

STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES – 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025

Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Student Advisory Council to be held at 10AM on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 in building 36 Council Room and via Webex.

**PRESENT:**

Ella Young	Chair and Women's Representative
Alana Khattar	Deputy Chair and Academic Senate – Undergraduate
Alexander Tegg	Deputy Chair and UOW Pulse Student Director
Zhizhen Zhou	Academic Senate – Onshore International Representative
Muhammad Sarwar	Academic Senate – Postgraduate and BAL – International Representative
Connor Da Lapa-Soares	Academic Senate – Undergraduate Representative
Nakia Edgecock	Academic Senate – Undergraduate Representative
Kyle Hewitt	Academic Senate/University Council – Postgraduate Representative
Hoang Anh Nguyen	ASSH – International Representative
Clare O'Toole	ASSH – Postgraduate Representative
Amity Lees	ASSH – Undergraduate Representative
Duc Kiet Nguyen	BAL – Undergraduate Representative
Mackenzie Dodd	Bega Campus Representative
Liam Felli	Clubs and Societies Representative
Tibee Leung	Clubs and Societies Representative
Fabian Ibro	EIS – Undergraduate Representative
Adrian Pittman	LGBTIQ+ Representative
Ryan Lim	Liverpool Campus Representative
Katherine Minns	Person with a Disability Representative
Aleksandr Eliseev	SMAH – Postgraduate Representative
Emma Moses	SMAH – Undergraduate Representative
Madeline Staples	Southern Highlands Campus Representative
Bianca Dumbrell	Southern Sydney Campus Representative
Jessica Hewett	Student Residences Representative
Zweli Khoza	Sydney Business School Campus Representative
Matthew Brown	University Council – Undergraduate Representative
Blaine Caton	WIC Representative
Yang Di	WUPA President
Hanzel-Jude Pador	WUSA President

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Prof. G.Q. Max Lu AO	Vice-Chancellor
Snr Prof. Sure Bennett	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Life)
Ellenie Petrou	Chief Strategy Officer
Charlotte Flynn	UOW Cadet Management

Roxie Weaver	Strategy Coordinator
Kit West	Student Advocacy Officer
Kellie Ridges	Director SAS, Acting Director DSL
Melissa Zaccagnini	Senior Manager, Student Experience and Projects
Lucinda Crossley Meates	Student Experience & Projects
Ashlea Rowland	Student Experience Insights Specialist
Courtney Grube	Student Representation Administration Assistant

### **APOLOGIES & LEAVE OF ABSENCE:**

Nicholas Chiaverini	Academic Senate – Undergraduate Representative
Tess Botham-Barnes	BAL – Postgraduate Representative
Helena Ibro	EIS – International Representative
Arman Hobhaydar	EIS – Postgraduate Representative
Angela Tobias	Innovation Campus Representative
Jin Zhao	Mature Aged Representative
Roxanne Kelly	Shoalhaven Campus Representative
Bakhat Rawat	SMAH – International Representative

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## **PART 1: OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

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### **\*1.1 Opening of Meeting**

#### **1.1 Introduction and Welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting at 10AM and proceeded to welcome and introduce all Council members, and other attendees, special guests and observers present.

#### **1.12 Acknowledgement of Country**

The acknowledgement of country was provided by the Deputy Chair/Academic Senate - Undergraduate Representative and welcomed by the Council

### **\*1.2 Apologies and Quorum**

Apologies were noted and received by the Council; the Chair noted the meeting was quorate.

### **\*1.3 Arrangement of Agenda**

#### **1.3.1 Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interests declared.

**1.3.2 Confidential Items**

No confidential items in agenda.

**1.3.3 Starring of Items**

The following items are starred for discussion:

- All Items in Parts 1, 2 and 3
- Item 4.2 is starred as well

**1.3.4 Meeting Protocols**

The Chair reminded members on decisions being made by consensus and for all questions to go through the Chair.

**\*1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED:**  
*That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025 be confirmed and signed as a true record.*

**\*1.5 Business Arising from Previous Meetings and Minutes**

The Chair noted the action items arising from the previous meeting. These action items include:

MEETING DATE	ACTION(S) ARISING	RESPONSIBLE PARTY(S)	STATUS
17th April 2025	SAC Executive to meet individually with council members to discuss transformation	SAC Executive	In progress

17th April 2025	Schedule a follow-up discussion between the Residences Rep and the Director SASD/Acting Director DSL to address specific concerns about the training and transition process for the merging of the library client services team with AskUOW	<b>SAC Executive Office</b>	<b>Completed</b>
17th April 2025	SAC Executive to plan additional SAC workshops to facilitate further consultation and discussion regarding the University’s transformation initiatives.	<b>SAC Executive</b>	<b>Completed</b>
17th April 2025	Connecting BAL Undergraduate Representative with Peer Learning Coaches	<b>SAC Executive</b>	<b>In progress</b>
17th April 2025	The SAC Executive will explore the feasibility of organising a student consultation session or town hall to increasing broader student engagement in the transformation process	<b>SAC Executive</b>	<b>In progress</b>
17th April 2025	SAC Executive to forward student concerns about the new Saudi Arabia campus to UOW Executive	<b>SAC Executive</b>	<b>In progress</b>
17th April 2025	SAC Executive to follow up with relevant university staff regarding changes to student representation on the Student Conduct Committee (SCC), including clarification of current arrangements and communication of any updates	<b>SAC Executive</b>	<b>In progress</b>

**\*1.6 Chair’s Report**

The Chair updated the council on the following: It has been a busy month for representatives, who have been actively engaging with students and staff, with a strong focus on the Transformation process, which remains a key priority. Representatives have also been juggling multiple deadlines for feedback.

