



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES 24 AUGUST 2022

Minutes of Meeting 04/2022 of the University Research Committee held on 24 August 2022 via Zoom.

Present:

Prof D Currow (*Chair*)

D/Prof D Adams
A/Prof S Akter
Prof M Batterham
Ms A Boyle
Prof J Chen
Prof H Ecroyd
Prof C Gibson
Prof P Innis
Prof P Kelly

Ms S Martin
Prof L Moxham
A/Prof G Peleckis
S/Prof M Randle
Prof N Reynolds
Prof C Ritz
D/Prof R Roberts
D/Prof S Robinson
S/Prof A Sims

Dr T Stutchbury
Dr M Thompson
Mr G Tomka
Dr E Twyford
D/Prof A van Oijen
Prof W Vialle
Prof J Wang

Minute Secretary:

Ms J Evans

PART 1 OFFICIAL BUSINESS

1.1 1.1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair delivered an Acknowledgment of Country.

1.1.2 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Prof K Clapham, Dr P Di Pietro, D/Prof S Kaye, Prof L Kervin, S/Prof P McGuirk and Prof P Perez. Prof C Gibson is representing Prof P McGuirk.

The Chair welcomed Prof Nina Reynolds (BAL) who commenced as Chair of Academic Senate on 1 August. Prof Reynolds replaces Prof Greg Rose and the Chair thanked Prof Rose for his contributions to the URC over the past 2 years. The Chair also welcomed A/Prof Shahriar Akter, the new ADR for BAL replacing Prof Simon Ville.

The Chair farewelled SMART Director S/Prof Pascal Perez who has resigned from UOW with his last day being 12 September 2022. Longer term, the intent is to advertise SMART Director internally and externally, however EIS will be looking to appoint an Interim SMART Director for an initial period of 6 months.

Dr Willo Boniface, ERA Project Manager, attended for discussion on agenda item 3.4. Lisa Simmons, Senior Manager Faculty Research Operations, attended for discussion on agenda item 3.6. Stefan Delfgou, Associate Director Research Grants and Development and Lucas Hughes, Manager ARC & Non-Medical Grants, attended for discussion on agenda item 3.7.

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 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7 were starred for the meeting.

Resolved (38/2022)

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

1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved (39/2022)

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 June 2022 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

Prof Sumeetpal Singh will join UOW next year as the Tibra Chair in Mathematical Sciences. Prof Singh is a UOW Alumni and moves from the University of Cambridge.

UOW Three Minute Thesis (3MT)

The UOW 3MT Final was held on 10 August and congratulations to all nine finalists. The overall 3MT winner was Sarah Vogel from EIS, with the People's Choice Award going to Catherine Stephen from SMAH. The Runner-up Awards were jointly won by Catherine Stephen and Michael Stapleton from EIS. Sarah Vogel will represent UOW at the Asia Pacific 3MT Final to be held on 19 October 2022.

UOW ARC Academy

The UOW ARC Academy will soon hold its inaugural meeting. The Academy currently has over 30 members, however, it is hoped to increase the representation of HASS members. The Chair also noted the implementation of a UOW Health and Medical Research Academy and an Industry & Commercialisation Academy in the coming months.

2023 Research Budget Model

Work continues on the 2023 Research Budget, noting that it is likely that the University's Research Block Grant (RBG) allocation will decrease by approximately \$1.26M compared to 2022. At this stage the RBG allocation model for next year is likely to be unchanged from 2022, that is:

- a major proportion of the RBG will be allocated to Faculties for Research Centres/Institutes, HDR support, research salary support and notional HDR supervision support; and
- the majority of external commitments to grants/fellowships (including salary shortfalls), RAID internal grant program, and research infrastructure & equipment will be covered from the central RBG allocation.

UOW Research Co-Investment Guidelines

Draft UOW Research Co-Investment Guidelines were presented to the URC on 1 June. The Guidelines:

- set out cash contributions from the UOW RBG to support proposals to external research grant funding schemes. Cash Co-Investments support project costs, research personnel salaries, fellowship salary shortfalls, HDR scholarships, and equipment costs; and
- provide a consistent, equitable and transparent approach for decision making and communication regarding Co-Investment, which balances strategic grant support with other demands to determine the best investment of UOW's RBG income.

A full draft of the Guidelines will be discussed at an upcoming meeting with the Executive Deans in September.

Research Centre and Institute Review Update

Phase 1 of the Review is complete, with Phase 2 currently being developed in consultation with the interim DCVR&I and Executive Deans.

