



## Non-Confidential Minutes Council meeting – 15 February 2024

15/02/2024 11:55 AM | AEST

GCB-C6.16, Gold Coast campus

### Members Present (13)

Sandra McPhee AM, Chancellor and Chair, People and Culture Committee  
Prue Berry  
Professor Tyrone Carlin, Vice-Chancellor  
Murray d'Almeida, Deputy Chancellor, via Zoom  
Julie Granger, Chair, Audit and Risk Management Committee  
Professor Renaud Joannes-Boyau  
Associate Professor Desiree Kozlowski, Chair of Academic Board  
Peter Lewis  
Scott Noble  
Jonathan Rourke, Chair, Finance and Investment Committee  
Dr Lucy Shinnars, via Zoom  
Gurpreet Singh  
Geoff Stalley, via Zoom

### In Attendance

Belinda Atkinson, Council Secretary  
Tracy Manning, Administrative Officer, Governance Services  
Kim Franks, Vice-President (People and Culture) - Items 9 and 10  
Sharon Farquhar, Director, Human Resources - Item 9 and 10, via Zoom  
Brendan Pearce, Director, Workplace Relations - Items 9 and 10  
Mark Krnjaic, Director, Organisational Development - Item 10  
Jack Williamson, Vice-President (Strategy and Implementation), Items 13 and 14  
Brendon Nelson, Vice-President (Students) & Registrar – Item 16 and 17, via Zoom  
Professor Thomas Roche, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality) - Items 18 and 19

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## 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

Sandra McPhee gave an Acknowledgment of Country and welcomed Associate Professor Desiree Kozlowski and Peter Lewis to their first Council meeting.

There were no apologies.

It was resolved:

**Council approves** a leave of absence for Julie Granger from the Council meeting scheduled for 18 April 2024.

## 2. Chancellor's Introductory Remarks

Sandra McPhee noted the recent passing of the University's foundation Chancellor, the Honourable Andrew Rogers AO, KC.

## 3. Previous Meetings

### 3.1 Confirmation of Minutes – Council meeting, 20 November 2023

It was resolved:

**Council:**

- (a) **agrees** that the draft Confidential Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 November 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 20 November 2023 to the University Council webpage.

### 3.2 Matters Arising

None.

### 3.3 Action Items

Council noted that the outstanding action item was addressed under item 12 of the agenda.

## 4. Councillors' Business

None.

## 5. Declarations of Interest

None.

## 6. Agenda

### 6.1 Starring of Items

No additional items were starred for discussion.

It was resolved:

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

### 6.2 Arrangement of Agenda

Council discussed Item 11 (Vice-Chancellor's Report), Item 12 (Report from the Chair, Academic Board), and Item 15 (SCU Ventures Report) before Item 9 (Quarterly Work Health Safety Report) and Item 10 (Quarterly People and Performance Report). The remainder of the agenda was discussed in the order presented.

## 7. Safety Matters

Council noted the emergency procedures for the Gold Coast campus included in the agenda papers and asked that more information on the assembly area be provided for future meetings.

## STAFF/STUDENT CONVERSATION

### 8. \*Review of Topics for 2024

Sandra McPhee invited Council Members to suggest topics for the Staff/Student Conversation agenda item. She referred to the draft list in the agenda papers and advised that new Executive members, Anna-Maree Shaw and Kim Franks, would be invited to provide their first 100-day insights at forthcoming meetings.

Council discussed receiving increased insights relating to the student and staff experience. Suggestions included:

- maintaining a list of topics for future inclusion.
- understanding the entire student experience beyond the new academic model.
- staff experience including the new academic model.
- the competitive environment in which the University operates and attracts students.

## KEY REPORTS

9. **\*Confidential: Quarterly Work Health Safety Report (Oct to Dec 2023)**
10. **\*Confidential: Quarterly People and Performance Report (Oct to Dec 2023)**
11. **\*Confidential: Vice-Chancellor's Report**
12. **\*Report from Chair, Academic Board**

The report was taken as read. Desiree Kozlowski highlighted:

- the 2024 Academic Board Work Plan would be further refined to align with Academic Board's reporting to Council.
- the Academic Board's appetite to progress the implementation of new course offerings.

Council discussed the delay in the course availability for Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine from 2025 to 2026. Management confirmed this was due to external accreditation issues. The Bachelor of Veterinary Technology would commence in 2025 as planned. Management noted that a new degree in physiotherapy was being developed.

## KEY TRANSFORMATION MATTERS

13. **\*Confidential: Strategy Enterprise Performance Dashboard**
14. **\*Confidential: Lismore Campus Master Plan**
15. **\*Confidential: SCU Ventures Report**

## KEY REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE MATTERS

16. **\*2024 Student Consultation Process**

The briefing paper was taken as read. Brendon Nelson provided an overview of the University's legislative requirements:

- to consult with students annually.
- for Council to approve the method of consultation.
- for the University to allow students to submit feedback on the consultation plan.

