



## UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES 14 MAY 2020

*Minutes* of Meeting 02/2020 of the University Research Committee held on 14 May 2020 via Zoom.

### Present:

Prof J Martin (*Chair*)

A/Prof H Chen  
Prof K Clapham  
D/Prof N Dixon  
Prof K French  
S/Prof C Gibson  
A/Prof P Kelly  
Prof L Kervin  
S/Prof R Lewis

Prof T Marchant  
Ms S Martin  
A/Prof D Mercer  
S/Prof A Okely  
A/Prof G Peleckis  
Prof W Price  
Prof M Randle  
D/Prof R Roberts

Mr G Tomka  
D/Prof A van Oijen  
Prof W Vialle  
S/Prof S Ville  
Dr M Voyer  
S/Prof G Waitt

### Minute Secretary:

Ms J Evans

## PART 1 OFFICIAL BUSINESS

### 1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from S/Prof D Steel and the Chair welcomed back Prof J Beck following a period of study leave.

Prof M Batterham representing S/Prof D Steel.

### URC Membership

The Chair noted the following membership matters:

- this is the last URC Meeting for Prof Wilma Vialle as her term as Chair, Academic Senate ends in 30 June 2020;
- Prof Greg Rose from ANCORS has been elected Chair, Academic Senate from 1 July 2020 and will take over the as the Academic Senate representative on the URC Committee;
- this is the last meeting for Prof Tim Marchant as he steps down as the Dean of Research, Prof Marchant will continue to Chair the UOW Rankings Committee;
- membership terms for all other URC Members ends in August 2020 and membership renewal letters will be forwarded prior to that;
- currently there are two vacant positions on the committee: HDR representative and UOW Dubai representative;
- an ECR representative on the committee will need to be sought as Dr Michelle Voyer is stepping down, although has agreed to stay until the end of her term (August 2020).

The Chair thanked Prof W Vialle and Prof T Marchant for their contributions to the Committee.

## **1.2 Arrangement of the Agenda**

### **1.2.1 Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

### **1.2.1 Starring of Items**

Agenda items 1.2, 1.5, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5 and 3.6 were starred for the meeting.

#### ***Resolved (12/20)***

*That the University Research Committee adopt the draft resolutions for the un-starred items.*

## **1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

#### ***Resolved (13/20)***

*That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 March 2020, as attached to the agenda paper, be confirmed and signed as a true record.*

## **1.4 Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

## **1.5 Chair's Business**

### **Universities Australia DVCR'S Meeting Update**

The Chair advised there have been two Universities Australia (UA) DVCR meetings recently, mostly centred on issues related to the response to COVID-19. Key issues discussed were as follows:

- what UOW researchers are currently doing to address COVID-19 including making face shields and sanitizer, developing research projects that help in dealing with the pandemic and contributing to policy decisions;
- Dr Alan Finkel (Australia's Chief Scientist and Chair of the Rapid Research Information Forum) and his address to the meeting about the impact the pandemic is having and is likely to have on Australia's Research Workforce and its capability to support recovery efforts;
- support of recommendations from the Australian Council of Graduate Research and the government response to provide more flexibility and support for HDRs through the Research Training Program; and
- the implementation of SAGE Athena Swan action plans by institutions has been extended by one year.

### **NSW DVCR'S Meeting Update**

The Chair advised that there have been three NSW DVCR meetings. Key issues discussed were as follows:

- response to COVID-19 and how to transition from the office and lab to working at home;
- sharing of information to ensure universities are aligned across the sector;
- how to come back from working from home;
- NSW Health COVID-19 Research Grants and the short deadline and over subscription;
- focussed translational impact of COVID-19; and
- being prepared for Federal and State Government focus on industry and translational research, whilst still maintaining fundamental research.

### **ARC Special Research Initiative**

During May UOW submitted 15 applications to the SRI for Australian Society, History and Culture, requesting a total of \$3,682,326 in ARC funding. Applications by faculty were as follows:

- 9 applications from Law, Humanities and the Arts;
- 4 applications from Social Sciences;

- 1 from Business; and
- 1 from Science, Medicine and Health.

UOW researchers also collaborated on 8 SRI applications submitted through other institutions.

