

UTS Council meeting report

16 October 2024

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 16 October 2024 meeting.

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

Strategic items of business

Strategy update and sustainable implementation

Council discussed the Strategy in the context of the environment in which UTS operates noting the significant changes that had occurred since the development of the UTS 2027 Strategy in 2018. Despite the impact of the Pandemic on our finances, and ongoing changes to government policy and other operating conditions, Council confirmed that the strategic vision articulated in the current Strategy remains relevant and the University is making good progress to achieving our strategic objectives as evidenced by our rankings performance and reputation, research impact and excellence, and the quality of our graduates.

The University is at a point in time where it has the opportunity to reframe the Strategy to set the foundations for 2030. Building on the successful achievements of the past six years, the emphasis of the Strategy is to focus on key priorities in the context of an external environment that will continue to evolve and change. With these goals in mind, the University has identified seven pan-university programs, most of which have their foundations in work that has already commenced, which will enable the achievement of our vision.

The Federal Government's proposed introduction of the international student caps in 2025 will have a significant impact on the University's financial position. There is a clear need for prioritisation (and potentially timing changes) in the early stages to favour those projects that will deliver significant return to UTS, either through cost reduction, revenue stimulation or as enablers of significant strategic priorities.

Following analysis of the impact of the proposed international student caps it is evident that the Operational Sustainability plan in its current form will not deliver the quantum of savings required. Council noted that the scope of the Operational Sustainability program will be extended. Council discussed the direction and focus of the Strategy and program of work to enable right sizing of the University and the gradual return to surplus.

Strategic Briefing – Research Investment

Council discussed the funding categories for research with a view to targeting focussed University investment. The funding categories provide a clear basis for where revenue growth is possible, noting that University funding currently outweighs external funding.

Attracting external funding for research is a key revenue growth strategy. The University Leadership Team will focus on robust work planning and expectation setting to improve investment outcomes.

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 was updated on the proposed reforms to the Australia's International Education Sector. The Federal Government has set the UTS indicative International Student Profile (or cap) for 2025 at 4800 (subject to the passage of the Education Services and Overseas Students Amendment [Quality and Integrity] Bill 2024). The proposed cap on international student recruitment will constrain the University's capacity to grow as had been planned.

Work Health and Safety Standing Report

UTS Council has a proactive duty to exercise due diligence in the Work Health and Safety of the staff, visitors and students of UTS, under the Work Health and Safety Act. Council receive a standing report at every Council Meeting as well as an Annual Report and various other sources to enable due diligence.

Council noted elements of the report including staff and student mental health and wellbeing. The results and the investigations and mitigations were also discussed.

Reports from committees

Council has a number of sub committees, whose membership have particular expertise, to provide assistance and advice to Council on matters for Council consideration. These committees report back to Council.

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.

Council noted that the Audit and Risk Committee, based on the information provided and associated discussions, provides Council with an assurance statement as to the effectiveness and completeness of the University's actions with regards to health and safety and noted that the Audit and Risk Committee confirmed that the UTS Council Health and Safety Responsibilities as outlined remains appropriate for the monitoring and reporting of the responsibilities of Council and the Audit and Risk Committee.

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
- Final Council and Committee Meeting Dates for 2025
- Notice of Pro-Chancellor Elections

Other reports

- Student Load Report 2024
- Finance Committee Report
- Academic Board Report

Items of General Business

Presentation: Faculty of Science

Professor James Wallman, Dean of Science, joined Council for a presentation on the Faculty of Science.

Professor Wallman discussed the Faculty Research income and the student mix. Research commercialisation and partnerships were also discussed.

Council discussed the Faculty Industry Advisory Board and recent changes to the Board, composition that has increased diversity which will enable broader input and shaping of the Faculty's research and teaching programs.

The Faculty's strategic priorities, research themes and focus areas, and identified risks were discussed. Council noted the Faculty's alignment with the UTS Strategy.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Council Members were given a tour of some of the facilities within the Faculty which included the Crime Scene Simulation Lab and the Biologics Innovation Facility.