Council was advised that none of the student feedback received impacted the consultation plan presented. The Student Association representative had joined the Student Experience Committee, and three student members had been elected.

Council encouraged Management to find additional ways to incorporate student satisfaction measures into reporting to Council.

It was resolved:

Pursuant to section 13(2) and 19(1) of the Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines 2022 (Cth), **Council approves** the process by which students enrolled at Southern Cross University are consulted, including consultation regarding the specific uses of the proceeds from compulsory Student Services and Amenities Fees.

## 17. **\*Support for Students Policy - Update**

The briefing paper was taken as read. Brendon Nelson highlighted the following:

- the Higher Education Support Act 2023 came into effect on 1 January 2024.
- Southern Cross University's First Year Success Program had greatly advanced the University's work to address the legislative requirements.
- the University published its Support for Students Policy in December 2023, and was therefore compliant.
- The University had commenced working to address what was likely to be included in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines to be published in April 2024.
- the impetus for higher education providers to provide support for at-risk students and actively intervene. Southern Cross was focussing on first-year students as a starting point.
- participation was the key to success and the Student Support Team was actively promoting to raise awareness.

Council discussed:

- the indigenous student cohort interventions in place. Management advised that the Indigenous Australian Student Support Team provided support for indigenous students. Similarly, the International Student Support Team for the international student cohort. The Student Care and Support Team referred students accordingly.
- regulator compliance issues and measures. Management advised that the draft guideline included a requirement to review and adapt. The sole legislative requirement was the publication of the policy. A review/gap analysis would be conducted once the guideline is published, and supported by a significant amount of annual reporting.

## 18. **\*Confidential: Complaints, Integrity and Critical Incidents 2023 Full Year**

## 19. **\*Confidential: Audit of Admissions Process**

## 20. **\*Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Attestation Statement**

The briefing paper was taken as read. Desiree Kozlowski confirmed no changes had been made after consideration of the statement at Academic Board.

It was resolved:

**Council approves** the Southern Cross University Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Attestation Statement 2023.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### 21. **\*Confidential: People and Culture Committee - verbal report**

### 22. **\*Confidential: Audit and Risk Management Committee - information circulated**

## **COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### 23. **\*Appointment to Council Committees**

The briefing paper was taken as read.

### 24. **\*Corporate and Academic Governance Review - Update on Actions**

The briefing paper was taken as read. Belinda Atkinson advised that future reports would include a progress measure to demonstrate when a matter was nearing completion. Michael Tomlinson will conduct a review of implementation of the recommendations in his report later in 2024.

## 25. \*Review of Council Approved Policy

The briefing paper was taken as read. Belinda Atkinson advised that a review of the policies sitting at Council level would be conducted to identify any additional policies that should remain with Council to approve or delegated to Academic Board or the Vice-Chancellor for approval and vice-versa.

It was resolved:

**Council agrees** that under the Delegations Register Academic Board has delegated authority to amend or rescind the Multi-Badged Degree Policy and to approve new policies relating to joint awards.

## 26. \*Council Schedule of Business, 2024

The briefing paper was taken as read. Council members were invited to highlight any matters that were not included. The revised schedule assists in demonstrating how the University meets the Higher Education Threshold Standards.

Council discussed:

- having an adequate spread of Council business throughout the year as business scheduled for June appeared to be quite heavy. Council was advised that some matters depended on data availability and may be provided at a later meeting, e.g., Student Experience.
- delegating business to a subcommittee where appropriate.

## OTHER MATTERS FOR DECISION

### 27. Confidential: Chancellor's Committee Business

## OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING

### 28. Policy Report

The report was noted.

### 29. Confidential: Budgeted expenditure greater than \$1 million

## CLOSING BUSINESS

### 30. Other Business

Sandra McPhee invited Council members to suggest matters to her for inclusion on the agenda wherever possible.

### 31. Confidential: Determination of Matters for Public Disclosure

No additional agenda items were identified as being confidential.

### 32. Meeting Evaluation

Scott Noble provided the meeting evaluation. He discussed:

- the high quality of the meeting papers.
- the omission of a financial update.
- the Lismore Master Plan was particularly interesting.
- the greatly improved WHS reporting.
- including a snapshot of each campus would be useful for Council members
- arranging regular campus tours for new Council members.

### **33. Next Meeting**

The next ordinary meeting of Council was scheduled for Thursday, 18 April 2024 at the Lismore campus.

The meeting concluded: 4.48 pm AEST.

**Belinda Atkinson**  
**Council Secretary**