### **Annual Faculty Research Performance Reporting**

The annual Faculty Research Performance Reporting process will commence shortly. In 2020 there will be a trial of a new reporting process aligned to the 2020-2025 Research and Innovation Strategy goals and priorities. Faculties will be asked to provide their reports using a new Faculty Research Reporting Template. Data released to the faculties will include: suggested HDR Student funding allocations, publication summaries, competitive research income received, pending competitive grant applications, gender breakdown for academic staff and research active information.

Meetings are scheduled for August 2020 and faculties will be able to provide feedback about new templates at the end of reporting process. For 2021 the process will be held earlier, in Q1.

The Committee queried whether or not the HDR Student Funding Allocations would be subject to the current UOW expenditure controls. The Chair advised that the expenditure controls had resulted in a number of unintended consequences, however she would clarify this with the COO.

### **RSO and ICR Review**

The Chair noted that each Business Unit within the Research and Innovation Division (RaID) will be undergoing a review to ensure optimum structures are in place to support staff and students and to ensure RaID Staffing and resources are appropriately allocated.

The Research Services Office (RSO) and Innovation and Commercial Research Unit (ICR) will undergo a review together beginning in Q3 2020, with outcomes to be implemented in early 2021. The RSO and ICR Review will consider: strategic alignment, purpose, structure and resourcing, stakeholder service provision and synergies with other parts of RaID, planned system implementations and business processes, and ways to improve support for industry engagement and business development. The Terms of Reference are currently being drafted and will then go to the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group (VCAG) for noting.

## **PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

### **2.1 No confidential business.**

## **PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **3.1 Research and Innovation Report**

#### ***Resolved (14/20)***

*That the University Research Committee note the Research and Innovation Report for the 14 May 2020 URC Meeting, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **3.2 UOW COVID-19 Research Response**

The Chair presented on UOW's COVID-19 Research Response, noting:

- the impacts on UOW research activities (clinical, human and animal research);
- the impacts on HDR students;
- impacts on internal funding (expenditure control measures, research programs paused, conferences cancelled/postponed)

- impacts on external funding/projects (extensions to application and reporting deadlines, schemes cancelled); and
- communications and support (monthly internal RaID Newsletter, UOW COVID website).

***Resolved (15/20)***

*That the University Research Committee note the UOW COVID-19 Research Response Presentation, as presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at the URC Meeting.*

**3.3 Higher Degree Research (HDR) Student Update**

The Acting Dean of Graduate Research thanked the ADR's, HPS's and DVC(R&I) for their continued support during this time. An update on enrolment numbers as at 4 May is as follows:

- Enrolled – 1498
- Domestic – 844
- International – 654

Autumn enrolments are down 9% compared to the same time last year, due to the COVID-19 travel bans. More detailed assessments on enrolment numbers can be found in the HDR Annual Report (agenda item 3.4). Also included in the report for the first time is HDR Publication Data.

Other initiatives for 2019 were:

- HDR Course Review; and
- Graduate Research School Review.

Responding to the COVID-19 situation and supporting and communicating with HDR Students has been the focus over the last month. Initiatives include:

- Regular updates to HDR Students addressing their concerns;
- Messaging directly from the DVC(R&I);
- Remote learning student survey with SSD to all students;
- Introduction of a 'contingency plan' template for all HDR Students, and
- Introduction of remote/distance enrolment and learning (due to travel bans/restrictions)

The A/Dean of Graduate Research noted that whilst students are having significant difficulties and disruptions to their research, there are a number of great practices that have been implemented within the schools and faculties, for example, a writing club in the School of Nursing and regular HDR drop-in sessions in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The welfare of students is a priority and the UOW Financial Grant Assistance Scheme is now available to international HDR's, with 5 receiving assistance in Round 2. A further 4 international students who have already submitted their theses and are unable to return to their home country have also received assistance.

The priority going forward is how to deliver a great postgraduate education in the best way possible, and how to build that community and connections.

Other initiatives include:

- all HDR Training has now been adapted to an online/remote environment and will continue into the Spring Session;
- a HPS Forum looking at 'How to Lead' during times of uncertainty, to share best practice and to empower Heads of Postgraduate Studies, ADR's are welcome to attend; and
- UGPN PhD Scholarships: 30 applications with 4 outstanding candidates selected.

