

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of meeting 2020/4 of the Board of Trustees of Western Sydney University, held at 1.00pm on Wednesday 10 June 2020, by Zoom.

Present:

Board of Trustees present by Zoom

Professor Peter Shergold AC (Chair and Chancellor)
Professor Barney Glover AO (Vice-Chancellor and President)
Ms Carmel Hourigan (Deputy Chancellor)
Ms Kerry Stubbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik AO
Mr Joseph Carrozzi
Mr Peeyush Gupta AM
Ms Holly Kramer
Dr Ben Etherington
Dr David Harland
Ms Naomi Hastings
Ms Georgia Lee
Ms Rose Lewis
Dr Linda O'Brien AM
Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy (Chair of Academic Senate)
Mr Bob Sahota
Ms Gabrielle Trainor AO

Apologies:

Ms Elizabeth Dibbs (Deputy Chancellor)

In Attendance:

Western Sydney University in attendance by Zoom

Professor Denise Kirkpatrick (Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Professor Deborah Sweeney (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International)
Mr Peter Pickering (Vice-President, Finance and Resources)
Mr Angelo Kourtis (Vice-President, People and Advancement)
Professor Simon Barrie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic)
Ms Helen Fleming (University Secretary and General Counsel)
Ms Sophie Buck (Director, Office of Governance Services)
Ms Christine Sharpe (Executive Governance Officer) (Minutes)
Mrs Kylie Cooke (Senior Governance Officer) (Meeting Support)

(For Item 4.1 only)

Distinguished Professor Annemarie Hennessy AM

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.

1.2 Apologies

The Board noted apologies from Ms Elizabeth Dibbs.

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. Mr Peeyush Gupta AM made declarations of interest at Items 3.3 and 3.3.1. Mr Joseph Carrozzi also advised that his employer is a tenant of the 1PSQ building, which is relevant to item 3.3.1. The Chair confirmed that this is not a conflict.

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

The Board requested a minor amendment to item 3.1 (Financial Scenarios in Response to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) to the 21 May 2020 meeting minutes with the insertion of words “and for job protection”.

Resolution

Subject to the minor amendment to item 3.1 of the 21 May 2020 minutes, the Board of Trustees approved the minutes and confidential minutes of its 8 April 2020 and 21 May 2020 meetings.

[10/6/2020:1]

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

[10/6/2020:2]

1.7 Arrangement of Business

The following items were identified for consideration in closed session: 3.2, 3.3, 3.3.1, 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4. It was also agreed to defer Item 3.2 until after Deputy Chancellor Hourigan left the meeting.

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 advised the Board that the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways is now complete with a report to be tabled at an upcoming meeting of the COAG Education Council.

The Chancellor emphasised the importance of university governance, particularly in light of four current prominent cases receiving attention in the media involving James Cook

University, Murdoch University, the University of Adelaide and the University of Queensland. The Board agreed that a briefing paper with case studies will be circulated for reflection against the Board's Ethical Framework for Decision Making, and will be scheduled for discussion at a future Board meeting.

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:

Departure of Professor Denise Kirkpatrick

The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that Professor Denise Kirkpatrick has resigned from the University, effective from end September 2020, after six years of service. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged Professor Kirkpatrick's significant contribution to the University both as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and most recently as Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) update

The University continues to lobby the NSW Government, through the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee, and the Commonwealth Government, through the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) and Universities Australia (UA), for additional support for the sector.

The NSW Government recently announced a loan guarantee scheme valued at \$750 million to help universities recover from the impact of COVID-19 and to become more sustainable. This means that the University's loan facility can be guaranteed under the NSW Government's Triple-A credit rating.

The recent announcements by the Chinese Government in relation to the safety of Chinese students in Australia are of concern. The NSW Government is considering the merits of opening a 'safe corridor' for international students inbound to Sydney. The University is hopeful of trials commencing by September with a repeat to allow for an intake in early 2021. The vast majority of these students will be from China. India and Nepal are more problematic because of the significant challenges faced by those countries with the COVID-19 crisis.

The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the work of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Vice-President, People and Advancement and the Executive Director, Human Resources for the significant progress made in negotiations with the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU). Both local Union branches have endorsed the proposed variations to the University Enterprise Agreements. The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that the University is committed to no stand downs of staff, no forced redundancies and job protection. The proposed amendments to the Enterprise Agreements will be progressed to the Fair Work Commission, if staff vote in favour of the changes.

