

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of meeting 2019/6 of the Board of Trustees of Western Sydney University, held at 8.30am on Wednesday 4 December 2019, Building EB, Boardroom, Parramatta South campus.

Present: Board of Trustees
Professor Peter Shergold AC (Chair and Chancellor)
Professor Barney Glover AO (Vice-Chancellor and President)
Ms Elizabeth Dibbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Ms Carmel Hourigan (Deputy Chancellor) (*via Zoom*)
Ms Kerry Stubbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik AO
Dr Ben Etherington
Ms Nicole Gismondo
Mr Peeyush Gupta AM
Dr David Harland
Ms Naomi Hastings
Ms Georgia Lee
Associate Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy (Chair of Academic Senate)
Mr Bob Sahota
Dr Linda O'Brien AM
Ms Gabrielle Trainor AO (*via Zoom for Item 1.1.1 only*)

Apologies: Ms Holly Kramer
Mr Joseph Carrozzi

In Attendance: Western Sydney University
Ms Helen Fleming (University Secretary and General Counsel)
Professor Denise Kirkpatrick (Acting Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Mr Peter Pickering (Vice-President, Finance and Resources)
Professor Sharon Bell AM (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Strategy and Planning)
Professor Kevin Dunn (Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation)
Mr Angelo Kourtis (Vice-President, People and Advancement)
Professor Simon Barrie (Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic)
Ms Sophie Buck (Director, Office of Governance Services)
Ms Christine Sharpe (Executive Governance Officer) (Minutes)
Ms Narelle Vance (Administration Officer) (Meeting Support)

1. OPENING AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members and observers, declared the meeting open and confirmed that there was a quorum present.

1.1.1 Confidential Item: Term of Office of Chancellor

[Ms Gabrielle Trainor joined the meeting via Zoom at 8.30am during this item].

[Ms Georgia Lee joined the meeting at 8.34am during this item].

This item was considered in closed session.

[Ms Gabrielle Trainor left the meeting via Zoom at 8.55am during this item].

1.2 Apologies

The Board noted apologies from Ms Holly Kramer and Mr Joseph Carrozzi, and noted that Ms Gabrielle Trainor AO attended the meeting for Item 1.1.1 only, and was an apology for the rest of the meeting.

1.3 Declarations of Material Interests

The Chair invited Board members to declare any new material interests in relation to any matters on the agenda or their role on the Board more generally. No new declarations were made.

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

The Board resolved as follows:

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes and confidential minutes of its 16 October 2019 meeting.

[4/12/2019:2]

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

[4/12/2019:3]

1.7 Arrangement of Business

The following items were identified as being considered in closed session: 2.1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6.

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

2.1 Chancellor's Report [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor, with the full support of the Board, noted the valuable contribution made to the Board by Ms Nicole Gismondo, whose term of office has expired. Ms Rose Lewis has

been elected as the new undergraduate representative and will attend the first meeting of the Board in 2020.

The Chancellor congratulated Dr Ben Etherington, Dr David Harland and Associate Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy on their re-election to the Board. The Chancellor also acknowledged the significant contribution of Professor Sharon Bell, who leaves the University at the end of the year.

The Chancellor acknowledged, with sadness the recent death of Aunty Mae Robinson, the first Aboriginal person to graduate with a Diploma in Teaching and who received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Western Sydney University in 2011. The foyer of Western Sydney University's Ngara Ngura Building at Liverpool is named the 'Aunty Mae Foyer' in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the education of NSW students, their families and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The Chancellor highlighted aspects of his written report, including:

Review of Senior Secondary Pathways

A series of consultation meetings with education experts and Year 11 and 12 students were recently held in all major capital cities. From these discussions, there is general agreement across the sector that the ATAR is a poor single measure of academic achievement. There is also agreement that traditional disciplines, such as literacy and numeracy, are as important as ever but students now require a broader range and mix of skills, including stronger problem-solving, communication and digital skills and the ability to navigate an increasingly complex range of options and pathways into further education and training. The Chancellor advised the Board that the aim of the review was to identify those attributes that students should have on the completion of high school. The final report will be submitted to COAG Education Council in April/May 2020.

St Vincent's Boys' Home

The Chancellor advised the Board that the University has recently been made aware of the allegations of sexual abuse at the St Vincent's Boy's Home, which occupied the building in Westmead that is currently the premises of NICM Health Research Institute.

The University has been in contact with Ms Prue Gregory from Knowmore Legal Services to explore an appropriate way of acknowledging the history. An update on this matter will be provided to the Board in 2020 once further information has been received.

