



## UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES 9 JUNE 2021

*Minutes* of Meeting 02/2021 of the University Research Committee held on 9 June 2021 via Zoom.

### **Present:**

Prof J Martin (*Chair*)

D/Prof D Adams  
Prof C Baldock  
Prof M Batterham  
Prof J Beck  
Ms A Boyle  
Prof K Clapham  
D/Prof S Kaye  
Prof R Lewis

Ms S Martin  
S/Prof P McGuirk  
S/Prof A Okely  
A/Prof G Peleckis  
S/Prof P Perez  
D/Prof R Roberts  
S/Prof Sharon Robinson  
Prof G Rose

S/Prof A Sims  
Dr M Thompson  
Mr G Tomka  
Dr E Twyford  
D/Prof A van Oijen  
Prof S Ville

### **Minute Secretary:**

Ms J Evans

## **PART 1 OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

### **1.1 1.1.1 Welcome to Country**

The Chair delivered a Welcome to Country.

### **1.1.2 Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Prof W Vialle, Prof W Price and Prof L Kervin.

### **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, 2.1, 3.2 and 3.3 were starred for the meeting.

#### ***Resolved (12 /2021)***

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

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

The minutes for 18 February 2021 were omitted from the agenda papers. They were forwarded to Committee Members following the meeting and subsequently approved via email.

#### ***Resolved (13/2021)***

*That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 February 2021, as circulated to members, 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 Appointments**

The Chair advised the following new appointments:

- the new Vice-Chancellor, Prof Patricia Davidson commenced on 3 May;
- congratulations to Prof Sharon Robinson on appointment as one of the new Deans of Researcher Development & Integrity, commencing the role in July; and
- interviews have been held for the other Dean of Researcher Development & Integrity and Dean of Research Knowledge Exchange & Translation, with an announcement to be made in the next couple of weeks.

### **2021 Universities Australia Conference**

The UA Conference was held in Canberra from 2-3 June, with the theme of A Year of Change: navigating a new world. Speakers included:

- The Hon Alan Tudge, Minister for Education and Youth who provided the ministerial address;
- The Hon Arthur Sinodinos, Ambassador to USA – discussing the key developments in US higher education and research under the new Biden administration and what it could mean for universities in Australia;
- An Expert Panel: Leading on gender equality – building momentum and dealing with resistance;
- An Expert Panel: University, industries & government: working together better to scale up commercialisation efforts; and
- The Hon Tanya Plibersek, Shadow Minister for Education who provided the opposition address.

The Chair noted that there was not a lot of positivity, although strong support for partnerships with business.

### **Government Reviews**

#### Research Commercialisation Taskforce

The Government released a Consultation Paper in February 2021 proposing the development of a model for University Research Commercialisation and mechanisms to increase partnerships between businesses and universities. Submissions will inform a scoping study outlining options for a new model to be presented to Government later this year.

#### National Research Infrastructure Roadmap

An expert working group, led by Dr Ziggy Switkowski AO, will lead the development of a new 2021 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap to set out Australia's research infrastructure capability and future areas of need for the next 5 to 10 years. The Roadmap will drive innovation and support Australia's economic recovery and ensure efforts are focussed on key areas. The roadmap will also support research commercialisation by identifying areas of opportunity at all stages of the research pipeline. The Government will invest \$4 billion in national research infrastructure to 2028-29 as part of its long-term commitment to the research sector. The EWG is expected to deliver a report to government by the end of 2021.

### **Foreign Engagement Update**

The Australian government has established legislation to ensure interactions with foreign entities do not adversely affect Australia's foreign relations and are consistent with Australia's foreign policy.

The *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (FITS)* imposes registration obligations on individuals and corporate entities that undertake activities or enter into a registrable arrangement with a foreign principal (foreign principal = foreign governments, political organisations, companies/ organisations/ individuals 'controlled' by a foreign government/political party). To

meet compliance obligations, the University is including a new requirement for all staff to provide details of FE activities through an annual Foreign Engagement Declaration process. It is anticipated that communications regarding this declaration will be issued to staff in June.

The Foreign Arrangements Scheme aims to ensure arrangements between State/Territory entities and foreign governments and their entities do not adversely affect Australia's foreign relations and are consistent with Australia's foreign policy. Universities must notify DFAT if they propose to enter a non-core arrangement with a foreign government, or a foreign university that lacks institutional autonomy. The vast majority of foreign universities do not fall into these categories and are out of scope for the scheme. Universities are required to notify their relevant FA arrangements by two key deadlines:

- from 10 March - notify of prospective non-core FAs; and
- by 10 June - notify of existing non-core FAs.

