



## UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES 30 AUGUST 2023

*Minutes* of Meeting 04/2023 of the University Research Committee held on 30 August 2023 via Zoom.

### **Present:**

Prof D Currow (*Chair*)

Prof S Akter  
Prof M Batterham  
Prof J Chen  
Prof K Clapham  
Dr P Di Pietro  
Prof P Innis  
D/Prof S Kaye  
Prof P Kelly

Prof L Kervin  
S/Prof R Lewis  
Ms S Martin  
Prof S Moss  
A/Prof G Peleckis  
Mr M Perry  
Prof N Reynolds  
Prof C Ritz

D/Prof R Roberts  
D/Prof A Sims  
Prof D Skropeta  
Dr T Stutchbury  
Mr G Tomka  
Dr E Twyford  
A/Prof S Wilkinson

### **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 Ms O Belhaffef, S/Prof C Gibson, Prof H Ecroyd, S/Prof P McGuirk, D/Prof S Robinson and Prof J Wang. Prof D Skropeta representing Prof H Ecroyd.

Ms Karen Lovasz, Manager RSO Strategic Projects attended for items 3.5 and 3.6. Ms Jan Sullivan, Manager Academic Quality & Policy attended for item 3.12.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Sustainable Futures (DVCRSF) thanked Professor Wilma Vialle for her membership of the URC and her contributions to global research engagement. Prof Vialle has completed her term as Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Strategy and the incoming Dean of Global Academic Affairs will, once appointed, become the Global Enterprises Representative on the URC.

### **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, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.12 were starred for the meeting.

### ***Resolved (37/2023)***

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

### 1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

#### ***Resolved (38/2023)***

*That the minutes of the previous Meeting 03/2023 held on 29 June 2023, as provided in the agenda papers, be confirmed and signed as a true record.*

### 1.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

#### **URC Meeting 03/2023 held 29 June 2023 - UOW Research Entities Framework Update**

Following the June meeting, it was decided that the draft UOW Research Entities Framework Policy would not be forwarded to Academic Senate for the July Meeting. It will be forwarded to September Meeting to allow additional opportunity to analyse and address the large amount of significant feedback received during the Open Consultation. The timeline adjustment has not affected the implementation date of 1 January 2024.

### 1.5 Chair's Business

#### **VALE Professor Justin Yerbury AM**

The DVCRSF acknowledged with great sadness the death of Professor Justin Yerbury AM following his long battle with Motor Neurone Disease (MND). Amid the sadness, we also drew hope and inspiration from Justin's life, from the courage and love of Justin and his family, and from his determination to live life to the fullest. Justin was a remarkable man, an exemplary scientist, and a determined advocate for the rights of the disabled. He made significant contributions to our understanding of the disease that took his life and left us with the hope that we will one day find a treatment for MND. The University is honouring Justin's legacy by establishing the [Justin Yerbury Chair in Neurodegenerative Diseases](#) to continue the fight against MND and other diseases. The response has been moving and many have already donated to this endeavour.

#### **New Appointments**

A/Professor Susan Thomas has been appointed to the role of Dean of Research Integrity Development and Ethics, commencing on 11 September. A/Prof Thomas is an Associate Professor of Mental Health and Behavioural Science at the Graduate School of Medicine and has served in research ethics and integrity governance and leadership roles across the University and Local Health District, including Chair of the Joint ISLHD Human Research Ethics Committee for 5 years. A/Prof Thomas brings experience in development of professional training for university and health staff in ethics and integrity, communication skills, conflict management and mental health interventions.

Professor Bradley Williams has been appointed to the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor (University Impact) commencing in early October 2023. This new role will be pivotal to the University in leading engagement with academics and HDR scholars, fostering opportunities and maximising the impact of the work of the University. Currently at UTS, Prof Williams has led research quality improvement processes at Faculty and institutional levels, elevating the institutional profile and external research funding. He spearheaded the establishment of the Defence Innovation Network, founded and was Director of the Research Centre for Synthesis and Catalysis at the University of Johannesburg.

