

# UTS Council report

30 November 2022

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 30 November 2022 meeting.

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

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## Strategic items of business

### **Strategic Briefing Overview for 2022 – achievements and looking forward to 2023 and beyond.**

Discussion for this item also included references to the Corporate Plan, Medium Term Finance Plan and Budget.

The revised framework for strategic briefings to Council based around the themes that emerged from the 2022 Council Retreat was discussed. The deeper dives into thematic areas of focus, led by the relevant member of the Senior Executive and supported by various deans and directors, had enhanced Council's understanding of the strategic issues, and delivered a more productive outcome from the perspective of Management.

The Vice-Chancellor advised Council on the need to provide greater clarity of how UTS conceptualises "Lifetime of Learning" both within the context of University's overall education framework, and how this contributes to a sustainable business model. The Vice-Chancellor also provided a diagram of the University's education framework incorporating traditional core undergraduate and postgraduate products, and how these may be aligned, together with new product lines, to the UTS concept of "Lifetime of Learning."

During the past three years, the University had developed an enhanced understanding of the challenges associated with the development and implementation of new business lines in online education and short forms of learning. It is apparent that the requirements for agility and speed in developing new product lines for implementation present challenges to the operating model of the University, including the structure of our workforce.

With respect to developing new product lines, the Vice-Chancellor advised Council of the importance for the University to understand where it has deep expertise in order to better identify our value proposition and areas of comparative advantage relative to both the university sector and other providers. As the UTS education framework is further refined, it will assist the University in further defining and developing its core education products, complemented by new product lines that will enhance the capacity to identify our distinctiveness, as we continue to develop industry partnerships and relationships.

Our core education offerings are provided in a regulated environment, but several new product lines operate in an unregulated space. The development of the Federal Government's Accord will help establish the framework for new products such as micro-credentials.

Council discussed the opportunity to leverage various attributes associated with UTS identity, including its social justice ethos. The importance of ensuring sufficient focus is provided on “traditional” core offerings was emphasised, to mitigate against the risk of focusing only on new initiatives. There was also discussion in relation to how new business lines align to the purpose of a university more broadly.

### **2023 UTS Corporate Plan**

The context through which the planning and development of the Corporate Plan had occurred, including the operating environment and the external environment impacting the University, and the sector more broadly, was discussed.

Council will discuss the current suite of KPIs at the 2023 Retreat and give consideration as to what performance indicators may be incorporated to measure and monitor organisational culture.

### **Strategic Briefing - UTS People Strategy Update**

The key themes presented in the Draft People Strategy were discussed. Some of the immediate initiatives were discussed, including the digitisation of services to enhance service delivery.

The issues and risks reflected in the draft strategy were discussed. This highlighted the need to ensure that the People Unit is structured to enable the implementation and delivery of the strategy. Council was also mindful of the impact of vacancy rates on staff workload from both a strategic and operational perspective.

The ability to measure the success of the strategy was discussed. Council will use the metrics in the Corporate Plan, Voice and Pulse surveys results, and management reports to monitor progress.

### **UTS 2023 Budget and Medium Term Finance Plan**

Each year Council considers the Budget and the Finance Plan. The underlying assumptions, University performance and the environment are also considered in context of the Plan. Both the Budget for 2023 and the Finance Plan were approved.

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## **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 briefly outlined the highlights in the report. The success of UTS in the recent Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grants round was highlighted.

The Australian Universities Accord consultation process, terms of reference and appointed panel were noted. UTS will continue to lobby and urge the panel to: undertake a whole of system review; be clear and overt about the expectations of universities (student experience, research profile, VET/HE interface, lifetime learning and industry partnerships in particular); and acknowledge that the current Australian university business model is reliant on international students to support core university objectives.

The impact of universities making early round offers to domestic undergraduate students, and the divergent approaches used by universities, was discussed. UTS participates in early round offers but all offers are conditional on HSC performance criteria.

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## 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, highlighted the proposed rule changes to support the student misconduct processes. The Student Members of Council reiterated the anticipated improved student experience outcomes that will result from the changes proposed.

The Chair also advised Council that UTS had recently hosted the annual Australian Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates Conference, which was positively received. Professor Dooley is currently Chair of the Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards.

### **Commercial Activities Committee**

Council discussed the proposal to transition UTS to a minority shareholder in Kilimanjaro Learning Services Pty Ltd, and approved the transition, noting that the equity positions of Newcastle University and UNSW may change. The term sheets will be updated accordingly.

The Chair, Commercial Activities Committee, also noted the work being undertaken in Algal Tech and the exciting opportunities that are emerging from this area of research focus.

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## Items for approval

UTS Council regularly approves appointments to boards of Directors, committee membership changes and minor changes to governance instruments.

Council made appointments to the ActivateUTS Board

Council made appointments to the Council Committees

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## Items for noting

Council is 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
- Results of Election of Deputy Chancellor and Pro-Chancellors

## Other reports

- Work Health and Safety Standing Report
- Interim Student Admission and Enrolment Report 2023
- Student load Report 2022
- Finance Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Governance Committee Report
- Honorary Awards Committee Report
- Infrastructure Committee Report