The Chair highlighted that this afternoon’s SAC transformation workshop presents an important opportunity to advance consultation. Appreciation was expressed to all SAC representatives for attending this extra meeting during what is a particularly busy time in the semester.

In addition, ongoing collaboration with student representatives on initiatives such as Project Period and the creation of a low sensory room was noted, with both projects having a meaningful, positive impact on students' daily experiences.

Finally, the Chair acknowledged the recent federal election and noted that with the new government now in place, the organisation can move forward with greater clarity in decision-making.

**\*1.6.1 Vision 2035 And Strategic Plan 2030**

The Chair welcomed UOW's sixth Vice-Chancellor and invited him to speak to this item.

The Vice-Chancellor began by offering a personal reflection on his background, sharing that he grew up in a rural village in China, where he experienced significant hardship. He spoke about receiving a scholarship to undertake doctoral studies in Queensland and outlined his academic and leadership career, including his most recent role as Vice Chancellor of the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom. He described his return to Australia as a meaningful homecoming and expressed gratitude for the warm welcome from the University and broader community.

He noted that in his initial weeks on campus, he had engaged with a large number of students and staff and commented positively on the University's vibrant culture and the beauty of the campus and surrounding region. He reiterated that student experience and student success would be the foremost priority of his leadership.

The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the financial challenges currently facing the higher education sector and outlined the rationale for the University's transformation. He emphasised the need to restore financial sustainability to support continued investment in infrastructure, digital innovation, and future-focused learning. These efforts are intended to secure the University's capacity to deliver high-quality education and research into the future.

He introduced three key strategic priorities that will underpin Vision 2035:

1. Student Experience and Success
2. Local Impact
3. Global Connection and Excellence

The Vice-Chancellor expressed appreciation for the feedback provided by students and staff and noted that this input will continue to inform the implementation of transformation initiatives. He acknowledged concerns regarding potential impacts, including staffing and operational changes, and affirmed that the University is committed to protecting core teaching, research, and student support functions wherever possible.

He concluded by emphasising the importance of collaboration and transparency across the University

community throughout this period of change, and affirmed his intention to lead with care, vision, and a strong focus on student outcomes.

Following the address, members were invited to ask questions. Reference was also made to the Students as Partners agreement, which was tabled at the meeting. The Vice-Chancellor expressed strong support for the partnership model, noting his belief that students are not customers, but learning partners and future custodians of the University.

The Bega Campus Representative asked whether the Vice-Chancellor had plans to visit the regional campuses. The Representative noted that the Bega Campus Manager had expressed hope that the Vice-Chancellor would be able to visit in person and engage directly with regional staff and students. In response, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that visits to regional campuses are scheduled and are being coordinated with campus managers. He noted an upcoming visit to Liverpool and expressed his intention to visit additional campuses, with dates to be confirmed and communicated in due course.

The Chair invited Chief Strategy Officer to speak to the **Vision 2035 and Strategic Plan 2030 Draft**. The Chief Strategy Officer thanked members for the opportunity to present and began by providing an overview of the strategy development process over the past twelve months. This included a recap of extensive consultations, workshops and roundtables involving students, student representatives and campus leadership, which helped shape the current draft of the strategic plan. Since the previous update in January 2025, the appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor has enabled further refinement of the strategy, including the introduction of a longer-term vision to 2035. Recent feedback from the Executive team was also incorporated into the plan.

A summary of key themes from consultations was shared, highlighting strong emphasis on student experience and success; flexibility in learning modalities such as hybrid delivery; enhanced access to support services; and improved campus facilities and technology. Stakeholders also expressed the importance of genuine partnership with students, maintaining the University's strong reputation and rankings, and clarity of purpose regarding the institution's role and impact.

The Chief Strategy Officer noted that the strategy draws on extensive internal and external research, including government policy considerations, sector challenges and opportunities. Over 1,000 responses from staff, along with input from community and industry partners, regional and metropolitan campuses, and global sites, have informed the draft. Reviews by various councils further contributed to its development.

The strategic framework presented includes a ten-year vision extending to 2035, coinciding with the University's 60th anniversary. The current draft represents the first five years (Strategic Plan 2030), with particular focus on financial sustainability in the initial two years to ensure effective transformation implementation. Following this, reinvestment will support strategic initiatives leading to the reassessment and development of the subsequent five-year plan.

The Chief Strategy Officer emphasised the critical importance of alignment between the institutional strategy and portfolio-level action plans, including faculty and divisional initiatives. Ongoing monitoring

against key performance indicators will underpin implementation and ensure progress towards strategic goals.

The Vice-Chancellor reaffirmed the University's strong foundations and emphasised that the development of the strategy has been a collective effort involving staff, students, and alumni. He noted the global alumni network, which now exceeds 190,000 and is expected to surpass 200,000 following the upcoming graduation cohort. Many alumni are leaders in their professions and are making a significant impact on communities around the world.

