

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of meeting 2022/2 of the Board of Trustees of Western Sydney University, held at 8.30am on Wednesday 13 April 2022 in Boardroom 1, Building EB, Parramatta South campus and via Zoom.

Present:

Board of Trustees members on Parramatta South campus
Professor Peter Shergold AC (Chair and Chancellor)
Professor Robert Mailhammer (Chair of Academic Senate)
Ms Elizabeth Dibbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Ms Kerry Stubbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Ms Holly Kramer (Pro-Chancellor)
Mr Simon Hickey
Mr Joseph Carrozzi AM
Ms Georgia Lee
Ms Natalia Vukolova
Ms Coralie Properjohn
Miss Rayaca Tayabally
Associate Professor Jennifer Mensch

Board of Trustees member via Zoom
Professor Barney Glover AO (Vice-Chancellor and President)
Dr Linda O'Brien AM (Pro-Chancellor)
Mr James Christian PSM
Mr Bob Sahota

Apologies:

Mr Lee Pinder
Mr Christopher Youness

In Attendance:

Ms Jane Hutchison (University Secretary)
Professor Clare Pollock (Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost)
Mr Peter Pickering (Vice-President, Finance and Resources)
Professor Simon Barrie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic)
Mr Angelo Kourtis (Vice-President, People and Advancement)
Professor Deborah Sweeney (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International)
Professor Michelle Trudgett (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership)
Ms Sophie Buck (Director, Office of Governance Services)
Ms Christine Sharpe (Executive Governance Officer) (Minutes)
Mrs Belinda Salvatori (Executive Assistant) (Meeting Support)

For Items 3.1 and 3.2 only:

Mr David Daniels (Director, Financial Audit, NSW Audit Office)
Mr Bhavesh Narsey (Partner, Grant Thornton)
Mr Darren Greentree (Chief Financial Officer)

1. OPENING AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members and observers, particularly noting the newly elected Academic staff member, Associate Professor Jennifer Mensch. The Chair gave an acknowledgement of country, declared the meeting open and confirmed a quorum was present.

1.2 Apologies

The Board noted apologies from Mr Lee Pinder and Mr Christopher Youness.

The Chancellor advised that Mr Christopher Youness has resigned from the University, and that another election will be held to fill the Professional Staff member position.

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 noted that he has become the Chair of the James Martin Institute for Public Policy and that he will also be overseeing an independent review of Australia's COVID response, funded by the Paul Ramsey Foundation, the Minderoo Foundation and the John and Myriam Wylie Foundation.

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

The Board resolved as follows:

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes and confidential minutes of its 23 February 2022 meeting.

[13/4/2022:1]

1.5 Action Sheets from Previous Meetings

The Board noted the actions taken on items listed.

1.6 Starring of Items

Resolution

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

[13/4/2022:2]

1.7 Arrangement of Business

The following items were identified for consideration in closed session: 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 5.2.

2. REPORTS

2.1 Chancellor's Report [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor spoke to his report, noting the following:

- *Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Council* – a meeting was held on 18 March focussing on the Western Creative Decadal strategy, with a presentation by the Director, Ms Dolla Merrillees. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Arts, and Regional Youth, the Hon. Ben Franklin, attended and engaged in how the University can complement contributions and collaborations with key business partners and Government in Western Sydney.
- *UA/UCC Joint Statement – 'Built on Bright Ideas'* sets out a path for the university sector to play its role in helping solve the nation's biggest challenges and secure Australia's future. Significantly, this is the first time that both organisations have released a joint statement.
- *Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Course* – The Chancellor strongly encouraged members to attend the upcoming AICD courses on University Governance. The Chancellor also advised that the University Chancellors Council's National Conference on University Governance will now be held on 12-14 October 2022, in Brisbane.

2.1.1 2023 Board of Trustees Meeting Dates [Open Session Item]

The Board noted the 2023 Board of Trustees meeting dates.

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

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following items in his report:

- *Return to Campus and Vaccination strategies*: Increased COVID-19 cases have created challenges for staff and students. In response, the University has been resilient and flexible, moving to online learning and work from home arrangements, where necessary.
- *National Student Safety Survey*: The Vice-Chancellor provided a detailed report on the outcomes of the National Student Safety Survey, and advised that he has held a number of meetings with students, as well as an all-staff webinar, to discuss the priorities and next steps the University will take to address sexual assault and sexual harassment on the University's campuses. The Respectful Relationships Taskforce will consider other ways to engage with vulnerable groups. The Board noted the University's response will be discussed at the first meeting of the People and Culture Committee, and discussed mandatory training for all staff members, including research supervisors and first responders. Members also discussed having mechanisms in place to empower vulnerable cohorts to speak about these issues.
- *Statement regarding the Ukraine*: The University released a public statement in support of the people of Ukraine, as well as those within the Russian Federation and Belarus who are opposing the acts of violence in Ukraine. Members discussed the importance and sensitivities of the University supporting universities in Ukraine, while condemning Russia and maintaining a relationship with China at an institution-to-institution level.
- *Federal Election*: The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the current election priorities that the University will seek to leverage, including the Nursing and Midwifery Clinical School in Penrith, the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Hub, and the Agri-Tech Hub.
- *Student Load Update*: The Vice-President (People and Advancement) spoke to the Student Load and Revenue report, noting that the University is above target on revenue, but below target on load. Commonwealth Grant Scheme load is below target for both commencing and continuing students due to a number of factors, including students accelerating their program of study and graduating early, an extremely competitive

admissions round, and an increase in job market opportunities. International student numbers are strong. The University will implement strategies which seek to increase mid-year and summer intakes.