***Resolved (16/20)***

*That the University Research Committee note the Higher Degree Research (HDR) Student Update, as presented by the Acting Dean of Graduate Research, at the URC Meeting.*

### 3.4 Annual Report on HDR Matters

#### ***Resolved (17/20)***

*That the University Research Committee note the Annual Report on HDR Matters, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### 3.5 Draft UOW 2020-2025 Research & Innovation Strategy Update

The Director Research Services Office advised that the consultation period for the Strategy has been extended and will now close on 15 May 2020. The level of engagement has been extremely pleasing with 350 survey responses to date, including substantial engagement from HDR students. Other engagement relating to the Strategy included: DVC(R&I) Podcasts, Virtual Morning Teas; and an upcoming UOW Community Reference Group meeting.

The survey has so far revealed good support for the Strategy, although concerns were also raised about capacity to support the initiatives outlined in the current COVID-19 environment. In particular, HDR Students were concerned about implementation of outcomes from the GRS Review. Other findings include:

- the need for fundamental research, as well applied research;
- support for research that is important to the region and local industry;
- implementation and accessibility of mentoring programs across the university;
- strong support for the UN SDG's; and
- for HDR students, more training and support, and scholarships and internships with industry partners to ensure career readiness.

Feedback from the consultation will be reviewed and the Strategy updated as required. The revised Strategy will then go to VCAG on 15 June, followed by Academic Senate on 8 July, VCAG for final review on 20 July, with the final Strategy presented to the URC on 29 July and to Council on 14 August for final approval.

#### ***Resolved (18/20)***

*that the University Research Committee note the Draft UOW 2020-2025 Research & Innovation Strategy Update, as provided in the agenda papers and presented by the Director Research Services Office, at the URC Meeting.*

### 3.6 Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings Update

The Committee discussed the THE Rankings update and what strategies will be used going forward to improve UOW's Rankings. The DVC(R&I) confirmed that gender equity and reduced inequality are a priority, noting that these require a change in processes, including valuing diversity and implementing the SAGE Action Plan.

The Dean of Research and Program Manager, Research Analytics, Systems and Support updated the Committee regarding initiatives to improve UOW's ranking, including:

- keywords associated with particular SDG's and using those keywords in publication titles (the RSO will be circulating a list of keywords);
- improving publication rates with low and middle income countries (eg Indonesia, India);
- ensuring institutional policies are up to date;
- better capturing information about community engagement activities; and
- faculties supporting Vertigo Impact Tracker to support collation of evidence for UN SDGs including engagement data to assist THE Impact and ARC EI assessments.

#### ***Resolved (19/20)***

*that the University Research Committee note the Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings Update, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **3.7 UOW Researcher Development & Impact Strategy Update**

***Resolved (20/20)***

*that the University Research Committee note:*

- (i) the revised Researcher Development & Impact Strategy - Implementation Plan, and*
  - (ii) the revised Attachment 2: Deliverables, scheduling and milestones;*
- as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **3.8 University Research Committee – Working Groups Update**

***Resolved (21/20)***

*that the University Research Committee note the University Research Committee - Working Groups Update, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **3.9 Intellectual Property & Commercial Research Policy Update**

***Resolved (22/20)***

*that the University Research Committee note the Intellectual Property & Commercial Research Policy Update, as provided in the agenda papers.*

## **PART 4 BUSINESS FROM UOW COMMITTEES**

### **4.1 Research Integrity Committee**

***Resolved (23/20)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 20 February 2020 Meeting of the Research Integrity Committee.*

### **4.2 Thesis Examination Committee**

***Resolved (24/20)***

*That the University Research Committee note the meeting summaries of the February 2020, March 2020 and April 2020 Meetings of the Thesis Examination Committee.*

### **4.3 Research IT and Systems Committee**

***Resolved (25/20)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 6 April 2020 Meeting of the Research IT and Systems Committee.*

### **4.4 SAGE Athena Swan Implementation Committee**

***Resolved (26/20)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 18 February 2020 Meeting of the SAGE Athena Swan Implementation Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.*

## **PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Other Business**

### **5.2 Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the University Research Committee will be held on Wednesday 29 July 2020 at 10.00am via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 11.10pm.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- 1.3 J Evans – file URC Minutes 4 March 2020
- 4.1 E Steinke – file RIC Minutes
- 4.2 S Flint – file TEC Summaries
- 4.3 M Oakman – file RITAS Minutes
- 4.4 K Lindenau – file SAGE Minutes

Signed as a true record



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Chairperson 06/08/2020