The Vice-Chancellor outlined the three core pillars of the strategy:

1. Student Experience and Success – supporting students to succeed and make a meaningful difference.
2. Local Impact – building on the University's heritage in engineering, technology, and innovation, and strengthening engagement with local communities, industries, and businesses to contribute to regional social and economic wellbeing.
3. Global Connection and Excellence – enhancing the University's global reputation and partnerships.

A fourth cross-cutting theme, Better Together, has emerged through consultation. It reflects the need to rebuild trust and strengthen the way the University community works collaboratively—both internally and with external stakeholders. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the importance of cultivating a culture based on shared purpose and mutual respect to enable successful strategy delivery.

He then spoke to the University's refined purpose: to create and apply knowledge that empowers people to make a difference—to themselves, to their communities, and to society—driving economic growth and social change for the future of the planet. A shared understanding of this purpose will be essential in aligning the University community toward common goals.

The long-term vision to 2035 focuses on empowering student success, enabling local impact, and elevating the University's global standing, with an aspirational target of being ranked in the global top 100. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that while UOW currently sits within the top 200, this goal is achievable through collective focus and alignment across all three pillars.

He cautioned against being consumed solely by short-term operational challenges, noting that the pace of global, technological, and social change can pull focus from the longer-term purpose. He stressed the importance of balancing urgent transformation needs with long-term strategic aspirations, and expressed confidence that the University can, through collaboration, find the "sweet spot" needed to deliver both.

The Vice-Chancellor concluded by outlining the next steps, which will include further iteration through Council, ongoing consultation, and engagement with alumni groups internationally. He acknowledged the leadership of the Chief Strategy Officer and her team and reiterated that the development and

implementation of the strategy will continue to be a whole-of-community effort.

The Chief Strategy Officer provided an update on the ongoing consultation process for the draft strategy. She noted that multiple consultation activities are planned over the coming weeks, including staff workshops, drop-in sessions, and engagements with community and alumni groups.

She highlighted the upcoming student consultation workshops, with four sessions scheduled following the official launch of the staff consultation. Invitations had been sent to all students, with 60 registrations received to date. The Chief Strategy Officer will host two workshops tomorrow and two more on the 12th of July. An additional Higher Degree Research workshop is planned for 4 July, with meetings also scheduled across different campuses.

Feedback collected through these consultations will be reviewed and incorporated into the strategy, with a target for Council approval by August. The strategy launch is planned to coincide with the University's 50th anniversary celebrations in September.

She emphasised that following approval, the focus will shift to strategy implementation and execution, which will be led by her team.

The Chief Strategy Officer encouraged members to participate in upcoming consultation sessions and noted that these workshops will provide opportunities to explore the strategy in greater detail.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council welcome the new Vice Chancellor and note the draft Vision 2035 and Strategic Plan 2030 and the invitation to provide feedback.*

**\*1.6.2 Acknowledgment and Thanks to Outgoing Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Life) Senior Professor Sue Bennett**

The Chair acknowledged the conclusion of Senior Professor Sue Bennett's term as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Life). On behalf of the Council, the Chair expressed sincere appreciation for Professor Bennett's contributions to the University and her unwavering support of the Student Advisory Council. Her personable and approachable leadership was commended, along with her genuine engagement with student representatives, which fostered a strong sense of connection between students and the University. The Council extended its best wishes to Professor Bennett for the next chapter of her career.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the conclusion of Senior Professor Sue Bennett's term as Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Life) and extend its sincere thanks for her contributions to the University and her support of the SAC during her tenure.*

**\*1.7 Membership Business**

The Chair thanked 3 outgoing council members for their valued efforts on the Student Advisory Council.

The Council farewelled Aleksandr Eliseev (SMAH Faculty Postgraduate Representative), Connor Da Lapa-Soares (Undergraduate Representative on Academic Senate), and Zhizhen Zhou (Academic Senate Onshore International Representative), acknowledging that this meeting marked the conclusion of their terms.

The Chair recognised each member for their exemplary representation and proactive contributions, with Aleksandr and Connor serving throughout 2024 and 2025, and Zhizhen since January 2025. Their dedication brought genuine value to the student and staff community at UOW during a time of significant change.

The Council expressed sincere thanks for their hard work and wished them all the best in their future endeavours.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council acknowledge the farewell of the outgoing members of the council.*

The Chair noted that the council is still without a Eurobodalla Campus Representative, which the Executive Team is in the processing of filling.

**PART 2: COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**\*2.1 Business and Updates from Student Advisory Council Committees**

**2.1.1 Student Service and Amenities Fees (SSAF) Subcommittee**

The Chair addressed this item in their capacity as Chair of the SSAF Subcommittee. They noted that the Subcommittee has completed its formal induction, which included training and an overview of the SSAF project allocation process. Applications for project funding closed on 6 June, and with this deadline now passed, the Subcommittee will convene shortly to commence the allocation process.

**2.1.2 Activation Working Party**

The Chair invited the Chair of the Activation Working Party to provide an update. The Working Party Chair informed the Council that the group has not yet met, as much of the recent focus and activity has been directed toward the Transformation. A more detailed update will be provided at the next SAC meeting.

**2.1.3 Regional and Metropolitan Campus Subcommittee**

The Chair invited the Chair of the Regional and Metropolitan Campus Subcommittee to provide an update. The Subcommittee Chair reported that the group met for the first time a week ago, engaging in productive discussions about student social life across regional and metropolitan campuses, including the role of Pulse in supporting these campuses.