Dr Paul Di Pietro has been appointed to the new role of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Industry & Engagement). Dr Di Pietro's work in research engagement and Defence strategy has been of great strategic significance to UOW, we look forward to his continued engagement in this space.

#### **Hysata Manufacturing Plant Launch**

On 14 August, Energy Minister Chris Bowen officially launched the Hysata commercial manufacturing plant in Port Kembla, where it will begin building hydrogen electrolyzers. Once fully operational the commercial plant will supply about 20 electrolyzers per year, or roughly 100 megawatts worth of generation capacity. The Minister announced a \$20.9 million grant

through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) to build its first five-megawatt demonstration plant. The work is expected to create 44 jobs with the company aiming to grow its team to more than 200 employees in the next few years. This is great news for the UOW spin-off, which will also provide great opportunities for UOW graduates.

### **Universities Accord**

As noted at the previous URC Meeting, the NSW Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Research met to discuss the interim report on the Australian Universities Accord that is currently out for consultation. Key issues include:

- Protecting research strengths (basic research)
- Funding National Competitive Grants – moving to fully costed over time
- Embedding and promoting First Nations research and knowledge systems
- Building research workforce capacity
- Strengthening research infrastructure
- Measuring research quality and impact
- Encouraging research translation and commercialisation

The Committee briefly discussed the full funding of grants, as noted in the interim report, suggesting that this is not the best way forward and the NZ Marsden Fund is an example of this.

### **URC Strategic Planning Day**

The DVCRSF advised that there will be a half day Strategic Planning Session for URC Members in early 2024, to develop a work plan based on strategy for the year.

### **Commercial Research Costing Changes**

The DVCRSF advised that changes to the Consultancy & Commercial Research Activities Expenditure Guideline will be rolled out by the end of the year. A Commercial Costing Proforma has been designed to assist UOW staff calculate the cost of undertaking commercial research, and determining the appropriate fee that should be charged to the client. The DVCRSF confirmed that ADR and ADHDR's could receive a copy for review prior to the rollout.

### **DVCRSF Town Hall Forum**

The DVCRSF will be hosting a Research Forum on 25 October. The event will be held online in the afternoon to encourage participation from UOW Global Campuses to join. It will feature updates from our leadership team on a range of research initiatives and programs.

## **PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**There was no Confidential Business**

## **PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS**

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

The Committee asked about the Individual Researcher Dashboards that are currently being developed to provide academics with oversight of their own research performance metrics. In particular, the timeline and whether these will be made available to ADR's prior to the rollout. The RSO Director advised that this question would be taken on notice.

#### ***Resolved (39/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee:*

- *Receive further information regarding the Individual Researcher Dashboards; and*
- *note the Research and Sustainable Futures Report for the August 2023 URC Meeting, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **3.2 Graduate Research Update**

The Dean of Graduate Research (DGR) advised the Committee on recent discussions at the Graduate Research Committee Meeting, noting the introduction of new courses for HDR's including Industry PhD's and changes to the Masters by Research. Discussions with Executive Deans and Associate Deans Education are continuing.

#### ***Resolved (40/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note the Graduate Research Update, as presented by the Dean of Graduate Research, at the URC Meeting.*

### **3.3 Associate Deans (Research) Update**

The ADHDR SMAH highlighted recent achievements: 3 DECRA's and 1 Future Fellowship, Prof Caleb Ferguson awarded the NSW Tall Poppy Science Award, rollout of the LIFT Internship Program and Eureka Finalists D/Prof Bert Roberts, Prof Zenobia Jacobs and Prof Bo Li.

The ADR ASSH highlighted and noted the following:

- A/Prof Steven Howard's successful ARC Future Fellowship;
- World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Children's Food, Nutrition and Physical Activity will be co-led by D/Prof Tony Okely and A/Prof Bridget Kelly;
- Overall success rate for the AEGIS internal grant scheme was quite low, as was the success rate for ECR's; and
- Streamlining the review processes for the internal grant schemes to reduce the burden on Faculty Research Committees.