Domestic student load

The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor recently met with Minister Tehan to discuss the ongoing challenges in the sector with respect to domestic student load with the continued caps on funding.

Shared Services UNSW

Following a discussion between the Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of WSU and UNSW in late April, an internal assessment of a potential merging of some professional services was commissioned. The rationale for the proposal was based on the possible efficiencies and strategic synergies achievable via a targeted merger.

Multiversity and NUW Alliance Update

The COVID-19 pandemic has provoked a change in the strategic orientation of the Western City and Aerotropolis Authority (WCAA), reflective of the policy and economic shift of the NSW and Commonwealth Governments. The WCAA has pivoted its focus and activities from industry attraction towards a recovery footing. For WSU and the NUW Alliance, this presents a strategic opportunity to bring forward education and training timelines.

Nirimba Campus Update

The University has commenced assessment of a feasibility study of the potential to transition the University College off the Nirimba campus, relocate it to other campuses and options for divestment of the site. If the case proves to be compelling, proposals will be progressed through the Finance and Investment and University Infrastructure Committees.

Sydney Metro West Station at Rydalmere

The NSW Government recently announced that the station at Rydalmere will not proceed. However, there will be a light rail stop at Rydalmere.

Research Grant Funding Successes

The University has been successful in securing research funding, including ARC Linkage Grant Funding, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Investigator Grants for Emerging Leaders Funding and State of Minnesota Research Grant.

True Reward

The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the work of the Vice-President, People and Advancement on the True Reward program.

General Staffing Matters

Professor James Arvanitakis has been appointed to the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor, Engagement.

Other Matters

The Board also discussed the following matters:

- Admission criteria and academic standards (particularly group work) involving international students and the need to stay vigilant about these matters;
- Successful delivery of professional services post Shared Services and the need to harmonise systems;
- The University's response to the Black Lives Matter movement. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation is developing a strategy.

2.3 Academic Senate Report [Open Session Item]

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

Academic Policy Review

The Chair of Academic Senate thanked the Board of Trustees for the approval to delegate authority to the Chair of Academic Senate to temporarily suspend or vary policy and procedures approved by Senate. Senate had been very adaptive, moving decision making to the local level to help facilitate rapid change, and this has been appreciated by the University community.

Academic Senate recently approved variations to the Admissions Policy to enable International Admissions to introduce temporary admissions processes and practices to accommodate application impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Freedom of Speech Policy

The Freedom of Speech Policy was well received by the members of Academic Senate.

Courses, Programs and Unit Approvals

There have been a number of 21C curriculum units approved. In particular, a student co-created Governance unit.

3. SIGNIFICANT MATTERS FOR DELIBERATION OR APPROVAL

3.1 Strategic Planning Update [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.2 Board of Trustees Graduate Member [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.3 Western Growth [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.3.1 Lease of 1 Parramatta Square (Peter Shergold Building) [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.4 Cancellation of Digital Textbook Initiative [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4. PRESENTATION

4.1 Health and Medicine Cluster [Open Session Item]

[Distinguished Professor Annemarie Hennessy AO, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Health and Medicine) joined the meeting at 3.20pm for this item]

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Health and Medicine), Distinguished Professor Annemarie Hennessy AO, attended the meeting to provide Board members with an overview of the Health and Medicine Cluster.

The Health and Medicine Cluster consists of the School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, School of Psychology and the Translational Health Research Institute. This group of related disciplines has always worked well together, and the COVID 19 pandemic has proven how well it operates as a Cluster. Examples of this are the recent Health Cluster COVID-19 Research Seminar series, and the School of Medicine weekly research seminars.

Professor Hennessy spoke to the Health and Wellbeing and Translation, Integration and Innovation themes of the Cluster, and the theme champions, Professor Virginia Schmied and Associate Professor Paul Breen.

Professor Annemarie Hennessy also provided the Board with an update on the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Distinguished Professor Annemarie Hennessy AO, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Health and Medicine) left the meeting at 3.40pm at the conclusion of this item]

5. BOARD COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY BODIES

5.1 Audit and Risk Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

5.2 Board Executive Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

5.3 Finance and Investment Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

5.4 University Infrastructure Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

6. OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR NOTING

6.1 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.

[10/6/2020:7]

7. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSURE

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 8.30am by Zoom.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 4.00pm.

Confirmed by:

(Chair)



(Date)

5/8/20