A key theme that emerged was the need to raise awareness of the Student Advisory Council and its function as a student voice mechanism. One representative noted they had not heard of the SAC prior to being approached to join. The Subcommittee also discussed the need to expand activities and events at these campuses to enhance student engagement and ensure students outside the Wollongong campus feel included.

The Chair highlighted a concerning issue raised by the Innovation Campus Representative, who shared that they must travel to the Wollongong campus to access most university-run activities. In response, one Subcommittee member has developed a survey, pending approval, to be circulated among students at these campuses to better understand their experiences and needs.

The meeting also touched on the Transformation, with the Liverpool Campus Representative noting they will be relocating to a different building as part of the changes. This representative expressed concern about whether the current quality of education would be maintained following the move.

The Senior Manager of Student Experience and Projects commended the Subcommittee for their efforts and for raising the important issue of SAC visibility. She noted that this serves as a valuable reminder for all Council members to reflect on their own visibility among the student groups they represent and to consider how they are actively engaging with them.

### **RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the updates provided by the Chairs of the SAC Subcommittees.*

## **\*2.2 Members Reports**

### **2.2.1 SAC Executive Update**

The Chair provided an update on the questions submitted by Council members to the Executive, along with background discussion on how to best prioritise obtaining accurate and detailed responses. It was emphasised that these responses should be shared not only within the SAC but also with the wider student community, potentially through publication on the Transformation Q&A website.

**ACTION:** The Chair to follow up with the Executive on the status of responses to submitted questions and explore options for publishing answers on the Transformation Q&A website to ensure transparent communication with the broader student body.

The Chair then invited the Deputy Chair/Academic Senate – Undergraduate Representative to speak on the

recent one-on-one meetings between Executive members and individual SAC representatives. The Deputy Chair noted that all three Executives have continued to meet individually with Council members to better understand their concerns and experiences. Even short 10–15 minute conversations have proven insightful in gaining a clearer picture of the Council’s diverse perspectives.

The Chair added that these meetings have been valuable for the Executive in understanding how members are engaging with their cohorts and for building more genuine connections across the SAC. Council members were encouraged to reach out to the Executives via their shared, regularly monitored email.

The ASSH Undergraduate Representative raised a question about whether any common themes had emerged from these one-on-one meetings. In response, the Chair noted that many discussions centred around strengthening internal connections within the SAC, as well as externally with key student groups. An example was shared of the ASSH Postgraduate Representative, who raised concerns about HDR resources. This led to connections being made with other HDR members on Council to provide further support. The Chair highlighted the importance of these meetings as opportunities for members to voice frustrations and seek guidance.

The Deputy Chair/Student Executive Pulse Director echoed this sentiment, noting that while many new members are highly passionate, some have struggled to establish strong connections. He spoke about working with members to channel their enthusiasm into meaningful avenues to ensure their voices are heard.

The Deputy Chair/Academic Senate – Undergraduate Representative also reflected on a recurring challenge raised in meetings: the difficulty of reaching the broader student community. While members are clearly passionate about representing their cohorts, there is a need for stronger strategies to connect with and hear directly from those they represent.

### **RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the update provided by the SAC Executives as set out in the agenda.*

### **2.2.2 ASSH Representatives Update**

The Chair invited the ASSH Postgraduate Representative to speak to this item. The ASSH Postgraduate Representative provided a verbal update, noting recent discussions held with faculty colleagues regarding the impact of the Transformation on ASSH staff and students. The focus has been on maintaining ongoing communication and consultation across the faculty to ensure transparency.

The Representative also met with the Head of Graduate Research School (GRS), Professor Simon Moss, regarding the allocation of postgraduate resources. As a result, Professor Moss is reviewing the relevant policy. The Representative raised a question about whether the Financial Inclusion Action Plans from the Transformation will be used to support students impacted by the changes. This question has been added to

the list for formal Executive response.

In addition, the Representative shared that Professor Moss is interested in re-establishing a HDR Student Committee, which would meet monthly. Expressions of interest have been invited from HDR students across campuses who would like to participate.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the update provided by the ASSH Representatives as set out in the agenda.*

### 2.2.3 EIS Representatives Update

The Chair invited the EIS Undergraduate Representative to speak to this item. The EIS Undergraduate Representative provided a verbal update in the absence of the other EIS representatives. He noted that he had requested access to undergraduate survey data to identify areas of student dissatisfaction with courses and subjects and is currently awaiting a response from the relevant team.

It was also noted that the EIS International Representative has continued work on student-led workshops in collaboration with the previous student mentor team and Women in STEM. These workshops are designed to support new master's students, particularly those without prior coding experience.

Feedback from the facilitator indicated that the workshops have been well received by participants. The EIS Undergraduate Representative expressed appreciation to the former mentoring team for their ongoing voluntary efforts, which have enabled the workshops to continue.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the update provided by the EIS Representatives as set out in the agenda.*

### \*2.2.4 Clubs and Societies Representative Report

The Chair invited the Clubs and Societies Representatives to speak to this item. The Clubs and Societies Representative provided a verbal update, highlighting the establishment of four new clubs at the Liverpool campus and one at the Shoalhaven campus this year. This development was noted as a positive step in expanding student engagement across regional campuses. Key focus areas moving forward include improving the event application process and enhancing connections with regional campus communities.

