



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES 21 OCTOBER 2020

Minutes of Meeting 04/2020 of the University Research Committee held on 21 October 2020 via Zoom.

Present:

Prof J Martin (*Chair*)

Prof D Adams
Prof C Baldock
Prof M Batterham
Prof J Beck
Dr Y Chew
Prof K Clapham
Ms S Flint
S/Prof Z Guo
D/Prof S Kaye
Prof L Kervin

Mr Omar Khalifa
Ms S Martin
S/Prof P McGuirk
A/Prof D Mercer
S/Prof A Okely
A/Prof G Peleckis
S/Prof P Perez
Prof W Price
D/Prof R Roberts
S/Prof Sharon Robinson

Prof G Rose
Prof N Seuffert
S/Prof A Sims
Ms E Steinke
Mr G Tomka
D/Prof A van Oijen
Prof W Vialle

Minute Secretary:

Ms J Evans

PART 1 OFFICIAL BUSINESS

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms A Boyle, Prof R Lewis and S/Prof S Ville. Prof N Seuffert representing S/Prof S Ville and A/Prof K Win representing Prof R Lewis. Ms Eve Steinke attended the meeting for discussion of agenda item 3.5.

The Chair noted that the URC currently has 2 membership positions vacant. The Chair further welcomed new and continuing members of the Committee, and asked all members to introduce themselves to the meeting.

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, 3.4, 3.5, 4.3 and 5.1 were starred for the meeting.

Resolved (40 /20)

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

1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved (41/20)

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 July 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 noted new staff as follows:

- New Chancellor, Ms Christine McLoughlin commenced 1 October 2020;
- New Vice-Chancellor, Prof Patricia Davidson, commences May 2021;
- A/Prof Alberto Nettel-Aguirre, Biostatistics and Director, Centre for Health & Social Analytics; and
- A/Prof Umberto Berardi, Director, Sustainable Buildings Research Centre.

NSW DVCR Meeting - Update

The NSW DVCR's are currently meeting fortnightly. A separate Infrastructure Sub-Committee has also been convened to coordinate NSW LIEF applications for 2021. The NSW DVCR Committee is holding a workshop on 27 October 2020 which will include past recipients and panel members. As a result of the coordination across NSW Universities, the process at UOW will be different to previous years. The program is currently being finalised and the Director Research Services Office will provide further details following the meeting.

Research Support Program (RSP)

The RSP provides annual block grants to support systemic research costs not supported directly through competitive grants (e.g. libraries, labs, consumables, technical staff salaries). An additional \$1 billion through the RSP is being allocated in January 2021 to alleviate financial pressures during COVID-19. The allocation is based on the current RSP funding model: 47% research income + 53% engagement income. The RSP safety net will not be applied in allocating this additional funding. Current RBG transitional arrangements were scheduled to cease in December 2020. These arrangements for RSP consist of a safety net to ensure that no university receives less than 95% of its funding for the prior year. Transitional arrangements will run until 31 December 2021, they will only apply to base RSP funding, not the additional \$1 billion RSP funding. The Chair advised that UOW are still waiting for details on how much will be received and reminded members that the next couple of years will be financially tough for the university and further details will be provided when they become available.

Foreign Relations Update

The Chair noted that in late 2019, the **Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector** were released by the Federal Government. The Guidelines provide information on best practice to assist decision-makers assess risks from foreign interference and promote risk mitigation strategies. Following that, **Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Bill 2020** was referred to Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 5 November 2020. The Chair noted that this legislation, if approved, will have great impact on the sector with the legislation giving the government capacity to cancel or veto agreements between universities and foreign governments/organisations, if they are inconsistent with Australian Foreign Policy. The legislation will apply to any "written arrangement, agreement, contract, understanding or undertaking" between an Australian university and any foreign government / entity. It will relate to current and future agreements and will result in a huge increase in reporting requirements to government. Any agreement with another organisation that has 'Institutional Autonomy' will not be in the scope of this legislation and not required to be referred to the Minister for oversight, however the definition of 'Institutional Autonomy' has not yet been defined.

The Chair further noted this has already had an impact, with ARC updating their **ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy**, where Researchers on ARC Grants or College of Experts must provide information about personal interests and relationships through their RMS

profile. Responses are not visible to other participants on the application or assessors. To ensure best practice, UOW is currently actioning the following:

- Updating policies (e.g. procurement of major contracts, IP, commercial research, donations);
- Creation of a central register of international collaboration agreements;
- Updating travel policies;
- Review of UOW Conflict of Interest policy (consultations closed 16 October);
- Review of cybersecurity training and procedures;
- Department of Home Affairs Training for senior executives in November; and
- Engagement of KPMG to undertake an internal audit on foreign interference.

The Committee noted their concerns as follows:

- The effect it will have on the selection of PhD Examiners;
- If and when a definition of 'Institutional Autonomy' will be forthcoming;
- Government interference in academic and research activities;
- Increased reporting to government;
- Overseas collaborators not being prepared to enter into agreements as a result of this legislation; and
- The complication of informal agreements that may now require a more formal arrangement.