2.1.1 Vice-Chancellor's Performance Plan and University Achievements and Challenges in 2019 and Priorities in 2020 [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.1.2 Forward Item Schedule 2020 [Open Session Item]

The Board discussed the 2020 Forward Planning Schedule noting that each of the Cluster Pro-Vice Chancellors will present to the Board in 2020.

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

The Vice-Chancellor presented his report and highlighted a number of items, including:

India trip

The Vice-Chancellor advised that he travelled to India and joined the Australian Government Education Mission, which was led by the Federal Minister for Education, the Hon. Dan Tehan MP. The University attracted Indian ministerial representation at each of its events.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that a number of Memoranda of Understanding were signed on behalf of the University and one in particular with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research which will further build on an existing relationship.

Foreign Interference Guidelines

The University Foreign Interference Taskforce released the final *Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the University Sector*. These Guidelines have received strong support from the sector. The University will consider changes to its internal practices in line with the Guidelines, including the possibility of reporting to TEQSA.

Research

The University has received advice that nine researchers have been awarded funding from the Australian Research Council, totalling \$3.5 million.

The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that the Australian Research Council has applied a national interest test to research grant applications. Two grant applications from the University were subject to further review under these new guidelines and both were approved.

International Student Mobility

International student mobility opportunities allow students to undertake study, research, volunteering and internships abroad. Between 2015-2018, there was a 54% increase in the number of students graduating with an international study experience.

Load update

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on student load and noted that load has stabilised with positive signs for 2020 enrolments.

The Vice-President (People and Advancement) advised the Board that there is a 20% increase in first preferences for 2020 as well as an increase in the number of first preferences from non-school leavers for the first time in a several years. The University is initiating the use of live data to build load projection models, using lead rather than lag indicators to project load.

Brand update

The Vice-President (People and Advancement) advised the Board that Behavioural Architects have repeated their survey on perceptions of the University; this follows the original survey conducted in 2017. The findings have shown a significant positive shift in the market as to how the University brand is perceived by the public. Further information will be provided at the February Strategy session.

Corpus funding

The Vice-Chancellor advised that after a call for expressions of interest for strategic projects to be supported by the University corpus, 84 applications were received and reviewed by the Senior Executive Group. Seven thematic streams were identified, which included Sustainability, Indigenous, International, Innovation and Industry/Entrepreneurship, Arts and Culture, Student Success strategy and Working Together in New Ways.

The Board discussed the process for the selection of the projects and the approach of streaming the proposals into themes and the importance of a higher level of strategic differentiation in applications. Annual reviews of the selected projects will also be critical to ensure projects are making progress and that funding can be withdrawn for projects failing to meet their objectives.

It was agreed the University Corpus: Governance and Operating Protocols will be reviewed at the February 2020 Board meeting.

In accordance with the ‘University Corpus: Governance and Operating Protocols’, the Board of Trustees approved the recommendation for the allocation of up to \$14 million of corpus funding to be released through the period 2020-2023 for the following projects:

- 1 Sustainability Impact: Transforming Our Future;**
- 2 Building Indigenous Capacity;**
- 3 Partnerships for Global Change;**
- 4 Western Ventures and Innovation Pathways;**
- 5 Western Sydney Creative;**
- 6 Student Success Centre; and**
- 7 Working Together in New Ways.**

[4/12/2019:4]

Casualisation

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on casualisation, noting that more data is required to obtain a greater understanding of the University’s staffing profile to inform employment practices and workforce planning, including information on the extent of teaching being undertaken by casual staff. A survey is planned for 2020 to generate the additional data required. The University will continue to monitor casualisation in line with TEQSA’s Key Risk Findings Report (2019), which directly linked high casualisation with student attrition and lower progress rates.

Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula

The launch of the Greater Parramatta Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) region was held on 1 November 2019 with the University of Sydney. Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, The Hon. Stuart Ayres MP was in attendance and spoke positively about the initiative.

Staffing Matters

The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that Professor Sharon Bell will leave the University at the end of December 2019 to commence a new role at the Australian National University. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged Professor Bell’s contribution to the University, in particular to strategic planning and the Academic Restructure project.

The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board of the appointment of Professor Michail Kagioglou as Dean of the new School of Engineering, commencing April 2020.

The Board noted the update on the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s portfolio and the proposed changes for 2020, which included renaming the Research and Innovation Division to the Division of Research, Enterprise and International.