The ADR EIS highlighted the 3 successful DECRA's, also emphasising the importance of the 'pipeline effect' in supporting EMCR's, noting that the EIS Future Fellow (Tang) is a previous VC's Post-Doc Fellow, and EIS Laureate Fellow (Susilo) is a previous Future Fellow.

The DVCRSF additionally highlighted UOW's overall success in the DECRA Scheme. UOW was substantially above the state average and ahead of the G08's success rate of 19%, with 7 UOW DECRA's and 28% success rate. This success suggests that the work being done by the faculties and the UOW ARC Academy is of great benefit.

#### ***Resolved (41/2023)***

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

### **3.4 University Research Committee – Revised Terms of Reference**

The Committee noted that the membership of the URC may need to be reviewed following the current Academic Governance Review. It was further noted that the Terms of Reference (TOR) includes that '*the URC .... supports research-active staff to achieve...*' and the Committee questioned whether this was still relevant considering the review of the Research Active Policy. The Director RSO confirmed that the Research Active Policy has not been rescinded and is still current, however it will likely be rolled into the Academic Performance Framework that is currently under review. At this stage, the reference to 'research active' will remain in the TOR.

#### ***Resolved (42/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee endorse the Revised University Research Committee Terms of Reference, as attached to the agenda papers, and forward to Academic Senate for approval.*

### **3.5 UOW Research Entities Framework Policy Review**

The Manager, RSO Strategic Projects joined the meeting and provided an update on the Final Research Entities Framework Policy, also thanking the Committee for their valued feedback

during this process. There were several enhancements made to the Policy from the consultation processes and these are detailed in the agenda papers.

The next steps are as follows:

- a Research Entities Framework Reference Group (REF Group) will be formed to provide strategic advice to support the successful implementation of the Framework;
- an Implementation Working Group (IWG) will be formed to provide operational advice and support during the implementation and transition phases; and
- a companion Policy is being developed for Major Research Platforms by the PVC Industry and Engagement and the AIIM Executive Director.

Following URC endorsement, the Policy will be forwarded to Academic Senate for further endorsement on 20 September, followed by University Council for approval on 13 October, with implementation from 1 January 2024.

The Committee questioned section 7.6 of the Policy, requesting clarification of who would endorse Dual Membership. The Manager, RSO Strategic Projects advised that this would be clarified in the Guidelines that will be developed by the Implementation Working Group.

It was further confirmed:

- recognition and endorsement under this Policy, to be established and operate as a UOW Research Entity, will commence in early 2024;
- detailed financial audits of Institutes, as detailed in section 6.5, may include an auditor external to UOW or an auditor external to the Institute (for example, Central Finance);
- the Policy is silent on funding arrangements as this would be detailed in the operational Guidelines; and
- the principles can be shared with Faculty Research Committees.

The DVCRSF thanked the Manager RSO Strategic Projects and the Director Research Services Office for their work on the Research Entities Framework Policy.

### ***Resolved (43/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee:*

- endorse the UOW Research Entities Framework Policy, as provided in the agenda papers; and*
- forward the Policy to Academic Senate for further endorsement, prior to final approval from University Council.*

### **3.6 Research Block Grant (RBG) Distribution and Allocation Model – Principles Framework**

The DVCRSF thanked the Manager RSO Strategic Projects, RSO Director (DRSO), Dean of Graduate Research (DGR) and Working Group members for their great work. The URC are asked to endorse the Draft RBG Principles Framework, as the basis for development of a new UOW RBG Distribution and Allocation Policy.

The DRSO provided an overview of the Working Group review process and proposed principles as outlined in the agenda paper. In addition, the DRSO summarised the proposed new RBG Model and Research Support Program (RSP) component based on the agreed principles as outlined in the agenda papers. The DGR summarised the Research Training Program (RTP) component of the proposed model, noting that several issues surrounding the allocation of RTP stipends will be further discussed and clarified at a later date.

