

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of meeting 2021/1 of the Board of Trustees of Western Sydney University, held at 8.30am on Wednesday 24 February 2021, in Boardroom 1, Building EB, Parramatta South Campus.

Present:

Professor Peter Shergold AC (Chair and Chancellor)
Professor Barney Glover AO (Vice-Chancellor and President)
Professor Alphaia Possamai-Inesedy (Chair of Academic Senate)
Ms Elizabeth Dibbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Ms Kerry Stubbs (Deputy Chancellor)
Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik AO
Ms Natalia Vukolova
Mr Lee Pinder
Dr Linda O'Brien AM
Mr Bob Sahota
Ms Georgia Lee
Dr Ben Etherington
Dr David Harland
Ms Naomi Hastings
Ms Rose Lewis

Apologies:

Mr Peeyush Gupta AM
Mr Joseph Carrozzi
Ms Holly Kramer

In Attendance:

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)
Mr Angelo Kourtis (Vice-President, People and Advancement)
Professor Deborah Sweeney (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International)
Ms Sophie Buck (Director, Office of Governance Services)
Ms Christine Sharpe (Executive Governance Officer) (Minutes)
Ms Teneille Rousianos (Administrative Assistant) (Meeting Support)

(For Item 4.1 only)

Professor Jing Han, Institute Director, Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture *(joined at 11.00am)*

(Strategy Session only)

Mr Martin Stewart-Weeks, Public Purpose Pty Ltd

1. OPENING AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome

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

The Chair welcomed Ms Natalia Vukolova and Mr Lee Pinder as newly appointed members of the Board.

1.2 Acknowledgement of Country

Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik AO gave an Acknowledgement of Country.

1.3 Apologies

The Board noted apologies from Mr Peeyush Gupta AM, Mr Joseph Carrozzi and Ms Holly Kramer.

1.4 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. No new declarations were made.

1.5 Confirmation of Minutes

The Board resolved as follows:

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes and confidential minutes of its 2 December 2020 meeting.

[24/2/2021:1]

1.6 Action Sheets from Previous Meetings

The Board noted the actions taken on items listed.

1.7 Starring of Items

Resolution

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

[24/2/2021:2]

1.8 Arrangement of Business

The following items were identified for consideration in closed session: 2.1, 2.2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.

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

2.1 Vice-Chancellor Performance Plan [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.2 Chancellor's Report [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor's report was taken as read.

Universities Australia (UA) Review

The Chancellor provided an update on the UA organisational review, which is currently under way. The review is looking at the relationships between Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors. The report will be discussed at the UA Plenary on 10 March 2021.

University Chancellors Council (UCC) – National Conference

The Chancellor advised the Board that the University Chancellors Council will hold its National Conference on university governance on 20-22 October 2021 in Brisbane.

External Review of the Performance of the Board of Trustees

The Chancellor spoke to this item noting that an external review of the Board of Trustees will be conducted in 2021 and it is anticipated to commence mid-year. The Board Executive Committee will, at its next meeting, consider a list of potential external reviewers to conduct the review.

2.2.1 Walker Review of Adoption of Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor spoke to this item and advised the Board that the *Review of the Adoption of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom* conducted by Emeritus Professor Sally Walker identified that there were still some significant areas of non-alignment across the sector.

It was noted that the University's policies were mostly aligned with the Model Code, but the Walker Review identified three specific areas of non-alignment:

- the language used in the *Charter of Academic Freedom* and *Freedom of Speech Policy* is capable of being interpreted to limit academic freedom in a manner inconsistent with the Model Code;
- neither the *Freedom of Speech Policy* nor the *Charter of Academic Freedom* includes provisions consistent with the principles of the Model Code about freedom of speech in the context of visiting speakers; and
- given that the University has implemented the Model Code via three instruments, there needs to be consistency within these documents and with other policies to ensure full alignment with the Model Code.

These instruments and other policies will be reviewed as a matter of priority to ensure full alignment with the Model Code.

The Chancellor advised that the Walker Review also made a number of general recommendations, including that the Model Code be amended to include a requirement that an annual attestation statement be published by universities in their annual reports.

2.2.2 Election of Deputy Chancellor [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

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

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

Return to Campus

Stage 5 of the return to campus plan commenced on 22 February 2021. Approximately 600 staff have applied for a Flexible Working from Home arrangement, to work from home one or two days per week.

Foreign Interference

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International advised the Board on the activities of the Western Sydney University's Foreign Interference Taskforce. It has developed a draft policy and will review existing policies to ensure compliance with the new Commonwealth legislation. It is also developing a risk matrix on international partnerships and conducting an audit of all agreements. In addition, there is benchmarking around training to assist staff. The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that the Audit and Risk Committee receives regular updates on foreign arrangements.

Safe Corridors

New South Wales is leading discussions with the Commonwealth and other State Governments to bring international students into Australia. The program is ready for implementation but is unlikely to commence until Australian residents are repatriated. The University remains hopeful that international students will begin to return from mid-2021.

Student Load update

The Vice-President (People and Advancement) provided an update on student load. The commencing load market is volatile, with other NSW higher education institutions using similar strategies previously deployed by the University, such as direct applicant portals and sub-bachelor diplomas. However, the University appears to be meeting its overall target.