The Liverpool Campus Representative responded by noting that, to date, the only active club they were aware of on campus was a Bible study group. They indicated that the broader implementation of societies had not yet been clearly communicated but expressed enthusiasm about the prospect of more clubs becoming active at Liverpool, particularly in light of the upcoming campus relocation and the potential to enhance social engagement.

The Chair suggested this would be a valuable opportunity for collaboration between the Clubs and Societies Representatives and the Liverpool Campus Representative and offered to facilitate the connection via a follow-up email from the SAC Executive account.

**ACTION:** The Chair to facilitate a connection between the Clubs and Societies Representatives and the Liverpool Campus Representative via email, to support collaboration and communication regarding the development of clubs at the Liverpool campus.

The second Clubs and Societies Representative added that clubs at Liverpool are in the early stages of establishment, including account creation and planning first events, with UniClubs currently providing support. This likely explains the limited communication to date.

It was also noted that several clubs have recently participated in conferences and competitions. A notable achievement mentioned was the UOW Mechatronics Society placing first nationally in a rover competition. The Representative also acknowledged participation in debating and Model United Nations events, recognising the broader impact of clubs representing the university at national and international levels.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the update provided by the Clubs and Societies Representatives as set out in the agenda.*

**\*2.2.6 UOW Pulse Executive Student Director Representative Update**

The Chair invited the UOW Pulse Executive Student Director Representative to speak to this item. The UOW Pulse Executive Student Director Representative provided a verbal update, beginning with clarification about the nature and role of UOW Pulse in response to recent conversations. It was emphasised that Pulse is a not-for-profit registered charity embedded within the University community. It is not a private company and does not operate independently. It exists solely to enhance the student experience. Any revenue generated, including but not limited to SSAF funding, is reinvested into programs, services, and initiatives that directly benefit students.

Key highlights from the previous year included:

- 747 student-focused events
- 216 wellness initiatives
- 427 entertainment activations (including live music, trivia, and bingo)
- Over 58,000 total student participants
- More than 7,500 visits to the Pulse Pantry, with 96% of users being international students

The Representative acknowledged a surge in activity within the clubs and societies space, as mentioned by the Clubs and Societies Representatives. These figures reflect strong student demand for engagement opportunities and demonstrate the tangible value of responsibly managed SSAF funding.

In relation to onshore campuses, the Representative clarified that each campus is generally responsible for its own activities, with the exception of the Innovation Campus. Although Pulse received SSAF funding

for the Innovation Campus, those funds were redirected toward broader student impact projects. Pulse remains open to supporting regional and metropolitan campuses and encouraged campus managers to initiate discussions to collaborate on student events and services.

The Representative encouraged the Regional and Metropolitan Campus Subcommittee to provide feedback on the emerging campus-based clubs, which are in the process of being launched at each regional and metropolitan location. This feedback would help tailor support and activities more effectively to the needs of each campus.

**ACTION:** The Regional and Metropolitan Campus Subcommittee to discuss the development of clubs at their respective campuses and provide feedback to Pulse to help inform future planning.

The Representative also requested to be included in future email discussions relating to these matters.

**ACTION:** The Chair to include the UOW Pulse Executive Student Director Representative in relevant email correspondence regarding regional and metropolitan club development.

Additional updates included efforts to explore alternative postal services following the closure of the Australia Post outlet on the Wollongong campus. Pulse is investigating the installation of parcel lockers and other solutions to maintain postal access for students.

In closing, the Representative raised the issue of SSAF funding boundaries, using the example of a faculty-led STEM coding event that has now transitioned into a club-run activity due to funding constraints. The Representative encouraged ongoing discussion around what services and initiatives should be funded through SSAF versus those that are core university responsibilities.

The University Council Undergraduate Representative asked the UOW Pulse Executive Student Director to expand more on the issue regarding the funding boundaries of SSAF. In response, the Representative explained that their concern relates to distinguishing between programs run by faculties that may be viewed as additional or supplementary but could still be effectively managed and funded by the university. They highlighted the potential issue of legally mandated services, such as those provided by SARC, being funded through SSAF rather than directly by the university. While they noted limited knowledge of SARC's full funding arrangements, the key point raised was whether some programs currently funded by SSAF are university obligations and should therefore be funded accordingly. The Representative suggested this matter be further examined by the relevant subcommittee to clarify funding responsibilities and ensure appropriate allocation of resources.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the UOW Pulse Executive Student Director Report as set out in the agenda.*

### PART 3: GENERAL BUSINESS

**\*3.1 UOW Parking – Wollongong Campus – 2025**

The Chair invited the UOW Pulse Executive Student Director Representative to speak to this item. The Representative addressed ongoing parking challenges at the Wollongong campus, highlighting it as a persistent issue. They outlined four main points of concern:

1. The recent transition to Cello Park and the benefits and drawbacks associated with this change, including the significant loss of carpool parking spaces.
2. The impact of the Mount Ousley intersection upgrade, which will include the creation of an access road through the current P5 car park. The entire P5 car park is expected to be unusable during construction, exacerbating parking shortages.
3. Continued pressure on campus parking due to increasing student numbers without a corresponding increase in available parking spaces.
4. Issues related to council street parking near campus, which does not align well with student timetables and presents ongoing challenges with local residents.

The Representative shared that they have had informal discussions with a director from the Infrastructure and Property Division (IPD) regarding these parking concerns. The director has expressed willingness to provide feedback and suggestions for mitigating the issues.