The Committee suggested the following adjustments to the Principles Framework Document:

- pages 64 and 65 reference HASS, the terminology should be SHAPE;
- page 65, point 7 should be clear that all stipends funded through the RTP pool are 3.5 years (including stipends given through projects);

- more precise information around the timelines of the implementation process as well as the introduction of additional metrics for RTP allocations is required;
- scholarships provided to support external grants and fellowships, e.g. ARC, should come from a central pool; and
- more detail required about RTP candidate allowances and who makes decisions within faculties (not just leaving this to individual supervisors) to ensure transparency.

The DGR advised that when developing the policy, specific timelines for introduction of new RTP metrics would be difficult to detail, however over time the policy may be adjusted and any changes would 'require endorsement from URC.'

The DRSO advised that the policy would provide more specific details on implementation of the new RBG model, including a safety net and transition periods, particularly for 2024.

The DVCRSF advised that he would also consider the suggestion by the SMAH AD-HDR that DECRA and Future Fellowship scholarships come from a central pool. Other Committee Members also noted their support for a centrally based University-wide policy on scholarships for these grant schemes.

Members are asked to provide feedback on the Principles Framework by Monday 4 September.

***Resolved (44/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee*

- (i) *provide feedback on the Draft RBG Distribution and Allocation Principles Framework, as provided in the agenda papers, and*
- (ii) *endorse the Principles Framework as the basis for development of a new UOW RBG Distribution and Allocation Policy.*

**3.7 Review of Higher Doctoral Degrees**

The DGR provided a brief overview of the background around the review of processes for Higher Doctoral Degrees. A Working Group was formed, and the final report made several recommendations that have been used as the foundation for the new Higher Doctoral Degree Procedures. The Committee were asked to provide feedback of the overall policy, and provide feedback for the following: *Has the procedure correctly identified who should endorse and approve the choice and reports of examiners?* and *Who should be the Custodian of this policy?*

Following further discussion, the Committee requested that the Procedure be reviewed by the Honorary Awards Committee.

***Resolved (45/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee:*

- (i) *provide feedback on the Higher Doctoral Degree Procedure directly to the Dean of Graduate Research; and*
- (ii) *endorse the recommendations outlined in the Higher Doctoral Degree Working Party Final Report, as provided in the agenda papers; and*
- (iii) *endorse the Higher Doctoral Degree Procedure, as provided in the agenda papers; and*
- (iv) *forward the Higher Doctoral Degree Procedure to the Honorary Awards Committee for review and feedback; and*
- (v) *forward the Procedure to Governance for university wide consultation, followed by Academic Senate for further endorsement and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Sustainable Futures), as the delegated authority, for approval*

**3.8 Review of Higher Degree Research (HDR) Procedures**

The DGR advised that five HDR Procedures have been updated/introduced as part of the review cycle. There are major changes to the procedures, mostly around the wording to reduce duplication, but also relating to the introduction of mid-candidature and pre-submission review

processes. In addition, candidates and supervisors will no longer be able to see each other's responses to annual reports - ensuring confidentiality, and outcomes for examinations have been simplified.

The Committee noted that although the principles of the procedures were discussed at the Graduate Research Committee (GRC), the GRC has not seen the final procedure documents and asked that these documents go back through the GRC for final review. The Committee also noted that the documents need a number of other changes including title updates, references to the ADR instead of the ADHDR, and inconsistencies with reference to timing.

***Resolved (46/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee review the Higher Degree Research Procedures, following the requested changes, at the next URC Meeting.*

### **3.9 UOW Researcher Development Framework**

***Resolved (47/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note and provide feedback of the UOW Researcher Development Framework Proposal, as provided in the agenda papers, and forward to Academic Senate for noting and feedback.*

### **3.10 Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Draft Guidance for UOW Researchers**

***Resolved (48/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note the Generative Artificial Intelligence guidance, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **3.11 UOW Data and Decision Science Initiative**

***Resolved (49/2023)***

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

### **3.12 TEQSA Re-registration and Academic Governance Review Update**

The DVCRSF welcomed the Manager Academic Quality & Policy to the meeting to provide an update on the University's preparations for its re-registration with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the outcomes of the Academic Governance Review.