As at 8 June, 97 FAs were listed on the public register with no university arrangements listed. A rush of notifications is expected to be submitted by the 10 June deadline, with a large volume from Go8 universities. The Global Strategy Division is coordinating work to ensure UOW's obligations are met.

### **iAccelerate Review**

A review of iAccelerate has recently been undertaken by external agency, Nous. The final outcomes of the Review will be provided to the DVC-RI shortly, with a management response to follow.

### **2021 DVCR&I Town Hall Forum**

All staff are invited to attend the Research & Innovation Town Hall Forum on Wednesday, 23 June 2021 from 10.30am - 12.00pm. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Patricia Davidson will open the forum and provide the welcome address. The Forum will feature updates on research initiatives and programs, including Implementation of key recommendations from the RSO/ICR Review and GRS Review, Outcomes of the UOW Prioritising Emerging Research Leaders (PERL) Fellowship Scheme, Opening of 2021 UOW Major Equipment Grant (MEG) Scheme, and update on the UOW RevITALise Research (RITA) Grants Scheme. Registration is essential via Eventbrite.

## **PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

### **2.1 Review of Research Centres & Institutes Framework**

The DVCR&I advised that the Review of UOW's Research Institutes and Centres Framework will seek to implement a range of initiatives to support strategic priorities identified in the 2020-2025 Research & Innovation Strategy and RSO/ICR Review. The review is planned for later this year and Terms of Reference (TOR) will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders. URC Committee Members are now asked to provide input into the development of the TOR.

The DVCR&I emphasised that there will be a number of years where funds for research will be constrained, going forward the aim is to ensure that available funds are directed in line with strategy and providing the best value for money, looking at how to best invest in research across the university.

The Committee questioned the timing of the Research Stocktake and the Centres & Institutes Review. The DVCR&I confirmed that the Research Stocktake will take place in Q3, with the Centres & Institutes Review commencing in Q4. Outcomes of the Research Stocktake will be one of the inputs considered in the Centres and Institutes Review. Discussion continued about the Review, with a numbers of suggestions as follows:

- the Review should provide clarity around how many research centres/institutes there are at UOW and the makeup/membership of those;
- the Review may provide advice on balancing the profiles and relationships between centres, institutes and schools within faculties;
- investigating the idea of a researcher allocating specific time between their school and their research institute/centre;
- understanding the effects on research of things such as international student subsidisation and government changes to block grant funding;
- more clarity around external funding for research institutes, especially in the context of UOW's new funding model;
- realising that diversity in research is good, however, internal funding will be limited for the next few years so external funding will also be required to sustain research at UOW; and
- the Review is an opportunity to broaden the metrics we use for research, such as research culture, research development, and integrity.

The DVCR&I asked Committee Members to provide any further suggestions by close of business Friday 11 June.

***Resolved (14/2021)***

*That the University Research Committee note the update on the Review of UOW Research Centres and Institutes Framework, as provided in the agenda papers, and provide feedback to the DVCR&I by close of business 11 June 2021*

## **PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS**

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

***Resolved (15/2021)***

*That the University Research Committee note the Research and Innovation Report for the June 2021 URC Meeting, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **3.2 Graduate Research Update**

The Dean of Graduate Research discussed the Student Complaints and Appeals Report 2020, compiled by the Academic Quality and Standards Unit, noting that complaints from HDR Candidates are treated as Academic Complaints and not General Complaints, and are investigated by the Student Ombudsman. For 2020 the report reveals 6 academic complaints, which is quite low, however there are some others that have been deemed General Complaints and may be managed and reported in a different way (for example, a harassment complaint). The Dean of Graduate Research advised that work is currently underway to find a better way of reporting complaints and noted that whilst the report had already gone through the Graduate Research Committee and Academic Senate, feedback from URC Committee Members is welcome. The Committee suggested:

- the inclusion of processes that address the difficulties that HDR students from different cultural backgrounds may have around making a complaint;
- the inclusion of processes that address the difficulties associated with the power imbalance between a supervisor and HDR student that again may create a reluctance to make a complaint; and
- that the co-supervision model between HDR students and supervisors is welcomed and could possibly be something that could be extended to ECR's.

***Resolved (16/2021)***

*That the University Research Committee receive the Student Complaints and Appeals Report 2020 with recommendations, as provided in the agenda papers and presented by the Dean of Graduate Research, at the URC Meeting.*

### 3.3 Update on One-UOW Shared Services Implementation

The Director, Graduate Research School provided a brief overview and update for the Graduate Research School, noting that:

- the staff training is focussed on responsiveness to enquiries;
- the GRS Service Catalogue is being refined following feedback from Implementation Workshops and focussing on providing quality processes that support excellence in graduate research;
- recommendations from the GRS Review have also been implemented; and
- the GRS has now been added to the UOW CRM system to ensure more precise responses to GRS enquiries.

