of Generative AI at the University for learning and teaching, research and professional services for a future meeting of Council in 2025.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-5.1

University Council **received and noted** the report from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 6

September 2024.

5.2 * Compliance Report

University Council considered the Compliance Report noting the recent legislative changes to casual employment laws and that the Audit and Risk Committee had requested that a detailed overview of its impact and potential implications for the University be provided to its November meeting. Members also noted that the practical impact of new 'right to disconnect' laws was determined to be relatively low, as its principles were already embedded into practice across the institution.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-5.2

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

5.3 * Report from Strategic Resourcing Committee

The Chair of the Strategic Resourcing Committee advised that the Committee had considered an earlier version of the funding model which included three scenario analyses of plausible long-term funding options and had recommended the addition of forecast changes to the balance sheet over time, assumptions for online load, and a clearer view of earnings from international arrangements for the version presented to Council (ref agenda item 8.1.1). Members noted the other items discussed at the Committee meeting were included on this agenda.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-5.2

University Council **received and noted** the report from the Strategic Resourcing Committee meeting held on 13 September 2024.

5.4 Assuring the Integrity of our Awards: Generative AI and Student Learning Action Plan 2024 – 2027

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-5.4

University Council noted that the GenAI and Student Learning Action Plan 2024- 2027 was submitted to TEQSA on 3 July 2024.

5.5 UTas Properties Pty Ltd (UPPL) Minutes

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-5.5

University Council noted the minutes of the University Properties Pty Ltd (UPPL) meetings held on 13 February 2024, 27 March 2024, 27 June 2024, 1 July 2024 and 16 August 2024.

6. GRADUATIONS

6.1 * Graduations to be presented for Re-issue and Conferral of Awards

University Council conferred awards to the students listed in the agenda.

Reference: Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-6.1(1)
Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-6.1(2)
Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-6.1(3)
Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-6.1(4)

7. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Mark White and Ben Rose joined the meeting at 11.53am

7.1 * Renewable Electricity Supply

Commercial in confidence

Reference: Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-7.1

7.2 Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs – Deed of Variation #5

This item was unstarred and therefore not discussed.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-7.2

University Council **delegated** authority to the Vice-Chancellor to sign the Deed of Variation 5 in relation to the Grant Agreement for the Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub between the University of Tasmania (UTAS) and the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry subject to appropriate legal and financial advice.

7.3 University Foundation Ordinance Amendments

This item was deferred to the December meeting of University Council.

*Mark White and Ben Rose left the meeting at 12.22pm
Michelle Weir joined the meeting at 12.23pm*

7.4 * Commencing and Lost Survey and Tasmania Brand Sentiment Research Result

University Council considered the Commencing and Lost (C&L) survey and Tasmanian Brand Sentiment qualitative study, two pieces of market research that detail the varied lived experiences of students. Members note that whilst the study included some positive results, including a healthy net promoter score and an increase in interstate school leavers, it also highlighted some dissatisfaction among Tasmania school leavers concerning program quality and online learning. During discussion members considered the need to continue to offer essential online learning options for students balancing study with work and family commitments, and the extent of online learning currently offered for school leavers which they are reporting is impacting their ability to connect with other students. Council noted the comprehensive engagement plan to use data driven insights to address concerns related to program quality and the amount of online learning occurring for on-campus students to inform further work to enhance student satisfaction and strengthen local reputation.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-7.4

University Council **noted** the insights from the Commencing and Lost Survey and Tasmanian Brand Sentiment research.

Michelle Weir left the meeting at 12.46pm

8. COUNCIL STRATEGIC SESSION

Ben Rose, Nicholas Farrelly, Jane Beaumont, Poppy Fay, Angela Castles and Rick Inglis joined the meeting at 1.15pm

8.1 * Council Strategic Session

8.1.1 *Funding Model Update

University Council were advised that following recent developments in international student legislation, financial outlook, and progress on campus builds there had been greater clarity on the future landscape which had prompted an updated long-term Funding Plan. Members noted that the Funding Model including a variety of scenarios that had been tested with the Strategic Resourcing Committee and considered the domestic and international higher education policy as it affected the University's student numbers and funding outlook to support capital plans.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.1

University Council **noted** the updated University Funding Plan.

