



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES 29 JULY 2020

Minutes of meeting 03/2020 of the University Research Committee held on 29 July 2020 via Zoom

Present:

Prof J Martin (*Chair*)

A/Prof H Chen
Prof K Clapham
D/Prof N Dixon
S/Prof R Lewis
Ms S Martin
Prof G Rose
Prof J Beck
Prof L Kervin

Prof D Adams
Prof M Batterham
S/Prof Z Guo
S/Prof P McGuirk
Prof S Carter
Mr O Khalifa
A/Prof D Mercer
S/Prof A Okely

A/Prof G Peleckis
Prof W Price
D/Prof R Roberts
Mr G Tomka
S/Prof S Ville
Dr M Voyer
Prof P Perez
S/Prof S Robinson

Minute Secretary:

Ms K House

PART 1 OFFICIAL BUSINESS

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from S/Professor D Steel and D/Professor A van Oijen. The Chair welcomed Professor G Rose to his first meeting as the Academic Senate representative on the URC, and Professor S Robinson to her first meeting as the new Director of the Global Challenges Program.

Professor M Batterham representing S/Prof D Steel.

URC Membership

The Chair advised that the current URC membership term is for two years, ending 31 August 2020. There will be some minor changes to URC membership from 1 September and membership renewal letters will be forwarded soon.

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 (27/20)

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

1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved (28/20)

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 May 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

New Staff

The Chair advised that the new Dean of Graduate Research, Professor Clive Baldock will commence on 3 August. The intention is to replace the Dean of Research position with a role focussing on researcher development and integrity, however this is currently on hold.

Recent DVCR Meetings – Update

The Chair advised that the Hon Dan Tehan, Minister for Education has recently established two working groups:

- **National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund Working Group**, led by UTS Vice-Chancellor, Professor Attila Brungs, will design a \$900M fund to enhance engagement between higher education and industry, with a strong focus on STEM industries; and
- **Research Sustainability Working Group**, led by Universities Australia Chair and Curtin University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Deborah Terry, will provide advice about sustainable approaches to research funding for universities during COVID-19 and beyond.

The Committee discussed the recommendations that UOW would provide to both working groups. Concerns were raised about issues that are being felt across the whole sector, particularly the vulnerability and need to protect ECRs and HDR students and the need to minimise institutional cash leveraging requirements by funding agencies.

The Chair advised that the NSW DVCR's group is currently meeting fortnightly, working together and sharing documentation and ideas. An Infrastructure Working Group has also been formed, with key issues identified as follows:

- The need for better coordination of ARC LIEF applications across NSW universities;
- Documentation about research shutdown during COVID, returning to campus post COVID and the sharing of institutional approaches; and
- Improving application processes for NSW Health COVID Research Grants. Round 2 has just opened, with a success rate of 3.5% from Round 1. NSW Health will be implementing a new process to review expressions of interest, with Prof Jenny Beck agreeing to be the nominee for UOW on that committee.

Annual Faculty Research Performance Reporting

The Chair advised that the annual Faculty Research Performance meetings will be held during August/September. In 2020, a new Faculty Planning and Reporting Process aligned to the 2020-2025 Research & Innovation Strategy Goals and Priorities is being implemented. Given that internal research expenditure has been under review by the COO and DVC(R&I), and following the faculty realignment process, financial reporting requirements have been simplified for this year.

New Internal Processes for Fellowships

The Chair advised that a new process will be introduced for the approval of UOW candidates applying for externally funded fellowships for the remainder of 2020. This was endorsed by VCAG on 27 July. Faculty endorsement of all candidates will ensure that salary shortfalls and

other cash and in-kind contributions are identified, planned for and standardised, bearing in mind high cost and low cost disciplines. The new process is three-staged as follows:

1. **EOI:** a new template for each scheme, including candidate self-assessment and faculty endorsement;
2. **Faculty Review:** including assessment of competitiveness and ranking of each candidate, recommendations will be provided to the DVC(R&I) for final approval; and
3. **DVC(R&I) Review:** assessment of applicants put forward by faculties and identification of candidates to progress to full application.

The new process will apply to the following ARC and NHMRC Schemes: ARC DECRA 2022; ARC Future Fellowships 2021; ARC Laureate Fellowships 2021; and NHMRC Investigator Grants 2022. EOIs will be called for in late July/early August.

For these funding rounds, only internal UOW researchers will be permitted to apply, provided they have a competitive track record and faculty support. This is aimed at encouraging UOW researchers, particularly EMCRs, to apply. Faculties must confirm support including underwriting salary shortfalls, and other cash/in-kind contributions.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee. The ADR BAL questioned the limit on internal fellowship applicants only. The Chair advised that the focus on internal applicants and supporting staff currently at UOW will only apply to the upcoming funding rounds identified and be reviewed for future years.