Indigenous Research Strategy Update

The Indigenous Research Strategy is a key component of the UOW Reconciliation Action Plan and it is critical for UOW to work towards the identified priorities, particularly how we each can contribute to ensure UOW is a destination of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Key priorities, actions and outputs have been identified for the Indigenous Research Strategy, which will be going out for external community consultation in Q4 2022. A draft Strategy will then be circulated to internal stakeholders.

Research Active Policy Review

The Research Active Policy specifies a minimum level of research outputs, income or HDR supervision that UOW academic staff must achieve to be classified as “Research Active”, and aspirational faculty targets. Existing minimum criteria were found to be among the lowest of all benchmarked institutions and a significant overhaul was recommended.

A revised policy provided was put forward, featuring targets for each discipline and closer alignment with Academic Performance Framework levels. It shifted from mandating minimum thresholds, to focus on supporting researchers to meet performance targets, informed by national discipline benchmarks, median levels of performance for UOW staff and an emphasis on quality. The policy has been further updated following consultation and is on hold pending consideration by the Interim DVC(R&I), Vice-Chancellor and discussions with the PVC (Strategy & Planning), regarding its alignment with the Academic Performance Framework.

PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

There was no Confidential Business

PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS

3.1 Research and Innovation Report

Resolved (40/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the Research and Innovation Report for the August 2022 URC Meeting, as provided in the agenda papers.

3.2 Graduate Research Update

The Director Graduate Research School (DGRS) advised:

- the team are currently working on modeling around scholarship extensions to provide clarity to the number of students returning following leave of absences and COVID disruptions;
- HDR numbers continue to decrease and discussions continue with the Student Recruitment and Marketing teams as to how increase HDR enrolments;
- a Supervisor Performance Framework is being established; and
- there are no plans at this stage to move thesis exams to an oral exam.

The Committee discussed HDR Scholarships and whether UOW is advocating for increases to the scholarship stipends, suggesting that current scholarships may no longer be attractive to prospective HDR students. The Interim Dean of Graduate Research (I/DGR) noted that focus groups and interviews indicate that the scholarship itself is less important, with the draw to UOW being more about the relationship with academics and potential supervisors, the campus

and its local environment. However, this feedback is from current HDR students, not the students who did not come to UOW, and there are many examples of students who do not come to UOW after receiving a scholarship from another university.

The Committee further discussed HDR students and their value to the university, noting that in some areas overseas they are recognised as semi-academics or trainee academics and regarded as colleagues. This is an ongoing conversation that will need to be addressed as UOW plans for the future. Discussion continued about what can be done to increase the visibility of HDR's, with suggestions as follows:

- inclusion of profiles in UOW Scholars/Elements;
- providing a staff email address; and
- increased profiling on UOW website, research magazines etc.

The I/DVCR&I asked the I/DGR to form a working group to work with IMTS and other key units to explore this further.

Resolved (41/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the Graduate Research Update, as provided in the agenda papers and as presented by the Director Graduate Research School and the Interim Dean of Graduate Research, at the URC Meeting.

3.3 Associate Deans Research (ADR) Update

The AIIM ADR advised that the VC has funded up to six \$20,000 Honours Project Scholarships to attract quality domestic candidates for 2023. A co-supervisor from EIS or SMAH is mandatory and project details will be distributed to Faculties soon. Visa delays continue to be an issue, requiring a substantial number of students to be enrolled offshore.

The SMAH ADR congratulated A/Prof Phil Byrne, part of a team of international researchers having a paper recently published in Science. Thanks were extended to D/Prof Antoine van Oijen who will be stepping down as Director of Molecular Horizons later this month. Prof van Oijen has been instrumental in leading and enabling the growth of Molecular Horizons over the last five years. Prof van Oijen thanked the URC and UOW research community for their support during this time.

The EIS ADR congratulated D/Prof Zhengyi Jiang and his team on the recent award of the ARC Training Centre for Innovative Composites for the Future of Sustainable Mining Equipment.

The BAL ADR advised that the faculty has introduced a small grant scheme to encourage linking with industry, hoping to establish relationships with industry that may lead to larger collaborations/funding.

The Director Research Services Office advised that ARC outcomes for Linkage Projects were announced this morning, with UOW receiving funding for three projects: one each for AIIM, EIS and ASSH.

Resolved (42/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the Associate Deans (Research) Update, as provided in the agenda papers, and as presented by the Associate Deans (Research), at the URC Meeting.

