

UTS Council meeting report

17 August 2022

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 17 August 2022 meeting.

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

Strategic items of business

Strategic Briefing – Distinctive Identity

In setting the discussion framework for this item, the Chancellor differentiated identity from both reputation and brand. The University's identity needs to be understood in the context of the present, recognising the elements and attributes that characterise UTS today. Reputation is derived from where the University has come from, and brand will focus on the future drawing upon the authenticity of our current identity.

The ensuing discussion focused on identifying the attributes that makes UTS distinctive from other universities. This is important from the perspective of understanding what attracts students, staff and industry partners to the University. It was noted that different audiences would find different points of distinctiveness and weight these in accordance with their own areas of focus.

In identifying the elements that make UTS distinctive one common theme that emerged is the University's progressive approach. This is demonstrated by the University's commitment to social justice, sustainability, and creativity, and how they inform or impact the research and learning at UTS. The University will need to consider how to measure and track elements of identity beyond the focus on performance measures such as research and employability.

Annual DVC Research Briefing

Council discussed the portfolio; the desire to grow the University's research reputation, choices in resource allocation, and improving our leverage of research expenditure. UTS proposes to transition from a growth strategy to a productivity strategy, where both income and expenditure, and their attribution to research activities are tracked. Impact remains a key focus for research activity but further understanding the return on investment, and clearly articulating all the attributes that comprise what constitutes "return", will allow a better understanding of resource distribution.

Delivering the strategy will require cultural change, and the impact of this will need to be both recognised and monitored by both Council and Management.

Social Justice Report

Council discussed the social justice work that has been underway throughout the University, illustrating the breadth of work being undertaken across the university to promote equity, diversity and social justice in accordance with the objectives of UTS2027 and the UTS Social Impact Framework.

The Chancellor thanked the team for their efforts in data collection represented in the 'Dashboard', enhancing both performance measurement and decision making. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice and Inclusion) gave an example of using data to more fully understand the needs and motivations for low socioeconomic students attending university. In support of the University's commitment to higher education participation, the U@Uni Academy was developed to enhance the opportunity to achieve participation targets.

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.

The Vice-Chancellor provided Council with an update on Covid-19 and the Campus Reactivation. UTS continues to aim for an open and reactivated campus, whilst mindful of our commitment to maintaining a safe campus for all. Flexible working and contingency planning arrangements are available for leaders to manage operations as effectively and flexibly as possible within their local areas.

The Vice-Chancellor also reinforced the importance for prioritising health and wellbeing, with regularly updated information and resources available via a dedicated campus reactivation portal and COVID-19 impacts and responses page.

Council also received an update on the strategy, UTS 2027. UTS 2027 Q2 reporting is currently being finalised, including a review of project outputs and overarching strategic initiative program outcomes. This reporting gives us a deep and transparent view of UTS 2027 progress. Analysis of project progress is showing the impacts of a tight labour market, which has affected resourcing across several projects. Mitigations have been put in place and projects are now regaining ground.

Work Health and Safety Standing Report

Council discussed the Report and noted the increase in psychosocial related incident reporting. The mental welfare of staff requires ongoing monitoring and Council noted the Mental Welfare Strategy had been approved. Furthermore, Council noted, an external review of WHS governance at UTS will be completed in September. The review will benchmark, among other things, UTS against ISO 45003-2021 Occupational Health and Safety Management - Guide for managing psychosocial risk.

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.

Academic Board

The Chair, Academic Board, outlined the background and rationale for disestablishing the Office of the Student Ombud.

Council noted that the Student Partnership Agreement had been finalised. Progress will be monitored by the Student Council Liaison Group. Council also discussed the potential opportunity for the Agreement to facilitate development and/or mentoring opportunities for student leaders.

Items for approval

Council approved the appointment of the Chair, Infrastructure 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
- Ministerial Appointments to Council

Items of General Business

Other reports

- UTS Corporate Plan 2022 Mid-year Progress Report
- Finance Committee Report
- Infrastructure Committee Report
- Commercial Activities Committee Report
- Student/Council Liaison Group Report
- Remuneration Committee Report