A draft report of the external review of Academic Governance has been received, with the full report due by 11 September 2023. The draft report showed an overall positive assessment:

- no areas of non-compliance;
- 18 commendations
- 12 recommendations for minor improvement;
- 13 recommendations – including 2 areas for priority attention as follows:
  - Engagement of Senate in the identification and monitoring of academic risk; and
  - Development of regular reports from Senate to Council so ensure Senate is meeting its Terms of Reference and Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) and Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) requirements.

Recommendations from the draft report relevant to this Committee are as follows:

- more attention to annual work plans for Senate and all Senate Committees;
- Senate agenda – more balance between Learning & Teaching and Research matters;
- Senate Membership – review categories of membership and address areas of under-representation (e.g., research);

- all Senate Committees to provide annual report on progress relative to their Terms of Reference and compliance with HESF/ESOS requirements;
- clarify lines of reporting to Council by the two Human Ethics Research Committees; and
- address quality assurance in research training explicitly in policy and framework documents.

The Committee briefly discussed the under-representation of research in the membership of Senate, and their support to work towards increasing it, although noting that it is Council that decides the membership of Senate. The Manager Academic Quality & Policy confirmed that once the final report is received, the team will consult with relevant stakeholders to provide a response addressing the recommendations. An Action Plan will also be provided to Senate.

The Committee briefly discussed the recommendation in the draft report to ‘clarify lines of reporting to Council by the two Human Ethics Committees’, and the suggestion that they should be independent of management.

The draft report has been shared with the RSO Director to check for and correct any factual errors or misinterpretations and is also available to be shared with the Committee if interested.

***Resolved (50/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note the TEQSA Re-registration and Academic Governance Review Update, as presented by the Manager Academic Quality & Policy, and as provided in the agenda papers.*

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

### **4.1 Research Integrity Committee (RIC)**

***Resolved (51/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 10 May 2023 Meeting of the Research Integrity Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **4.2 Graduate Research Committee (GRC)**

***Resolved (52/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 26 April 2023 and 22 June 2023 Meetings of the Graduate Research Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **4.3 Research IT and Systems Committee (RITAS)**

***Resolved (53/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 7 June 2023 Meeting of the Research IT and Systems Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **4.4 Early Career Disruption Committee (EC-DC)**

***Resolved (54/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note the summary for the October 2022 to June 2023 Meetings of the Early Career Disruption Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### **4.5 Research Infrastructure Advisory Group (RIAG)**

***Resolved (55/2023)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 10 May 2023 Meeting of the Research Infrastructure Advisory Group, as provided in the agenda papers.*



## PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS

### 5.1 Other Business

No other business

### 5.2 Next Meeting

The next University Research Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday 22 November 2023.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm.

## ACTION ITEMS

Agenda Item	Action Arising	Action By
1.5	Provide ADR and ADHDR's with the Consultancy & Commercial Research Activities Expenditure Guideline and Commercial Costing Proforma for review prior to rollout.	Sharon Martin
3.1	Provide more information about when Individual Researcher Dashboards will be available.	Sharon Martin
3.4	Forward the University Research Committee Terms of Reference to Academic Senate for approval.	Julie Evans
3.5	Forward the Research Entities Framework Policy to Academic Senate for endorsement, and University Council for approval.	Karen Lovasz
3.6	Provide any further feedback to Karen Lovasz on the Research Block Grant (RBG) Distribution & Allocation Principles Framework by COB 4 September 2023.	All Committee Members
3.7	Forward HDR Procedure to the Honorary Awards Committee for review and feedback.	Simon Moss
3.7	Provide any further feedback on the HDR Procedure directly to the Dean of Graduate Research.	All Committee Members
3.7	Forward the HDR Procedure to Governance for university wide consultation, followed by Academic Senate.	Simon Moss
3.8	Update the HDR Procedures for inclusion at the next URC Meeting.	Simon Moss
3.9	Forward the UOW Researcher Development Framework Proposal to Academic Senate for noting and feedback.	Sharon Robinson
3.12	Review interim report to correct any factual errors or misinterpretations and provide clarification if required.	Sharon Martin

Signed as a true record



Chairperson 22/11/2023