The Dean of Graduate Research advised that conversations are currently underway regarding the replacement of HDR Systems.

The Director, Research Services Office provided a brief overview and update for the Research Services Office, acknowledging and thanking all that were involved in the process, especially Associate Deans Research and Faculty staff that have now transitioned into the RSO. It was noted that:

- the major changes to the RSO structure are the inclusion of the Commercial Contracts Unit and the new Faculty Research Operations Unit;
- changes to the Research Grants and Development Team will provide increased focus on research priorities and more career pathways for staff;
- the Research Integrity and Ethics Unit will, as part of RSO/ICR Review Recommendations, move to report directly to the new Deans of Researcher Development and Integrity;
- recruitment for vacant positions is currently underway, with applications closing 15 June;
- three One-UOW Transition and Implementation Workshops have been held with further workshops planned for mid to late July once the recruitment process is finished; and
- further priorities include revision of the RSO Service Catalogue, streamlining processes (eg: moving to online forms), work to assist staff in managing workloads and ongoing training and development (particularly for new staff).

The Committee asked for more information about the relationship between the RSO and ICR with regard to the management of grants and contracts. The Director RSO explained that as a result of a recommendation 11 from RSO/ICR Review, the Commercial Contract Unit will move across to the RSO to introduce a “one stop shop” for research and contracts management throughout UOW. The Senior Industry Research Manager noted that ICR would now prioritise business development activities, particularly growth in HERDC income categories 2-4.

#### ***Resolved (17/2021)***

*that the University Research Committee note the update on the One-UOW Shared Services Implementation, as presented by the Dean of Graduate Research, Director Graduate Research School and the Director, Research Services Office, at the URC Meeting.*

### 3.4 Draft UOW Research Stocktake Scope

#### ***Resolved (18/2021)***

*that the University Research Committee note the draft UOW Research Stocktake Scope, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### 3.5 UOW Data and Decision Science Initiative

The Director, NIASRA, provided a brief update on the initiative advising that the focus at the moment is Health and Social Sciences, however, those interested in Data and Decision Science from other disciplines should also make contact.

***Resolved (19/2021)***

*that the University Research Committee note the update on the UOW Data and Decision Science Initiative, as provided by the Director NIASRA at the URC Meeting, and as provided in the agenda papers.*

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

### **4.1 SAGE Athena Swan Implementation Committee**

***Resolved (20/2021)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 9 December 2020 and 25 February 2021 Meetings of the SAGE Athena Swan Implementation (SASI) Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **4.2 Research Integrity Committee**

#### **4.2.1 Revised Ethical or Religious Objection by Students to the Use of Animals and Animal Products in Coursework Subjects Policy**

***Resolved (21/2021)***

*That the University Research Committee endorse the Revised Ethical or Religious Objection by Students to the Use of Animals and Animal Products in Coursework Subjects Policy, as provided in the agenda papers, and forward to the Vice-Chancellor for approval, effective immediately.*

#### **4.2.2 Research Integrity Committee Meeting Minutes**

***Resolved (22/2021)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 3 February 2021 Meeting of the Research Integrity Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.*

## **PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Other Business**

#### **Impact of COVID-19 on HDR Students**

The Committee briefly discussed the impact of the current pandemic on HDR Students, noting that they have had no or very limited access to UOW support funding, with members asking if there is scope to provide some financial support. The Dean of Graduate Research advised that he would take this question on notice, noting that this has been discussed within the sector. Unfortunately the current funding model for scholarships is very limited as to how RTP Funds can be spent, however the conversation around support for HDR students is ongoing.

#### **Special Research Initiative Excellence in Antarctic Science**

The Dean, Researcher Development and Integrity advised that this SRI will commence on 14 June 2021, following the initial announcement more than a year ago.

#### **UOW RevITALise Research Grant Scheme (RITA) 2021 RITA**

The Dean, Researcher Development and Integrity advised that the last RITA drop-in session will be held on 15 June. This follows more than 60 people attending the previous 2 sessions.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- 1.3 J Evans – file URC Minutes 18 February 2021
- 2.1 All Members - provide feedback to the DVCR&I by close of business 11 June 2021
- 4.1 K Lindenau – file SASI Minutes
- 4.2 J Evans – forward policy revisions to Governance for VC approval  
R Perkiss – file RIC Minutes and Update RIC Membership



Signed as a true record

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Chairperson 01/09/2021