



Non-Confidential Minutes for Council meeting, 20 November 2023

20/11/2023 | 10:00 AM - AEDST

Vice Chancellor's Meeting room, Rod Treyvaud Building, Lismore campus

Members Present (9)

Sandra McPhee AM, Chancellor (Chair)
Prue Berry
Professor Tyrone Carlin, Vice Chancellor
Julie Granger
Associate Professor Renaud Joannes-Boyau
Scott Noble, via Zoom
Jonathan Rourke, via Zoom
Gurpreet Singh
Geoff Stalley

In Attendance

Belinda Atkinson, Council Secretary
Tracy Manning, Administrative Officer, Governance Services
Brendon Nelson, Vice President (Students) and Registrar – item 18
Professor Thomas Roche, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) – item 8
Travis Walker, Vice President (Finance) – items 15, 16 and 17
Jack Williamson, Vice President (Strategy and Implementation) – items 13 and 14

IN-CAMERA COUNCIL ONLY DISCUSSION

Council met in-camera at the commencement of the meeting without the Vice Chancellor or other attendees.

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1. Welcome, Apologies, and Leave of Absence

- The Chancellor gave an Acknowledgment of Country and welcomed Gurpreet Singh to the meeting.
- Apologies were received from Professor Andrew Rose, Lucy Shinnars, and Murray d'Almeida.
- There were no requests for a leave of absence.

2. Chancellor's Introductory Remarks

The Chancellor:

- discussed her attendance as a guest speaker at the 2023 Women in Business Awards Gala Reception Breakfast at the Gold Coast.
- provided a brief update on the search process for new members of Council. Several strong candidates had met with Professor Mary Spongberg, Associate Professor Renaud Joannes-Boyau and Julie Granger in November. The People and Culture Committee would propose preferred candidates to Council.

3. Previous Meetings

3.1 Confirmation of Minutes – Council meeting, 26 September 2023

It was resolved:

Council:

- (a) **agrees** that the draft Confidential Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 September 2023 can be signed by the Chancellor as a true and correct record of the meeting; and
- (b) **approves** the uploading of a Non-Confidential Council Minutes on items of open business of the Council meeting held on 26 September 2023 to the University Council webpage.

3.2 Matters Arising

None.

3.3 Action Items

There were no open action items.

4. Councillors' Business

None.

5. Declarations of Interest

None.

6. Agenda

6.1 Starring of Items

Item 8 was additionally starred for discussion.

It was resolved:

Council agrees that all unstarred items be noted or approved in accordance with the relevant draft resolutions.

6.2 Arrangement of Agenda

Council discussed item 18 before item 15. The remainder of the agenda was discussed in the order presented.

7. Safety Matters

Council noted the emergency procedures for the Lismore campus included in the agenda papers.

STAFF/STUDENT CONVERSATION

8. *Presentation: Southern Cross Model and outcomes for student equity groups

Professor Thomas Roche, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) provided a presentation on the outcomes for student equity groups under the Southern Cross Model. He highlighted:

- improved student success rates. The mean for Unit Success was 87.9% in 2023 compared to 70.5% in 2019.
- decreased absent fail rates from 5.7% in 2019 to 3.2% in 2023.
- the significant improvements to the success rates for equity group students in pre-Bachelor pathways.
- the creation of a suite of diplomas across all faculties at the University that provided an entry point for equity group students into a variety of industries.

KEY REPORTS

9. ***Confidential: Vice Chancellor's Report**
10. ***Confidential: People and Performance Report**
11. ***Workplace Health and Safety Report – Q3, 2023**

The report was taken as read.

12. ***Report from Chair, Academic Board**

The report was taken as read. In Professor Rose's absence, Associate Professor Renaud Joannes-Boyou, Deputy Chair (Research), Academic Board.

Council discussed:

- the outcomes for the EduCo student cohort
- consolidating the Academic Board Work Plans including reasons for any delays and traffic lights to indicate status.
- the ongoing transformation of the Southern Cross Model.

Council was advised that Professor Rose's term as Chair of Academic Board would conclude on 31 December 2023. Nominations would be called for over a period of two weeks, and the members of Academic Board would elect the Chair from the nominees.

