

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of meeting 2020/7 of the Board of Trustees of Western Sydney University, held at 8.30am on Wednesday 2 December 2020, in Boardroom 1, Building EB, Parramatta South Campus and by Zoom.

Present: Board of Trustees present in Boardroom, Parramatta South Campus
Professor Peter Shergold AC (Chair and Chancellor)
Professor Barney Glover AO (Vice-Chancellor and President)
Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy (Chair of Academic Senate)
Ms Elizabeth Dibbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Mr Joseph Carrozzi
Ms Holly Kramer
Ms Gabrielle Trainor AO
Dr Linda O'Brien AM
Mr Bob Sahota
Ms Georgia Lee
Dr Ben Etherington
Dr David Harland
Ms Naomi Hastings
Ms Rose Lewis

Board of Trustees present by Zoom
Ms Kerry Stubbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik AO
Mr Peeyush Gupta AM

Apologies: Nil

In Attendance: Western Sydney University present in Boardroom, Parramatta South Campus
Ms Helen Fleming (University Secretary and General Counsel)
Professor Scott Bowman AO (Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Mr Peter Pickering (Vice-President, Finance and Resources)
Professor Simon Barrie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic)
Ms Sophie Buck (Director, Office of Governance Services)
Ms Christine Sharpe (Executive Governance Officer) (Minutes)
Ms Teneille Rousianos (Administrative Assistant) (Meeting Support)

Western Sydney University present by Zoom
Mr Angelo Kourtis (Vice-President, People and Advancement)
Professor Deborah Sweeney (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International)

1. OPENING AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members and observers and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians

of the Land on which the Board met and paid respects to their Elders past and present. He declared the meeting open and confirmed that there was a quorum present.

The Chancellor noted that this meeting was the last meeting for Ms Gabrielle Trainor AO before expiry of her term of office and thanked her for all her service and commitment to the Board including as a member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

1.2 Apologies

No apologies were noted.

1.3 Declarations of Material Interests

The Chair invited Board members to declare any new material interests in relation to matters on the agenda or their role on the Board more generally.

The Chancellor advised that he will not be joining the Board of Alarcon Ltd, the listed company name of HWL Ebsworth Lawyers.

The Vice-Chancellor advised that he is no longer a Trustee of the Museum of Applied Arts and Science Trust.

Dr Linda O'Brien advised that she no longer a Director of the School of Life Foundation.

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

The Board resolved as follows:

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes and confidential minutes of its 7 October 2020 meeting.

[2/12/2020:1]

1.4.1 Confirmation of Rotary Resolution Minutes

The Vice-President (Finance and Resources) advised that that the University placed a successful bid of \$1.65 million for the purchase of 137 Pennant Street, Parramatta.

The Board resolved as follows:

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the Rotary Resolution held between 23 October 2020 and 27 October 2020.

[2/12/2020:2]

1.5 Action Sheets from Previous Meetings

The Board noted the actions taken on items listed.

Virtual Graduations

The Chancellor congratulated the Vice-President (People and Advancement) on the success of the virtual graduation ceremonies. The Chancellor advised the Board that the ceremonies are still available online and encouraged members to view a ceremony.

The Vice-President (People and Advancement) advised that, due to the success of the ceremonies, the University will consider how to make virtual graduations an option for students in future ceremonies.

1.6 Starring of Items

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved all unstarred items as having been considered and noted, and their respective recommendations as adopted.

[2/12/2020:3]

1.7 Arrangement of Business

The following items were identified for consideration in closed session: 2.1.1, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4. Item 2.1.1 was moved to be considered at the start of the agenda, after item 1.7.

2. CHANCELLOR'S AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORTS

2.1 Chancellor's Report [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor's report was taken as read.

The Chancellor spoke to the Review of the NSW Vocational Education and Training Sector. The report has been submitted and a meeting has been scheduled with the NSW Premier to discuss the report.

The Chancellor advised that he had presented the findings of the report at a recent meeting of the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee, and outlined the five major recommendations:

1. To enhance quality vocational training in schools and raise its standing to that of higher education;
2. for NSW to take the lead in piloting a new type of industry focussed cross-sectoral tertiary institution;
3. the creation of professional careers guidance;
4. for greater collaboration between education institutions and industry; and
5. to extend income contingent loans for students completing Certificate 3 and Certificate 4 vocational qualifications.

Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor Advisory Council

The Chancellor provided an update on the recent meeting of the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor Advisory Council, noting that the discussions were both effective and informative. Representatives from Government, not-for-profit investors and industry attended the meeting and discussed how to develop a social and affordable housing strategy, which would see both financial and social returns to the University. The Council also discussed housing security for older women and a number of attendees were interested to see the research on this topic.

The Board were advised that the Advisory Council discussed themes for the 2021 meetings, including Health and Agri-Business.

National Redress Scheme

The Chancellor advised that at the November Board Executive Committee meeting, it was agreed that the University would apply to join the National Redress Scheme into Institutional Child Abuse. Joining the Scheme is considered low risk; however, the

University has an obligation to show leadership and should opt in. The Board was advised that the Vice-Chancellor and University Secretary and General Counsel are arranging for an application to be made. The Board will be provided with an update in early 2021.

Giving Day

The Chancellor advised the Board that the University won the Best Fundraising or Engagement Campaign – Small Team Award for the inaugural Giving Day event in 2019.

2.1.1 Vice-Chancellor's Performance Plan and University Achievements and Challenges in 2020 and Priorities in 2021 [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.1.2 Board of Trustees Forward Item Schedule 2021 [Open Session Item]

The Board noted the Board of Trustees Forward Item Schedule for 2021.

2.2 Vice-Chancellor's Report [Open Session Item]

The Vice-Chancellor's report was taken as read.

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted a number of items, including:

COVID-19

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on COVID-19 and thanked the Board for its support during 2020.

The Federal Government's Safe Corridor initiative for international students continues to be pushed back due to other priorities, and it now appears that it will be February 2021 before a small number of international students may be included on inbound flights. There is a high level of offshore demand for Western Sydney University programs, and students want an on campus experience if they are permitted to enter the country.

The University also proposes to implement a hybrid international education model, combining online off-shore and a face to face in country experience, to capitalise on the teaching and learning innovations that have resulted from the pandemic.

Future Directions 201-2023

A number of the foreshadowed change proposals are under way and the University is still on target to achieve the level of change outlined in the Future Directions paper.

The Board sought clarification on how the University will address the issue of academic staff casualisation. The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that the Budget forecast for casual spend in 2021 has increased, and that the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor is in discussions with the unions on new models to support greater security of employment for some categories of casual staff. The University is encouraged by the models that are being explored with further discussions scheduled for early in 2021.

International update

The University has seen a busy time for international engagement by using Zoom to connect with many of the University's partners. Recently, the University hosted the virtual launch of the Australia-India Water Centre (AIWC). The AIWC consists of several universities, research organisations and business partners from Australia and India, and has been established to improve water management and sustainable economic development.

Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Bill 2020 (Cth)

The *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Bill 2020* is currently being considered by the Commonwealth Parliament. The legislation includes a major expansion of the scope to include the education, research and innovation sector, which will have a significant impact on universities. Universities Australia continues to lobby for changes to the draft legislation.

Student Experience Survey

The Board discussed students' responses to online learning versus the campus experience. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) spoke to the improved academic performance of students during COVID-19, and how the University is focusing on continued improvement to delivery and engagement of content in 2021. The University will introduce HyFlex, which allows a learning activity to be delivered in three different modalities - face-to-face, online streaming or in a packaged 'to-watch-later' (non-synchronous) format. Learning and teaching spaces will be Zoom enabled across all campuses.

Medium Term Note

The Vice-President (Finance and Resources) provided an update on the Medium Term Note issue and advised the Board that it received a positive outcome by achieving the lowest price for a University at 1.6% for \$200 million. The Vice-Chancellor advised that the outcome reflects the quality of the presentation and acknowledged the efforts of the Vice-President (Finance and Resources), the Executive Director (Financial Operations) and Associate Director (Treasury).