2.3 Academic Senate Report [Open Session Item]

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

Senate Review

Considerable progress has been made in response to the Academic Senate Review, with changes to its membership and terms of reference. Other initiatives introduced in response to the Review include the introduction of a student paper tabled at each meeting, and a pre-Senate meeting held with the elected student members and the Chair to ensure more collaboration and support are provided to the student-elected members.

Charter of Academic Freedom

The Board noted that the Academic Senate approved a revised Charter of Academic Freedom at its October meeting. The Charter speaks to the rights and responsibility of academics and students of the University.

3. SIGNIFICANT MATTERS FOR DELIBERATION OR APPROVAL

3.1 2020-2022 University Operational Plan [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

[Ms Carmel Hourigan left the meeting at 11.18am]

3.2 Western Growth Update [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.3 Code of Conduct [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor spoke to this item, noting the relationship between the Code of Conduct to the Model Code for *Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers (French Model Code)* (to be discussed at item 3.4 below) and the *Charter of Academic Freedom*.

The Vice-Chancellor advised that the Code has been rewritten, and now incorporates the values set out in the University's Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and the principles in the Ethical Framework for Decision-Making previously approved by the Board of Trustees. The Code has been designed as a positive document, focusing on the values and behaviours that the University upholds, rather than a punitive instrument whose purpose was to define staff misconduct. The Code is also closely aligned with the direction of public policy, using the French Model Code's definition of academic freedom and removing clauses prohibiting public comment to ensure that the University is aligned appropriately with the French Model Code.

The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the contributions of the Working Party and confirmed an appropriate consultation process had been undertaken for the Code of Conduct, including with the Executive Committee, Academic Senate and the broader University community.

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the revised *Code of Conduct*.

[4/12/2019:6]

3.4 Model Code for Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor spoke to this item and advised the Board that the Model Code is a result of a review undertaken by the Hon. Robert French, AC which sets out eight principles relating to academic freedom and freedom of speech.

The Board was asked to endorse principles 1-8 set out in the Model Code, and to note, as outlined in the Explanatory Note, that these principles are captured in a number of University documents, including the *Board of Trustees Ethical Framework for Decision Making*, *Code of Conduct* and *Charter of Academic Freedom*.

The Board noted that a policy dealing with freedom of expression on campus will be developed and submitted to the Board for approval in April 2020.

Resolution

That the Board of Trustees:

1. endorsed Principles 1 to 8 set out in the *Model Code for Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers*, March 2019 (Model Code);
2. noted the Explanatory Note explaining the University's commitment to the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech set out in the Model Code;
3. noted that the Principles in the Model Code have already been captured in a number of University documents, including the Charter of Academic Freedom, the Board of Trustees Ethical Framework for Decision Making and the Code of Conduct;
4. noted that the Principles outlined in the Model Code will inform the review of the University's non-statutory policies and procedures to ensure alignment with those Principles in their interpretation and application and that any departure from those Principles should be for valid, clearly articulated reasons; and
5. instructed University Management to develop a policy concerning freedom of speech (or expression) on campus as it relates to invited and other visitors to the University, to be submitted to the Board for its consideration at the April 2020 meeting.

[4/12/2019:7]

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 External Relations Working Party [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4.4 Finance and Investment Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

1.5 Foundation Council [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4.6 University Infrastructure Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

5. OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR NOTING

5.1 Accounting Standard Update [Open Session Item]

The Vice-President (Finance and Resources) spoke to this item and provided the Board with an update as to the University's approach regarding the implantation of AASB15/AASB1058 Revenue from Contracts with Customers and Income of Not-For-Profit Entities.

The Australian Accounting Standards Board made a decision to issue a narrow scope deferral in respect to the implementation of these two standards only for universities and only in relation to research grants. This means a University can choose, but will not be required, to apply the new revenue standards to Research Revenue in their 31 December 2019 financial reports.

The University's preference is full implementation and has forecasted and budgeted accordingly to account for the financial alignment of reduced revenue in both current and future periods.

5.2 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.

[4/12/2019:17]

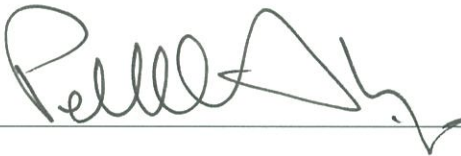
6. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSURE

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 19 February 2020 at 8.30am at the Parramatta South Campus.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.34pm.

Confirmed by:

(Chair)



(Date)

19/2/20