KEY TRANSFORMATION MATTERS

13. ***Confidential: Strategy Enterprise Performance Dashboard (Late Paper)**
14. ***Confidential: Strategic Directions Update**
15. ***Confidential: Financial Outlook**
16. ***Confidential: Veterinary Medicine Concept Proposal (Late Paper)**

It was resolved:

Council endorses the Veterinary Medicine Concept Proposal.

KEY REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE MATTERS

17. ***Confidential: *2024 University Budget**

It was resolved:

Council approves the 2024 University Budget.

18. ***Confidential: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Responses**
19. ***Enterprise Risk Management Policy (Late Paper)**

The briefing paper was taken as read. Julie Granger, Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee, noted that the proposed changes to the policy were not contentious.

It was resolved:

Council approves the proposed amendments to the Enterprise Risk Management Policy.

20. ***Material Enterprise Risks (Late Paper)**

The briefing paper was taken as read.

Council was reminded that the risk categories and descriptions were developed with the assistance of PwC. A number of these have since been expanded upon and further updates would be made.

Council discussed risks relating to artificial intelligence (AI) such as Chat GPT and how these were captured in the University's material risks. Council was advised that AI was an emerging risk that spanned across a number of areas detailed in the SCU Risks on a page document. It was not currently a standalone material risk, but could be included in a future update.

21. *Corporate and Academic Governance Review - Update on Actions

The briefing paper was taken as read. Belinda Atkinson, Council Secretary, advised that progress on some areas had been delayed due to other factors or were part of a broader piece of work underway. Academic Board was monitoring progress on Academic Governance matters in tandem.

Council indicated that matters marked as closed or complete would require further updates, including strategies and outcomes for indigenous student participation and success.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

22. *Confidential: Audit and Risk Management Committee

23. *Confidential: Finance and Investment Committee

24. *Confidential: People and Culture Committee

COUNCIL BUSINESS

25. *Council and Committee Evaluations

The briefing paper was taken as read. Belinda Atkinson, Council Secretary highlighted the following:

- the 2023 Council Schedule of Business had been acquitted.
- the 2024 Council Schedule of Business presented at the September Council meeting, was flexible and additional matters could be added.
- not all Council member responses to the evaluation survey were received in time to include in the agenda papers.

Council discussed:

- in relation to the evaluation survey results:
 - the diversity of skills and prioritising areas of improvement. Council was advised that skills and knowledge were front and centre of the Council member search process that was underway.
 - some comments were at odds with each other, such as the length of meetings and volume of meeting papers. Council discussed the possibility of scheduling special meetings to enable deep-dives for some matters.
 - training opportunities for Council members.
- possible staff/student conversations, including:
 - Executive Dean's perspective about the University strategy at the Faculty level.
 - areas of research.
 - the experience of Discipline Chairs.
 - first 100 days insights from new recruits in senior roles.
- in relation to stakeholder engagement:
 - hearing more from Indigenous stakeholders.
 - holding periodic informal community dinners.
 - A presentation on developments in the city of Lismore.

26. *Assessment against the Voluntary Code

The briefing paper was taken as read. Belinda Atkinson, Council Secretary, advised that the University's compliance against the Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Universities was assessed on an annual basis and a statement about the University's compliance would be included in the University's Annual Report.

Council discussed making the process about more than just compliance and including greater consideration about what Council was doing as a governing body and possible improvements.

It was resolved:

Council endorses:

- (a) the Council Secretary's report on the University's standing against the revised Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Universities for 2023.
- (b) the following statement being included in the University's 2023 Annual Report:

The University Council has adopted the Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Public Universities.

In November 2023, the University Council reviewed the University's standing against the revised Voluntary Code during 2023. The University is substantially compliant with the Voluntary Code.

OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING

27. Policy Report

The report was noted.

28. Confidential: Budgeted expenditure greater than \$1million

The report was noted.

29. Confidential: Use of the University Seal

The report was noted.

CLOSING BUSINESS

30. Confidential: Determination of Matters for Public Disclosure

No additional agenda items were identified as being confidential.

31. Meeting Evaluation

The Chancellor provided the meeting evaluation, highlighting:

- the transparent communication between Council and Management.
- while Council was not always focused on the same areas as the Vice Chancellor, it was very cognisant of the enormous amount of work being done.

The Vice Chancellor thanked Council for its support.

32. Next Meeting

The next ordinary meeting of Council was scheduled for Thursday, 15 February 2024 at the Gold Coast campus.

The meeting concluded at 2.30 pm.

Belinda Atkinson
Council Secretary