Additional points raised included the need for more information about the timeline and details of construction impacts at P5, as well as suggestions to improve visibility and accessibility of cash payment options for parking, which some students have found unclear.

Regarding carpool parking, the Representative suggested reviewing the previous carpool scheme's viability. Although usage was reported to be about 20 percent before its closure, there appears to be genuine student interest in reinstating it, even on a smaller scale.

Finally, the Representative encouraged dialogue between the university and local council to review the effectiveness of council parking arrangements for students and explore potential improvements, despite anticipated resistance from residents regarding changes or expansions.

The University Council Undergraduate Representative thanked the UOW Pulse Executive Student Director for raising the issue of parking, noting that concerns about the removal of carpool parking have been raised repeatedly since its discontinuation last year. They shared that some students were only recently discovering the carpooling option was no longer available, indicating a lack of clear communication.

They observed that parking demand has significantly increased this year, with car parks reportedly filling before 9:00 AM, causing delays and disruptions to students' ability to attend classes on time. The Representative emphasised that the carpooling initiative had previously been a valuable and environmentally friendly solution for students, and suggested that reinstating it could help alleviate some of the current issues.

In response to the information shared about the upcoming closure of P5 due to the Mount Ousley interchange construction, the Representative expressed concern that this was not widely known among the student body. They cautioned that students may be caught off guard by the closure, which could

significantly disrupt travel plans.

The Representative concluded by asking what plans are in place to address the expected reduction in parking capacity, and whether a new parking facility will be introduced to offset the loss of P5.

The UOW Pulse Executive Student Director Representative acknowledged the concern and noted that their awareness of the Mount Ousley interchange project came through their background as a civil engineering student working on a separate transport project. They emphasised that the implications of this project, particularly the loss of parking at P5, raise important questions about how parking capacity will be maintained.

They mentioned that while there are discussions about introducing commuter parking once construction is completed, demand is expected to be high and spaces could be quickly exhausted. The Representative expressed appreciation for the support from fellow council members and reiterated the importance of proactively addressing the issue.

They suggested that the university reintroduce workshops with the Infrastructure and Property Division (formerly known as Facilities Management Division), similar to those held last year. These workshops could serve as a platform to discuss a range of transport-related issues, including the feasibility of reinstating the carpool parking program.

**ACTION:** The Chair to explore the reinstatement of workshops with the Infrastructure and Property Division (IPD) to discuss parking issues, including the impact of the Mount Ousley interchange construction, future parking provisions, and the feasibility of reintroducing carpool parking.

The Academic Senate Undergraduate Representative acknowledged that discussions regarding parking and the carpooling initiative have been ongoing for some time, including at the end of the previous year. They noted that the removal of carpooling has likely contributed to the increased parking demand this semester, as more students are now travelling individually without any incentive to share transport.

They emphasised that reinstating carpooling is important for ensuring equitable access to campus. While parking may cost approximately \$10 per day, the Representative argued that this remains a financial burden for some students, particularly when combined with existing tuition and living costs.

In addition to the student equity concerns, the Representative highlighted the environmental benefits of carpooling. They stressed that if the university is committed to environmental sustainability, then implementing carpooling is a simple and practical step to reduce emissions from student commuting.

They concluded by urging the university to prioritise action on this matter, rather than allowing it to be continually postponed. The Representative emphasised that this is a longstanding and significant student issue that should be addressed as part of the broader university transformation, rather than being delayed further.

The Sydney Business School Campus Representative highlighted the unique parking challenges faced by students at the Sydney CBD campus, where there is no designated student parking available. They noted that while many students rely on public transport, it can be unreliable, and the combination of multiple modes of transport can make commuting time-consuming. In some cases, what would be a 40-minute drive can take up to two hours via train and bus connections.

They mentioned that although the building housing the campus has parking facilities, these are primarily reserved for staff. The nearest available student parking is at a commercial facility (First Parking), located

nearby, which costs \$16 regardless of how long a student stays. While this may be reasonable for a full day of classes, it becomes costly for students attending only a short class.

The Representative proposed that parking issues at the Sydney campus be considered as part of the broader parking discussion and encouraged the Council to explore potential solutions to better support students who study at this location.

**ACTION:** The Chair to include the Sydney CBD campus in ongoing parking discussions and liaise with the Infrastructure and Property Division to explore feasible parking support options for students attending the Sydney Business School campus.

The Chair invited the ASSH Undergraduate Representative to make comment as they were an active member of 2024 discussions around this issue. The Representative expressed strong support for the points raised by fellow Council members, particularly regarding the longstanding concerns about parking. They noted that the issue of carpool parking has been raised consistently throughout their time at the university and remains something they are deeply passionate about.

They shared that students continue to voice frustrations over parking challenges and often feel that their concerns are not being fully heard, although they clarified that this was not a criticism of anyone present at the meeting. The Representative emphasised that parking difficulties affect not only students but also staff and visitors, making it a significant issue across the entire university community.

In addition to parking, the Representative highlighted issues with public transport, particularly the infrequent train timetable. They noted that train arrival times often do not align with class schedules, causing further inconvenience for students commuting to campus. While acknowledging that train scheduling is outside the university's control, they stressed that transport access remains a critical barrier for many.