2.3 Academic Senate Report [Open Session Item]

The Chair of Academic Senate spoke to aspects of the written report, including:

International Admissions

Academic Senate ratified an extended variation to clauses 24 and 25 of the *Admission Policy*, clause 14b of the *Enrolment Policy* and clause 9(a) of the *International Student Fees and Refunds Agreement* for an additional six months. The rationale for the extended variation is to amend the admission procedures and practices to accommodate international student applicants who continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Academic Senate Policy Committee

Academic Senate approved the establishment of the Academic Senate Policy Committee. The Committee will provide consistency and transparency of policy development, allow agility and flexibility of policy review and improve compliance through a review schedule.

Policy Approvals

Academic Senate approved the revised *Progression Policy* (renamed *Progression and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress*). The policy has been re-written to incorporate changes required as part of the new Student Management System (SMS). Progression checks have been removed based on student passing 50% of units and has been replaced with checks based on a satisfactory Grade Point Average (GPA). This will assist with the new Job-ready Graduate package (JRG) guidelines.

Academic Senate approved the revised *Assessment Policy* (renamed *Assessment Policy – Criterial and Standards-Based Assessment*) and the revised *Assessment Guide*. The updated policy will deliver a better understanding of the purpose and standards of assessment and allow for better student outcomes.

Revised Student Code of Conduct

Academic Senate endorsed the revised *Student Code of Conduct*, which has been rewritten to align more closely with the recently revised and approved staff *Code of Conduct*. It is now a principles-based document that links to the values in the University's Strategic Plan. The

revised *Student Code of Conduct* also makes particular reference to the values of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom, to ensure alignment with the French Model Code.

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the proposed revised Student Code of Conduct.

[2/12/2020:4]

3. SIGNIFICANT MATTERS FOR DELIBERATION OR APPROVAL

3.1 2021-2023 Operational Plan and Budget [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

[Ms Kerry Stubbs left the meeting at 10.40am]

3.2 Sustaining Success 2021-2026 [Open Session Item]

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the item and advised the Board that *Sustaining Success 2021-2026*, builds on the work of Emeritus Professor Denise Kirkpatrick and the *Securing Success 2018-2020* strategic plan. The new plan meets the challenges of a significantly changed operating environment for the University, reflecting the impacts of COVID-19, new funding arrangements under the Job-Ready Graduates program, and the University's own recovery planning. He thanked Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy, Professor Brian Stout and Professor Scott Bowman for their work on finalising the Plan.

The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor spoke to the new Strategic Plan, outlining that it centres the University's future on the values of boldness, fairness, integrity and excellence guided by the principles of sustainability, equity, transformation and connectedness. The University's mission, detailed in *Sustaining Success*, is to co-create thriving communities by producing successful graduates and impactful research.

Eight 'enablers' support the fulfilment of the University's values and principles: people; place; learning and teaching; student experience; research and innovation; global engagement; Indigenous perspectives and technology and systems. Each enabler is connected to decadal and operational plans and aligned with measurements that assist the University in assessing progress against the goals of *Sustaining Success*.

The Chair of Academic Senate advised the Board that the Strategic Plan has been written in accessible language and makes sense to all stakeholders, internally and externally. It has been tested across six scenarios to see how it could be deployed.

The Board sought clarification on fragmentation of the traditional University framework from influences such as micro-credentialing, secondary pathways and partnerships with schools, and how this is reflected in the plan. The Board discussed that this should be articulated within the plan.

It was agreed to approve the new Strategic Plan, *Sustaining Success 2021-2026* in principle, noting that a final version will be presented to the Board in February 2021. A baseline for the measures will be set and mapped with a dashboard provided to the Board at its next meeting.

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved in principle the new Strategic Plan, Sustaining Success 2021-2026, and noted that a final version will be presented to the Board at its meeting in February 2021.

[2/12/2020:6]

3.3 Board of Trustees Membership [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.4 Western Growth Update [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4. BOARD COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY BODIES

4.1 Audit and Risk Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4.2 Board Executive Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4.3 Finance and Investment Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4.4 University Infrastructure Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

5. OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR NOTING

5.1 Uses of the University Seal [Open Session Item]

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the affixing of the University Seal to those documents listed in the attached report, pursuant to the University Seal Usage Policy.

[2/12/2020:12]

6. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSURE

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 24 February 2021 at 8.30am in Boardroom 1, Building EB, Parramatta South Campus.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.30pm.

Confirmed by:

(Chair)



(Date)

24/2/21