The Board were advised of a positive increase in Indigenous student numbers, with an increase of 8%-15% across all categories.

Engineering Innovation Hub

The 'topping out' ceremony was held on 23 February 2021 with The Hon. Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and representatives from Charter Hall in attendance.

NUW Alliance Update

NUW Alliance has secured \$17 million in funding under the Commonwealth's National Priority Places, Innovative Places and short course Commonwealth supported places initiatives, and is working, with the leadership of Western Sydney University College, on developing, adapting and acquitting the funding by modifying some engineering programs to undergraduate certificates.

Senior Leadership Group – Development Days

The University hosted its annual Senior Leadership Group Development Days over two days at the Peter Shergold Building, Parramatta and the Hawkesbury campus. Day 2 was led by Maximus and focussed on "transformative resilience", which included a unique team building exercise.

All-Staff Webinars

The first all-staff webinar for 2021 took place on 10 February. It focused on the 2020 end of year financial report, the University's return to campus plan, and 2021 Divisional priorities.

Walker Family Foundation

The Walker Family Foundation has pledged funding of over \$2 million in a partnership with the University to promote educational opportunity and performance.

Update on University Staff and Networks

The Board were advised of the recent death of Mr David Hazlett. Mr Hazlett contributed to the University in a number of ways, including as a member of the Foundation Council since 2018 and as a major donor supporting undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships.

The Board were also advised of Professor Jane Marceau's death on 28 December 2020. Professor Marceau was Pro Vice-Chancellor Research of UWS Macarthur from 1996 and the University of Western Sydney, from 2001.

Professor Clare Pollock, Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Flinders University, has been appointed as Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and will commence with the University on 14 June 2021.

Professor Scott Bowman has been appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Charles Darwin University and will leave Western Sydney University on 31 March 2021.

2.4 Academic Senate Report [Open Session Item]

The Academic Senate report was taken as read.

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

Academic Senate Executive Committee

Academic Senate Executive Committee has met on four occasions to approve two donor funded scholarships, the *Diploma in Aerotropolis Industry 4.0 (Mechatronics Skills)* and two associated pathways and three donor funded scholarships.

Curriculum Design and Approvals Policy and Procedures

At the 4 December 2020 meeting, Academic Senate approved the *Curriculum Design and Approvals Policy* (CDA Policy) and associated procedures. The CDA Policy represents the streamlining of the policy suite by replacing seven policies and provides a set of overarching principles that academic staff can use to guide curriculum design. Importantly, partnership pedagogy has been built into the design of the policy.

Policy Variations or Suspensions in Response to COVID-19

A number of policy variations or suspensions in response to COVID-19 have been ratified by Academic Senate, including changes to the Graduation Policy, Examinations Policy, Unit Outline and Learning Guides Policy, Progression and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Policy (GPA Neutral Scheme) and Special Consideration Policy.

3. SIGNIFICANT MATTERS FOR DELIBERATION OR APPROVAL

3.1 Sustaining Success 2021-2026 [Open Session Item]

The Chancellor introduced this item and highlighted aspects of the University's strategic plan – *Sustaining Success 2021 – 2026*, including the four principles: Sustainability, Equity, Transformation and Connectedness. The principles are specific and clear as to where the University wants to position itself. He also drew attention to the appendices, which contain the targets, that are both bold and detailed, indicating the direction in which the University is heading from its current position.

The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the Board members, staff, students and alumni who contributed to the development of the strategic plan. The Senior Deputy Vice-

Chancellor also acknowledged Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy and Professor Brian Stout for their work on the strategic plan.

The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor spoke to the Indigenous perspectives noting that partnering with the Indigenous community enables the University to deliver Indigenous student success.

3.2 Western Growth Update [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.3 Chair, Foundation Council [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4. PRESENTATION

4.1 Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture [Open Session Item]

[Professor Jing Han, Director, Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture joined the meeting at 11.00am for this item]

The Director, Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture, Professor Jing Han, gave a presentation on the Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture, outlining the vision, mission, achievements and strategic plan for 2021.

Vision

Professor Han spoke to the vision of the Institute set by the Vice-Chancellor, “to enable the development of deeper ties forged through open, intellectual and dynamic engagement with centuries old and emerging Chinese arts and culture.”

Mission and Position

Professor Han highlighted the four mission and position statements, including:

- to establish a national hub for arts and cultural exchange between Australia, China and the Sinosphere;
- to be in a leading position in engaging and promoting Australian and Chinese arts and culture;
- to develop collaboration partners: local, national and international; and
- to deliver distinctive program and events to underpin the position of the Institute.

Achievements

Professor Han spoke to the achievements of the Institute, including Research areas and Graduate Programs, Art Exhibitions, Community Engagement and Partnership and International Collaboration.

Professor Han spoke to the strategic focuses in 2021, including the Master of Cross-Cultural Relations and PhDs, with a focus on contemporary Chinese Australian Arts, Chinese culture and Chinese Australian history and Australian and Chinese literature.

[Professor Jing Han, Director, Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture left the meeting at 11.35am 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.

[24/2/2021:12]

7. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSURE

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 8.30am in Boardroom 1, Building EB, Parramatta South Campus.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.15pm.

Confirmed by:

(Chair)



(Date)

14/4/21