The Chair advised that the NSW DVCR's have met with the DFAT a number of times and hope to provide input into the legislation, and that the legislation would likely be passed due to its bipartisan support. The Chair encouraged members to educate themselves about the legislation.

2020-2025 Research and Innovation Strategy

The Chair advised that on 14 August, University Council approved the University's 2020-2025 Education Strategy; Research & Innovation Strategy; and Civic University Strategy. The Research & Innovation Strategy outlines our vision, values, goals and objectives and is focused on activities to support Goal 2: Creating knowledge for a better world. One common feature in all three Strategies is the recognition of UN Sustainable Development Goals in specific objectives and measures of success. The new Research & Innovation Strategy and key priorities for 2021 will be discussed in further detail at a future URC meeting.

Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) and Engagement and Impact (EI)

The Chair thanked the Committee for contributing to the recent submission regarding changes to the ERA and EI.

Research Services Office (RSO) and Innovation and Commercial Research (ICR) Review

The Chair noted that the RSO and ICR Review has been completed with outcomes to be announced in the next few weeks, with recommendations implemented from early 2021. The Review considered:

- Strategic alignment and purpose; structure and resourcing; partnerships; and
- Service delivery and collaboration; and systems and processes.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their contributions to the Review.

The Future in Black and White Report

The Chair noted a new report has been released by Dr Thomas Barlow titled '*The Future in Black & White*' – *Australian University Research in a Post-COVID World.*' The Report is a crystal ball gaze 20 years into the future, informed by past trends and present circumstances, providing data/arguments/counter-arguments/extreme cases and 20-year bets on what the future will look like for Australian University Teaching and Research. UOW has purchased the report and it is available to UOW employees only and should not be distributed outside the University. Access to the report is available by contacting the Director Research Services Office. Dr Barlow will also attend the 2 November VCAG Meeting to make a presentation.

Voluntary Early Retirement

The Chair noted that a number of employees at UOW have taken up the Voluntary Early Retirement offered and will soon leave the University. The Chair thanked those leaving the University and extended best wishes for the future.

PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

2.1 No confidential business.

PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS

3.1 Research and Innovation Report

Resolved (42 /20)

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

3.2 Higher Degree Research (HDR) Student Update

The Dean Graduate Research (DGR) gave a presentation to the Committee about the future of Graduate Research at UOW. A key element currently is ‘*How do we better prepare and better train our HDR Students moving forward?*’ A recent study found that most PhD Graduates move on to jobs in business and the public sector with less than 20% of graduates continuing in academia. Here at UOW, and across the sector, the aim is to better capture and credential the research training component of a PhD and to ensure that PhD Graduates are job ready. This requires a re-think about the traditional PhD model, particularly in regards to supervision.

The DGR advised that as a result of the Graduate Research School Review completed earlier in the year, it was recommended that the DGR, together with the GRS, have responsibility for a university-wide skills development program and transferable skills program. As a result of these recommendations, the implementation of a ‘Graduate Certificate in Research’ is proposed. Work is also being progressed on a ‘UOW Graduate Researcher Development Framework’, which will inform the research training required into the future. The DGR provided further details on both the Graduate Certificate and the Framework and the PowerPoint presentation is attached to these minutes for reference. The DGR answered and clarified a number of questions from the Committee about the Graduate Certificate in Research. Any further questions should be directed to the DGR following the meeting.

The DGR discussed the new HDR Scholarship Allocation Model for 2021. Based on recorded data for each Faculty/Institute, four parameters of equal weighting have been used to determine the forthcoming percentage allocation as follows:

- FTE HDR enrolments at the end of 2019;
- HDR completions in 2019;
- \$ scholarships funded in 2019 (for 2020); and
- HERDC earned in 2017-2019.

The number of scholarships available for allocation in 2021 has significantly increased from 130 to a total of 200, comprising 120 RTP and 80 UPS scholarships. The scholarships will be allocated to faculties/institutes in advance to assess students based on their own faculty research strategies, and a number of parameters around institutional expectations and strategic priorities. The DGR will provide further details following the meeting and any further questions about the scholarship process and allocations should be directed to the DGR following the meeting.

Resolved (43 /20)

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

3.3 Global Challenges Program Update

The Executive Director, Global Challenges Program advised that the team are currently working with research groups to provide new leadership opportunities following the early retirement of a number of research leaders. The Executive Director thanked and acknowledged those leaders for their great work within those research teams and extended best wishes for the future.

Work continues on the Sustainable Research Goals (SDG's) Report that will be provided alongside the Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings Submission. The report will cover operations, engagement, teaching and learning and research. The report is currently with Executive Deans for comment and approval.

Global Challenges today re-launches their 'In Conversation' series which focusses on the disaster response initiative in the South Coast. This takes advantage of the current Climate Change Week and also Mental Health Month, hosting a range of speakers from Global Challenges Projects and Leadership Teams. Within the Disaster Response Project, 3 projects that had received Global Challenges funding in 2019 have also received external funding to support their projects.

The Global Challenges Team are currently reassessing the 3 faculty rule that is part of the Global Challenges Funding Criteria. This is as a result of the consolidation of 5 faculties to 4 faculties.