The Representative also appreciated that the discussion included regional and metropolitan campuses, recognising that parking and transport issues are not limited to the Wollongong campus but are widespread across all UOW locations.

The Chair contributed further to the parking discussion, highlighting concerns regarding surcharges applied by CelloPark, the third-party parking payment provider. They shared a personal experience of being charged an unexpected \$10 fee at the end of a week of parking, unrelated to a specific day's use, suggesting that these fees can be unclear and costly for regular users. The Chair noted that this issue had not been widely discussed and may warrant further attention.

The Chair also commented on the previous carpool parking arrangement, questioning the rationale behind its removal. They expressed confusion over the claim that the carpool zone was underutilised, clarifying that while P8 had designated carpool spaces, it was still accessible to individual drivers who were able to pay for parking. They argued that the 20% utilisation figure may not accurately reflect actual use or justify the removal of the initiative.

The WIC Representative added to the discussion on CelloPark surcharges, suggesting that these fees might be applied on a monthly basis, potentially accumulating over multiple parking sessions. While they were not fully familiar with the specifics, they noted that their review of parking statements showed surcharges associated with using the CelloPark app for payments.

The UOW Pulse Executive Student Director Representative explained that the previously cited 20%

utilisation rate for carpool parking was a key factor in its removal, particularly due to the staffing costs associated with managing the space. They noted that having a staff member on site to verify eligibility for free carpool parking incurred daily expenses, which became inefficient when the carpool zone was used at such low capacity.

They suggested that one potential solution could be to explore whether verification could be integrated into the existing CelloPark app, which may eliminate the need for dedicated staff to monitor usage. The Representative acknowledged the concern around CelloPark surcharges and agreed it would be worth investigating whether those fees are excessive and if alternative arrangements could be more cost-effective.

They also shared that the university had previously considered a rideshare-style app, similar to Uber, for coordinating carpooling but was unable to proceed due to legal constraints. Nonetheless, the Representative recommended continued discussion with the Infrastructure and Property Division (IPD) to explore alternative ways to incentivise carpooling and reduce parking pressure.

The Academic Senate Undergraduate Representative clarified that, based on their understanding, the carpool parking area was not staffed throughout the entire day but only during peak hours. They suggested that the cost of staffing during those limited hours, while not insignificant, was a reasonable and worthwhile investment for supporting an environmentally sustainable initiative such as carpooling. Ultimately, they acknowledged that any decisions regarding staffing and funding would need to be made by the university.

The Academic Senate/University Council Representative raised a point regarding the interpretation of the 20% utilisation figure for the former carpool parking area. They noted that even if only 20% of spaces were used for carpooling, the impact was still significant due to the number of passengers per vehicle. For example, if 20% of a 200-space car park was used, that equates to 40 vehicles, potentially transporting 120 or more students when considering carpooling typically involves three or more occupants.

They further suggested that removing the carpool initiative could lead to increased parking congestion, as those shared rides would now require individual parking spaces. In their view, even limited usage could justify staffing costs, especially if the total student benefit and environmental impact are taken into account. The Representative expressed support for re-evaluating the justification used to discontinue the carpool system.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the report provided by the Deputy Chair of SAC (UOW Pulse Student Director Representative) as set out in the agenda*

**\*3.2 Update from Student Advocacy**

The Chair invited the Student Advocacy Officer to speak to this item. The Student Advocacy Officer presented the 2024 Annual Report of the Student Advocacy Service. They noted that the service is currently a two-person team, with recruitment underway for the second role. As a SSAF-funded initiative, the service operates independently from direct management oversight to maintain confidentiality and impartiality. Management does not have access to calendars due to the presence of sensitive student information.

The Officer shared that this was the first time the service had found an appropriate platform to present their

report, and they considered the Student Advisory Council to be a suitable audience given the alignment of values—particularly the shared commitment to improving the student experience.

Key issues identified in the 2024 report included:

- Ongoing inconsistency in the application of Generative AI policies across faculties, which remains a concern into 2025.
- A rise in academic misconduct matters, partially related to the above inconsistency.
- An increase in academic complaints, particularly concerning assessment marking, group work, and feedback. This trend has been further impacted by the Transformation process in 2025, which appears to be affecting academic quality in some cases.

The Officer outlined that the Student Advocacy Service provides support at all stages of the student grievance and appeal process—from initial concerns to final appeals. The nature of matters brought to the service varies widely, but the team is equipped to assist students regardless of the complexity or timing of the issue.

The Student Director thanked the Student Advocacy Officer for attending and acknowledged the valuable conversation they had previously regarding the Transformation and its potential impact on students. They noted that, through their role, the Student Advocacy Service often supports students during highly stressful situations. The Student Director asked what impacts the Officer has observed so far as a result of the Transformation, and what effects they anticipate moving forward, particularly in relation to the change in university structure and the reduction of professional staff, and how these changes may affect the service and student experience.

The Student Advocacy Officer responded, acknowledging that it was a complex and layered question. They noted that there is currently a significant degree of uncertainty being felt by both academic and professional staff, many of whom are struggling to understand the evolving university structure and roles. This uncertainty is having a flow-on effect across operations and support services.

Two key points were raised. Firstly, while the full impact of the Transformation may not yet be evident to students, the changes are already being experienced by staff and are likely to have a more direct effect on students in the near future. However, due to the current lack of clarity, students are finding it difficult to provide meaningful feedback on the Transformation.

