

UTS Council meeting report

14 February 2024

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 14 February 2024 meeting.

**The Report structure replicates the flow of the agenda.*

Strategic items of business

UTS Corporate Plan 2023 - End of Year Performance Report

Council monitors the University performance throughout the year. The end of year performance report provides valuable oversight on how well the University has performed against the targets set.

In November 2022 Council approved the UTS Corporate Plan 2023, which outlined the University's strategic priorities for 2023 and the associated performance indicator targets to track progress against these priorities. The plan also outlined a range of initiatives demonstrating a commitment to achieving our institutional goals consistent with the UTS2027 Strategic Plan.

Council commended the results overall, particularly highlighting the strength and resilience of our community and what we have been able to accomplish despite the consequential impacts and disruption caused by the Pandemic. Specific elements of the report were discussed, with particular focus on where there are opportunities for improvement.

Accord Update

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Universities Accord Report will be released towards the end of February, and that Council will be updated on the implications for the Sector, and for UTS, at the Retreat to be held in March.

Council discussed the lack of clarity, at this stage, regarding Government funding for priorities identified from the Accord Report. The University Leadership team will be discussing this further.

The increasing regulatory burden on universities and its impact was also discussed. The University will apply a risk lens in giving consideration to how it responds to the increasing regulatory burden.

Operations and performance

Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor provides a report to each Council meeting containing updates on key developments and events that have occurred since Council's last meeting. Updates include; the implementation progress of the UTS 2027 Strategy, State and Federal Government issues, updates regarding the university sector and internal matters, particularly achievements and awards.

Council discussed the ongoing global tension in the Middle East and Ukraine, causing increasing anxiety for many in our community.

The Vice-Chancellor discussed the report, highlighting the ongoing student and staff concerns regarding the war in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East. He reinforced the University's commitment to providing a safe environment in which diverse views and ideas can be debated and tested. This is consistent with the University's approach to supporting academic freedom and freedom of expression which are critically important values of UTS.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the increasing volume of international student visa application rejections by the Australian Department of Home Affairs is having an impact upon UTS and the sector more broadly.

The University continues to be an advocate for a safe community with zero tolerance of gender-based harassment and violence, supported by a range of strategies and programs. The University is continuing to explore opportunities for further strengthening its commitment to this area.

Reports from committees

Council has a number of committees, whose membership have particular expertise, to provide assistance and advice to Council on matters for Council consideration. These committees report back to Council. Not all of the Committee Reports are represented in this brief overview.

Report from Audit and Risk Committee

The primary responsibility of the Audit and Risk Committee is to assist Council in overseeing the activities undertaken by the UTS body corporate and, from time to time, other related entities as requested by Council.

In line with the Committee's Terms of Reference and streamlined review process, the Finance Committee joined the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration of the Draft UTS Financial Statements (Parent).

The Committees were provided a detailed presentation on the UTS Financial Performance for year end 31 December 2023, to allow appropriate context for better consideration of the Financial Statements. The Committees discussed the Financial

Statements and Financial Performance, with Management responding to the questions raised by the members. The draft Financial Accounts are being reviewed by the NSW Audit Office with the final version being submitted to Council for approval at its April meeting.

Report from Governance Committee

The Chancellor, as Chair of the Governance Committee provided an update on the project to update the Committee Charters.

The current Terms of Reference are being updated to align with more contemporary terminology and design format. The increasingly complex compliance environment is being considered from a governance perspective. Furthermore, the role of Council Committees, including Academic Board, in the oversight of the University's risk taxonomy is also a key point of focus.

Items for approval

none

Items for noting

Council are provided papers for noting and include activity that has occurred between Council meetings.

- Chancellor's Report
- Use of Power of Attorney, University Seal and Executive Action
- Annual Declarations of Interest

Items of General Business

Other reports

- Interim Student load Report 2024
- Work Health and Safety Report
- Finance Committee Report
- Remuneration Committee Report