8.1.2 * Future Student Profile

University Council discussed the key features of the future student profile and tested potential scenarios, risks and opportunities within that market environment. Members considered the various mix of student cohorts including on-campus and online, Tasmanian and mainland, and domestic and international noting that there were underlying assumptions supporting the projected student numbers in the context of a managed market, both domestically and internationally. During discussion members considered the skills required for Tasmania over the next 25 years to enable it to match the productivity of mainland states by 2050 and how to build this workforce, noting the opportunities in growing allied health professional workforce, partnering with TAFE, and prioritising programs that contribute to productivity through primary industries and new business creation.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.2

University Council **noted and discussed** the presentation regarding the future student profile.

8.1.3 * Future of Southern Campus and Strategic Communications

The Vice-Chancellor provided University Council with an update on the southern campus distributed model including the preferred site for a new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) facility at Sandy Bay, and outlined the proposed plan for the other three campus sites including a 'city campus' to incorporate existing medical sciences, creative arts teaching, learning and research space and the Forestry

Building which would include the Schools of Business and Economics and Education, Humanities and Social Sciences; a 'historic campus' on the Domain including the Phillip Smith Building as home to the International School, Outdoor Education Program and a 'waterfront campus' including the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies facilities at Salamanca and Taroona.

Discussion focused on the development of a STEM precinct at Sandy Bay which would include a complete retrofit of some existing science buildings, the addition of new builds, and the enhancement of the natural landscape of the campus and provide opportunities for industry co-location, and school and community engagement. Members considered the various zones on the Sandy Bay campus, including identified land to potentially hand back land to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and opportunities to utilise land north of Churchill Avenue, subject to negotiation with the State Government on the University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill 2024. Council provided support for the positioning in relation to the future of the southern campus as outlined, noting that the development of Sandy Bay was contingent on securing support and significant funding from the State and Federal Governments. The details of the supporting communications and plans to engage key stakeholders were considered and supported.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.3 (1)

University Council **noted** the updates on the work streams in relation to the Southern campus and opportunities to realise value from Sandy Bay campus.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.3 (2)

University Council **approved** the proposed positioning on the future of the southern campus and the supporting communications and engagement strategy.

Anna McKay joined the meeting at 3.57pm

8.1.4 * Surplus Assets

Commercial in confidence.

Reference: Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.4(1)
Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.4(2)

8.1.5 * Finalisation Newnham and Inveresk Campus Grant Deeds

Commercial in confidence.

Reference: Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.5 (1)
Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.5 (2)

8.1.6 * Lease at Proctors Road Sandy Bay

Commercial in confidence.

Reference: Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.6

8.1.7 * 2025 Operating Budget Update

University Council noted the update on the 2025 Operating Budget. Members discussed the progress towards meeting a \$30m EBITDA target and the significant risks to achieving it which included the current migration settings for international students and the substantial changes required across the institution to reduce the current workload. Current international student numbers had dropped to 60 per cent compared to 2023 enrolments because of the visa progressing challenges with members noting the flow on effect into future years. Three different scenarios to respond to the financial challenge were considered, with the short- and long-term risks, timing and impacts discussed for each scenario. Council requested further detail on proposed responses to be considered by the Strategic Resourcing Committee in November and discussed by Council at its December meeting.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.7

University Council **noted** the 2025 Operating Budget update.

8.1.8 * College Change Programs

University Council noted that the College of Arts, Law and Education's change program would commence in quarter four 2024 and discussed the consultation with the College to date including constructive engagement with the College leadership team and noted the timing for the change announcements. An update on proposed future academic structures for the University was provided which was organised around purpose and emphasised the University's commitment to strengthening regionality.

Resolution 17-10-2024-UC-8.1.8

University Council:

- **noted** that the changes in CALE will move ahead before the end of 2024.
- considered and **noted** the proposed evolved academic structures, and provided feedback to inform the design, planning and sequencing of further organisational changes into 2025.

8.2 * Institutional Strategic Plan (Break Out Session)

This item was not considered at this meeting.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Other Business

There were no items of other business raised.

The meeting concluded at 5.16pm