RSO & ICR Review – Commencing August 2020

The Chair advised that over the next 5 years, RAID units in the DVC(R&I) portfolio will be reviewed to ensure optimal structures are in place to support UOW research staff and students, and that RAID staffing and resources are appropriately allocated. The Research Services Office and Innovation and Commercial Research Unit will undergo a review together, during August and September 2020, with outcomes to be implemented in early 2021. The Review will consider the following:

- strategic alignment, purpose, structure and resourcing;
- stakeholder service provision and synergies with other parts of RAID;
- planned system implementations and business processes; and
- improving support for industry engagement and business development.

An external expert, Dr Mark Hochman, will work with BIAD to undertake the Review. Submissions to the Review open 30 July and close on 14 August, followed by meetings with key stakeholders. Details will be advertised in Universe.

PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

2.1 No confidential business.

PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS

3.1 Research and Innovation Report

Resolved (29/20)

that the University Research Committee note the Research and Innovation Report for the 29 July 2020 URC Meeting, as provided in the agenda papers.

3.2 Higher Degree Research (HDR) Student Update

The Acting Dean of Graduate Research advised that this is her last URC meeting in this role, and thanked the Committee for their support. The Chair thanked the A/Dean Graduate Research

for stepping up to this position at very short notice and acknowledged it has been great working together.

HDR enrolment update:

- The enrolment numbers were down – this is expected, with a large number of deferral request – 64 for Autumn and 26 for Spring
- 50 students enrolled in distance and remote mode
- 271 completions in 2019
- 85 completions as of June 2020
- 64 RTP scholarship holders commenced out of 68 offers made
- 24 UPAs
- Application numbers for doctoral degrees are down by 18%
- 6% increase in applications for MRes degrees
- The number of active COEs were down by 30%, at 14%

Good news is that we were awarded 21 CSC scholarships – a pleasing outcome at a challenging time.

During COVID-19 it has been important to build and maintain relationships with HDR students remotely. Remote enrolments and initiatives include:

- July 2020 remote enrolments are eligible without visas;
- Remote study plans have been designed;
- Interim progress reports have been designed, published and released to students;
- 17 webinars on Research Skills Training have been produced and made available for students on Moodle;
- Virtual Orientation to be held on 30 July with 92 students registered;
- Two virtual thesis writing boot camps;
- GRS have scheduled drop in sessions for HDR students, and
- Two virtual forums held for Heads of Postgraduate Studies on policy updates, with ADRs in attendance.

3MT heats were held during July with the finals to be held in a virtual format on 18 August and comprising 10 finalists. Thanks to all ADRs and Faculty Research Officers who embraced the changes and organised the faculty heats, also a thank you to the sponsor of this event UniBank.

The Chair invited questions from members. The ADR BAL emphasized the need to increase HDR scholarships at UOW. With reference to agenda item 3.5 (page 88 of agenda), the ADR noted an enormous mismatch between the bold statement “*Our HDR students power our research engine room. They are our junior colleagues and our future ambassadors*” and the comparative table on the same page where it is identified that UOW has one third the numbers of UPAs and one half the RTPs of Macquarie University. The Chair noted these concerns, however, she also advised that an increase in HDR scholarships would necessarily result in less money for other research activities.

The Chair of Academic Senate raised the issue of remote enrolments commencing from July 2020 which could change the need for financial support. Further advising that in the past, fee waivers or discounts for remote enrolled students have been arranged, and this could be a way of bringing in additional students.

Resolved (30/20)

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.

3.3 Global Challenges Program Update

The incoming Executive Director of Global Challenges expressed her thanks to Professor Chris Gibson for his excellent stewardship of the program as the inaugural Executive Director. She is excited to be leading UOW's interdisciplinary researchers towards building new research teams to place them in a position for new funding opportunities.

Due to the current financial situation, Global Challenges will not be funding Keystones in 2020. A total of 28 Seed Applications (requesting \$380,000) and 14 Project Funding Applications (requesting \$531,000) were received. This is similar to previous years, however some researchers were unable to submit an application due to COVID. In 2020 a GC Disaster Response Program was set up to explore ways to help the NSW South Coast recover from the bushfires, with 45% of Seed and 100% of projects addressing this call. A project led by Professor Paul Cooper, looking at disaster recovery in the Kangaroo Valley area, received \$50,000 in matching funding from the Shark Island Institute. The projects included 105 researchers, with a significant number of ECRs, women and indigenous leadership.

Global Challenges is currently reviewing leadership support in Building Resilient Communities and Sustaining Coastal and Marine Zones and considering the three-faculty criteria within the new faculty structure. The Committee was asked to provide feedback on how to improve Global Challenges over the next 2-3 years.