Secondly, the Officer emphasised that there are staff across the University, particularly within the division that includes Student Advocacy, SARC, CMC and the Ombudsman, who are actively advocating for the student experience. A recent meeting with the Chief Operating Officer included discussions about the potential impact of the Transformation, particularly in terms of changes to the systems and relationships that support students. It was noted that disruptions to these structures could lead to unintended consequences for students.

The Officer also shared that the Student Advocacy Service submitted a 14-page written response to the Transformation consultation process. The submission detailed potential impacts on a range of student cohorts including higher degree research students, international students, equity and diversity groups and

those based at regional campuses and the main campus.

The Student Director, UOW Pulse highlighted the importance of recognising the small but significant effects that organisational changes can have on students. They noted that a workshop following this meeting will focus on these issues, particularly in the context of the Transformation process. The Student Director, UOW Pulse emphasised how discussions with the Student Advocacy Officer underscored the vital work being done and the need to consider how even minor delays, miscommunications, or structural changes might disproportionately impact vulnerable student groups.

The Chair enquired if students at regional and metropolitan campuses have access to Student Advocacy Services. The Student Advocacy Officer confirmed that these services are available to all UOW students who have a student number. As Student Advocacy is funded through SSAF, any student contributing to SSAF is entitled to access the service. The Officers can meet with students in person at the Wollongong campus or via Zoom. Additionally, the Officer noted that campus managers at regional and metropolitan campuses provide excellent advocacy support alongside various other student support services.

The Chair followed this by asking how the Advocacy Services are promoted to students. The Student Advocacy Officer explained that promotion primarily occurs through targeted correspondence. For example, students facing misconduct allegations, whether general or academic, are directly contacted. The service also maintains relationships with university staff, such as heads of students, who refer students needing to make academic complaints to advocacy. Additionally, there are established connections with wellbeing support services that direct students to advocacy as needed. Beyond staff referrals, some students discover the service independently through online searches, such as by typing “UOW advocacy student” into Google.

The University Council Undergraduate Representative asked The Student Advocacy Officer to elaborate on the first recommended action in the report regarding the review and revision of the Student Academic Consideration Policy to improve alignment with students’ access to medical services.

The Student Advocacy Officer explained that the 2024 report reflected challenges related to the absence of on-campus GP services during that year, as the medical centre on Level 1, Building 11, was not yet available. During this period, students needing medical certificates for academic consideration had to seek off-campus providers. Changes in government bulk billing practices also created additional barriers, particularly for international students who needed to find insurance-appropriate GPs.

The Officer further noted that the university had rolled back some COVID-era provisions that had previously relaxed requirements for medical certificates. The reinstatement of stricter policies led to an increase in fraudulent medical certificates submitted by students, contributing to a rise in general misconduct cases.

In response, changes have been made in 2025 to the general misconduct process, specifically addressing fraudulent medical certificates, which the Student Advocacy Officer welcomed as a positive development.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the report provided by Student Advocacy as set out in the agenda..*

**\*3.3 Update on SSAF Survey Results**

The Student Experience Insights Specialist reported on the 2025 SSAF Student Consultation Survey conducted from 7 to 21 May. This year, incentives endorsed by SAC were provided and the survey was distributed via personalised links to 22,261 SSAF-liable students' UAW email addresses. These measures significantly improved engagement, resulting in a response rate of 5.31 per cent, with 1,182 responses—almost double last year's participation.

The survey focused on campus and demographic analysis as well as awareness and use of existing 2025 SSAF projects. Two free-text questions asked students what they would like to see their SSAF funds spent on.

Campus breakdown showed most responses came from the Wollongong campus with 1,004 responses, followed by Liverpool with 58 and others. It was noted that a renewed focus on regional and metro campus engagement would be beneficial next year.

Respondent profiles indicated most participants were full-time, face-to-face undergraduate students, with a balanced distribution across first, middle and final year cohorts.

Regarding awareness of SSAF, most students understood its purpose, though a notable number remained unaware as reflected in free-text feedback.

The top three SSAF-funded services students engaged with were orientation, library extended access and clubs and societies. The top three student priorities for SSAF spending were food and drink provisions, assistance with employment or career advice, and promoting student health and welfare.

Free-text responses have been analysed and will be shared in further detail during upcoming workshops. As an additional update, 28 submissions for SSAF projects were received before the closing date and will be reviewed by the SAC SSAF subcommittee in their upcoming meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

*That the Student Advisory Council note the update provided by the Student Experience Insights Specialist as set out in the agenda.*

**PART 4: FINAL BUSINESS**

**4.1 Questions on Notice**

**\*4.2 Other Business**

### **4.3 Next Meeting**

The Chair advised the next SAC meeting will be held on the Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at 11:30 AM.

### **4.4 Rolling Agenda Schedule**

- Update from the Persons with a Disability Representative
- Update from BAL Representatives
- Update from University Council Representatives
- Update from Shoalhaven Campus Representatives
- Update from Liverpool Camus Representative
- Update form Sutherland Campus Representative
- Update from the LGBTIQ+ Representative
- Update from Student Residences Representative
- Update regarding the Student Conduct Committee

### **4.5 Closure of Meeting**

The Chair thanked all members and closed the meeting at 12:00 pm.

Signed as a true record:

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*A Tegg*

Alex Tegg

Acting Chair, Student Advisory Council

11/08/2025