- *Chancellor's farewell events*: The Vice-Chancellor highlighted key dates of events to acknowledge the Chancellor's service to the University and the sector ahead of his retirement at the end of the year.
- *Enterprise Bargaining Update*: The Vice-Chancellor provided a brief update on progress with the latest round of enterprise bargaining. An administrative two per cent pay increase was given to staff outside the bargaining process.
- *Launch of the 21C Minors*: The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) advised that the University is building five 21C minors in 2022, which will add to the current suite of ten. One of the new minors will be in the creative arts.
- *Initial Teacher Education Review*: The Board discussed the implications of the review into Initial Teacher Education. The report highlights the need to do more to raise the esteem of the profession, and for teachers to be supported in the classroom.

2.3 Academic Senate Report [Open Session Item]

The Chair of Academic Senate spoke to the report, noting:

Student Management System (SMS) Project update

The Chief Digital and Information Security Officer provided an update to Senate on the SMS Project, and advised that the University is addressing current issues. Academic Senate will continue to monitor the issues arising from the SMS implementation.

Academic Governance Policy

The Chair of Academic Senate spoke to the revised *Academic Governance Policy*. The revisions are minor in nature, including updated membership to reflect the current organisational structure of the University, updated terminology to reflect the new Student Management System and *Curriculum Design and Approvals Policy*, clarification on who may attend on behalf of members who are on leave, amendments to address diversity of membership, and editorial amendments to improve readability of the document.

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the revised *Academic Governance Policy*.

[13/4/2022:3]

3. SIGNIFICANT MATTERS FOR DELIBERATION OR APPROVAL

3.1 Assurance of Controls [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.2 2021 Audited Financial Statements [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.3 2021 Annual Report [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor introduced this item, drawing the Board's attention to the Governance and Management and Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Attestation sections of the Annual Report.

The Vice-Chancellor spoke to the Annual Report, noting that it reflects well on the University's performance during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

The Board of Trustees:

- 1. noted the relevant sections of the Annual Report that pertain to the Board of Trustees, namely the sections on Governance and Management (pages 10-17), and appendices 1 – 3; and**
- 2. approved the Western Sydney University Annual Report 2021 and authorised the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor to sign the letter of submission to the Minister in accordance with section 9A(e) of *The Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984*.**

[13/4/2022:5]

3.4 Sustaining Success 2021-2026: In-Depth Analysis and Reporting - Sustainability [Open Session Item]

The Vice-Chancellor introduced this item advising that at the June 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, it was agreed that regular ‘deep-dive’ reports on the key measures of *Sustaining Success 2021 – 2026* be provided at Board meetings throughout 2022. These ‘deep-dive’ reports will be in addition to the regular, bi-annual dashboard presented to the Board in June and December. The Board were supportive of the new reporting format, and suggested that a cover page with the upfront context would be helpful.

[Ms Natalia Vukolova left the meeting at 10.45am]

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Enterprise and International), spoke to measure 1 – Grow the University’s reputation, highlighting the targets for the University’s performance in the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings, including: the World University Ranking, Impact Rankings and Young Universities Ranking. Board members discussed the staff to student ratio, noting that the proposed de-casualisation strategy is expected to have a positive impact on ratios.

The Vice-President (Finance and Resources) spoke to measure 2 – Adopt energy renewables in campus operations and advance toward carbon neutrality in 2023, highlighting that from 1 July 2021, the University’s electricity supply contract is now 100% accredited ‘Green Power’ from renewable sources. The Vice-President (Finance and Resources) spoke to current activities, including continued commitment to Green Star accredited buildings, solar panelling, installing additional Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations, and introducing EV as part of the University’s fleet of vehicles. It was agreed that the links to the current Sustainability Reports and the Sustainability and Resilience Decadal Strategy be circulated to Board members.

[Ms Natalia Vukolova joined the meeting at 10.54am]

The Vice-President (Finance and Resources) spoke to measure 3 – Demonstrate financial resilience and robustness by growing the University corpus and maintaining liquidity, highlighting that investment returns met CPI and are tracking well against the benchmark.

3.5 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 Foundation Council [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 *Western Sydney University (University Seal and Authentication) Rule 2021*.

[13/4/2022:10]

5.2 Chancellor Nomination and Election Process [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

[Items 5.3 and 5.4 were discussed prior to item 5.2]

5.3 Amendments to the Western Sydney University Act 1997 (NSW) [Late Paper] [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor spoke to the late item on the proposed amendments to the *Western Sydney University Act 1997 (NSW)*, noting that the NSW Parliamentary Counsel Office has drafted a clause for inclusion in *Statute Law (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill*. The proposed amendment provides for a member of the Board of Trustees to preside at meetings of a committee constituted by the Board, in place of the Deputy Chancellor as is currently the case.

5.4 Acquisition of Whitlam House [Open Session Item]


The Vice-Chancellor spoke to the acquisition of Whitlam House, and advised that the University has received confirmation that the Commonwealth are committed to the funding of the acquisition and partial refurbishment of the house. The University will now acquire the property, and it will be refurbished in time for the 50th anniversary of the election of the Whitlam Government in December 2022.

6. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSURE

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 8 June 2022 at 1.00pm in Memorial Hall, Hawkesbury Campus.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.35pm.

Confirmed by:



(Chair)



(Date)