Two GC teams were awarded 2020 Vice-Chancellor's Research Excellence Awards:

- Interdisciplinary Research Award - Next generation sunscreens; and
- Research Partnership and Impact – Ahead of the Game: Global impact in the promotion of mental health through sport.

Resolved (31/20)

that the University Research Committee note the Global Challenges Program Update, as presented by the Executive Director Global Challenges, at the URC meeting.

3.4 Revised UOW 2020-2025 Research & Innovation Strategy Update

Resolved (32/20)

that the University Research Committee note the Revised UOW 2020-2025 Research & Innovation Strategy Update, as provided in the agenda papers.

3.5 Post COVID-19 Recovery Pathway to 2023: Protecting UOW's Research Excellence Futures

The ADR BAL commented on the document and the emphasis on translational vs basic research. The Chair advised that translational research is one of five priority actions over the next two years. Translational research has been identified as a key investment priority by the Government, and researchers and institutions need to be aware of this and position themselves to take advantage of any additional funding opportunities to build these capabilities.

The Chair, Academic Senate asked how the potential areas of UOW translational research in renewable energy, energy storage, carbon include capture, plastic recycling, green chemistry, green mining, robotics, cybersecurity, data science, advanced manufacturing and sustainability were identified. The Chair advised that these were gleaned from recent announcements by various state and federal ministers and were put forward as research areas where UOW could potentially contribute.

Resolved (33/20)

that the University Research Committee note the Post COVID-19 Recovery Pathway to 2023: Protecting UOW's Research Excellence Futures, as provided in the agenda papers at the URC meeting.

3.6 Revised Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC 2020)

The RSO Program Manager, Research Analytics, Systems and Support and the Research Reporting and Analytics Manager joined the meeting for discussion of the Revised Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC 2020). It was noted that FOR and SEO codes in Australia are well established and important, and the changes as a result of the review are substantial and the first major change since 2008. Changes at the 4 digit level FOR codes are minor, however changes at the 6 digit level of research are significant, including: new codes; codes that have changed in nature; split codes; and code rearrangement.

The next round of ERA 2023 and EI 2024 will use the new codes which will present an immense impact on the way researchers, their grants and their outputs are assigned to FORs. The RSO Team provided the Committee with further analysis and overview on the effects of these changes and advised that the ERA/EI Executive Committee will be re-convened in September to discuss the changes and provide guidance and advice on:

- Implementation timeline;
- Creation of a website explaining the changes;
- Information on how to align the new FOR codes with previous research;
- New publication system (Symplectics) launching later in the year;
- Updating FOR codes in RIS (ideally at the 6 digit discipline level); and
- ERA Management System updates.

The ADR SMAH noted that due to the amount of work required, information should be provided to researchers to ensure they get involved and complete the required actions by the deadline. The ARC is still to provide further information, however, the new FOR Codes for publications will begin from 2021.

Resolved (34/20)

that the University Research Committee note the Revised Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC 2020) update, as provided in the agenda papers and presented by the Program Manager, Research Analytics, Systems and Support and the Research Reporting and Analytics Manager, at the URC Meeting.

3.7 Restoring UOW Research Operations (Stage 1) update

Resolved (35/20)

That the University Research Committee note the Restoring UOW Research Operations (Stage 1) update, as provided in the agenda papers.

PART 4 BUSINESS FROM UOW COMMITTEES

4.1 Research Integrity Committee

Resolved (36/20)

That the University Research Committee note the draft minutes of the 21 July 2020 Meeting of the Research Integrity Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.2 Thesis Examination Committee

Resolved (37/20)

That the University Research Committee note the meeting summaries of the May 2020, June 2020 and July 2020 Meetings of the Thesis Examination Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.3 Research IT and Systems Committee

Resolved (38/20)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 6 July 2020 Meeting of the Research IT and Systems Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.4 SAGE Athena Swan Implementation

Resolved (39/20)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 21 April 2020 Meeting of the SAGE Athena Swan Implementation Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS

5.1 Other Business

The Chair noted it was pleasing to see the outcome of the survey results in relation to the Variation to UOW Enterprise Agreements for the proposed mandated purchased leave scheme, released 29 July.

5.2 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the University Research Committee will be held on Wednesday, 21 October at 10.00am via Zoom

The meeting closed at 11.04am

ACTION ITEMS

- 1.3 J Evans – file URC Minutes 14 May 2020
- 4.1 E Steinke – file RIC Minutes 21 July 2020
- 4.2 S Flint – file TEC Summaries May, June, July 2020
- 4.3 M Oakman – file RITAS Minutes 6 July 2020
- 4.4 K. Lindenau – file SAGE Minutes 21 April 2020



Signed as a true record

.....

Chairperson 30/10/20