Resolved (44 /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 University Research Committee Revised Terms of Reference

The Committee noted the minor changes to the Terms of Reference, as detailed in the agenda papers. A number of additional minor grammatical revisions were further suggested by the Committee.

Resolved (45 /20)

That the University Research Committee endorse the Revised Terms of Reference, with additional minor adjustments, and forward to Academic Senate for approval.

3.5 Draft Predatory Publishing and Conferences Guidelines

The Committee noted the guidelines and made the following suggestions:

- The inclusion of an email address that can be used for reporting Predatory Publishing and Conferences:
- A readily accessible online tool made available to identify Predatory Publishing and Conferences.

The Committee discussed the second suggestion of an online tool and the Chair advised that there are a number of legal issues associated with creating a list declaring something as predatory and sharing this publicly. The Research Ethics and Integrity Manager advised that the UOW Library Website provides a resource to check whether a publisher or conference is recognised, rather than whether or not they are predatory.

The Committee further discussed the existence of a list that identifies predatory publishers and conferences, noting that there is such a list available online. The Chair noted the concerns from members about UOW supporting and referencing this list, however it was again confirmed that due to the legal position, researchers should source this information from the UOW Library.

The Committee referenced the proposed guidelines provided in the agenda papers, noting that publishing with predatory publishers and conferences may represent a breach of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (The Code), and potentially lead to an investigation under the processes outlined in UOW's Research Integrity and Conduct Policy. It was suggested that UOW should be supporting researchers, rather than taking a more punitive approach. The Chair confirmed that the Guidelines should be adjusted to ensure a more supportive approach rather than a punitive one.

Resolved (46 /20)

that the University Research Committee

- (i) note the Predatory Publishing and Conferences Working Party Report; and*
 - (ii) endorse the Draft Predatory Publishing and Conferences Guideline with suggested adjustments to*
 - (a) include an email address to be used for reporting Predatory Publishing and Conferences; and*
 - (b) amendments to ensure a more supportive approach rather than a punitive approach following a breach of The Code,*
- and forward to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) for approval.*

PART 4 BUSINESS FROM UOW COMMITTEES

4.1 Thesis Examination Committee

Resolved (47 /20)

That the University Research Committee note the meeting summary of the August 2020 Meeting of the Thesis Examination Committee.

4.2 SAGE Athena Swan Implementation Committee

Resolved (48 /20)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 17 June 2020 and 5 August 2020 Meetings of the SAGE Athena Swan Implementation Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.3 UOW Researcher Development and Impact Reference Group

The Executive Director AIIM provided an update on the Researcher Development and Impact Reference as follows:

- The Faculty re-alignment has resulted in a reduction in reference group members and delays in appointing Impact Champions;
- Impact Champions will be elected by 2 digit FOR Code due to government interest on translational research and changes to research funding with renewed focus on ERA and EI; and
- The roles and responsibilities of Impact Champions will be revised as a result of changes within the sector and discussions will be held with Executive Deans and ADR's to progress these appointments.

The Director Research Services provided an additional update as follows:

- a presentation was given at VCAG earlier this week focussing on preparations for ERA2023 and EI2024, noting that the parameters may change as a result of the recent ARC Consultation of both;
- the presentation included a proposal to begin interim review processes for ERA and EI, with VCAG advising that these should begin no later than Q3 2021; and
- VCAG stressed the importance of ERA/EI Discipline Champions being appointed as soon as possible due to the large amount of work that will be required.

Resolved (49/20)

That the University Research Committee note the

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

4.4 Research IT and Systems Committee

Resolved (50/20)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 7 October 2020 Meeting of the Research IT and Systems Committee.

PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS

5.1 Other Business

Intellectual Property Commercialisation Revenue Policy & Commercial Research Policy Updates

The Senior Manager, Innovation and Commercial Research noted that the policy updates are in progress and once further information is received from Governance, they will be provided to URC Members for feedback. Following endorsement from the URC, anticipated to be at the next meeting, approval will then be sought from Academic Senate at their first meeting in 2021.

5.2 2021 Draft Proposed Meeting Dates

Resolved (51/20)

that the University Research Committee note the 2021 Draft Proposed Meeting Dates, as provided in the agenda papers.

The meeting closed at 11.20am.

ACTION ITEMS

- 1.3 J Evans – file URC Minutes 29 July 2020
- 1.5 S Martin – provide further details to members of LIEF Workshop to be held on 27/10/2020
J Martin – provide further details of RSP Funding when available
- 3.2 C Baldock – provide details of new HDR Scholarship Allocation Model for 2021 to ADR’s
All Members – direct further questions re: Graduate Certificate and Scholarships to the DGR
- 3.4 S Martin – update changes to TOR and forward to Academic Senate for approval
- 3.5 E Steinke - update changes to Guidelines and forward to DVC(R&I) for approval
E Steinke – follow up with library regarding their website information & support for researchers
- 4.1 S Flint – file TEC Summaries
- 4.2 K Lindenau – file SAGE Minutes
- 4.4 M Oakman – file RITAS Minutes

Signed as a true record



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Chairperson 23/02/2021