3.4 Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) Update

The ERA Project Manager provided an update to the Committee as follows:

- the ARC has announced that Clarivate will be the citation provider for ERA2023;
- the ERA2023 rating scale will be based on the ERA2018 rating scale;
- evaluation handbooks should be released by the end of this year;

- nominations for the Research Evaluation Committees (REC) are currently open and 47 UOW researchers have accepted the invitation to nominate;
- the Indigenous Studies Cluster Chair position has now been filled;
- researchers are encouraged to update/claim their publications and FOR codes in Elements by 31 August to ensure inclusion in the ERA2023 submission, this is critical members should encourage colleagues to also make these updates;
- the ERA Management System and associated training will be ready in October 2022; and
- an ERA2023 Tableau Dashboard has been created that includes supplementary information to be used alongside the ERA Management System.

Resolved (43/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) Update, as presented by the ERA Project Manager, at the URC Meeting.

3.5 Supporting Academic Awards and Prizes at UOW

Resolved (44/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the ‘Supporting Academic Awards and Prizes at UOW’ paper, as provided in the agenda papers.

3.6 Changes to Faculty Research Governance

Following the implementation of the Associate Dean (Higher Degree Research) positions in each faculty, the Committee questioned whether they would report to the Associate Dean Research or the Executive Dean of their faculty. The Senior Manager Faculty Research Operations advised that the AD(HDR) would report to the Executive Dean. As a result of this, the AD(HDR) would also be part of the Faculty Executive Committee and the faculty policies should be updated to reflect this. The Committee was advised that this would be passed on to the relevant policy owner to be updated.

Resolved (45/2022)

That the University Research Committee consider and endorse the revised draft Academic Governance Policy in relation to proposed:

- (i) *Changes to Faculty Research Committee Terms of Reference and membership;*
- (ii) *Establishment of Faculty Graduate Research Committee Terms of Reference and membership; and*
- (iii) *Insertion of the Associate Dean (Higher Degree Research) as a member of the Faculty Executive Committee,*

as provided in the agenda papers and refer to Academic Senate for approval.

3.7 Australian Research Council Update

The Associate Director, Research Grants and Development provided information to the Committee about the ARC National Interest Test (NIT) Statements that are required for all applications within the National Competitive Grants Program. The purpose of the NIT is to demonstrate the societal benefits (economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural) of the proposed research beyond the academic community. The ARC is consulting on the process for reviewing NIT’s for the current Discovery and subsequent rounds. UOW’s position that the NIT should form part of the overall ARC assessment process, via the ARC Selection Advisory Committees, has already been provided to the ARC. If the process is to remain separate, then at a minimum, the ARC should seek additional information from applicants prior to forming a view on the NIT.

The Manager ARC & Non-Medical Grants provided information to the Committee on:

- the current ARC consultation regarding timelines for the upcoming ARC Grant Schemes;

- the new ARC Industry Fellowship Schemes;
- amended dates for the Future Fellowship, DECRA and Discovery Indigenous Schemes; and
- the UOW pre-application processes.

Resolved (46/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the Australian Research Council Update, as presented by the Associate Director, Research Grants & Development and the ARC Grants Manager, at the URC Meeting.

3.8 UOW Data and Decision Science Update

Resolved (47/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the UOW Data and Decision Science Initiative Update, as provided in the agenda papers.

PART 4 BUSINESS FROM UOW COMMITTEES

4.1 SAGE Athena Swan Implementation Committee

Resolved (48 /2022)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 12 April 2022 and 8 June 2022 Meetings of the SAGE Athena Swan Implementation (SASI) Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.2 Research Integrity Committee

Resolved (49/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 30 March 2022 Meeting of the Research Integrity Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.3 Graduate Research Committee

Resolved (50/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 12 April, 17 May and 21 June 2022 Meetings of the Graduate Research Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.4 Research IT and Systems Committee

Resolved (51/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 17 May 2022 Meeting of the Research IT and Systems Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.5 Early Career Disruption Committee

Resolved (52/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the summary for the May to July 2022 Meetings of the Early Career Disruption Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS

5.1 Other Business

The Dean of Researcher Development & Integrity advised that a new Epigeum Module ‘*Advancing your Research Career: Strategies for Research Leadership*’ has been developed for Early and Mid-Career Researchers and is now available.

5.2 Next Meeting

The next University Research Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 October 2022, 10.30am to 12.00pm.

The meeting closed at 11.50am.

ACTION ITEMS

- 1.3 J Evans – file URC Minutes 1 June 2022
- 3.2 L Moxham – form a working group to increase visibility of HDR’s
- 3.6 L Simmons – forward revised TOR to Academic Senate for approval, including required updates to the Faculty Executive Committee TOR
- 4.1 N Asquith – file SASI Minutes
- 4.2 R Perkiss – file RIC Minutes
- 4.3 J Barrie – file GRC Minutes
- 4.4 M Oakman – file RITAS Minutes
- 4.5 L Sherwood – file EC-DC Summaries



Signed as a true record

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Chairperson 26/10/2022