

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING HELD
ON FRIDAY, 24 MAY 2024
AT 2.15 PM, IN ROOM RR 5-09, ROWLAND REES BUILDING,
CITY WEST CAMPUS

2/2024

ITEM 1 - WELCOME AND OPENING

1.1 PRESENT:

Prof Deirdre Tedmanson
(Chairperson)
Prof Craig Batty
Prof Andrew Beer
Assoc Prof Anton Blencowe
Mr Alan Brideson
Prof Jon Buckley
Dr Ryan Causby
Prof Joanne Cys
Dr Xin Deng
Ms Jessica Ford
Prof Sanjay Garg
Prof Paula Geldens
Assoc Prof Sheridan Gentili
Assoc Prof Jodie George
Ms Karla Gotting
Mr Brendan Hughes
Prof Tracey Humphrey
Mr Richard Irons
Mr Phil Johnson
Dr Masud Karim
Ms Argani Kashyap
Prof Marta Krasowska
Dr Malgorzata Korolkiewicz
Ms Camilla Liddy
Prof David Lloyd
Dr Shashi Nallaya
Assoc Prof Gary Owens
Dr Fanke Peng
Mr Oliver Shephard-Bayly
Ms Yashaiah Varona
Prof Rachael Vernon
Dr Paula Zito
Mr Peter Cardwell
(Executive Officer)

APOLOGIES:

Prof Amie Albrecht
Mr Bill Le Blanc
Ms Tracey Coleman
Prof Shane Dawson
Prof Marnie Hughes-Warrington
Dr Phil Johnson
Dr Evangeline Mantzioris
Prof Elspeth McInnes
Prof Sandra Orgeig
Assoc Prof Lemuel Pelentsov
Prof Jacqui Ramagge
Ms Gabrielle Rolan
Mr Tom Steer
Assoc Prof Stephen Ward
Mr Henry Zampoli

ALTERNATES:

Ms K Gillespie
(for Mr B Le Blanc)
Assoc Prof Sally Plush
(for Prof Sandra Orgeig)

OBSERVERS:

Ms Zoe Gray
Mr Craig Jones
Prof Esther May
Mr Franco Parrella

- 1 The Chairperson, Prof Deirdre Tedmanson, opened the meeting and welcomed members, alternates, observers, and in particular she welcomed the new part-time Dean of Graduate Studies, Assoc Prof Sally Plush. Prof Tedmanson also acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on lands never ceded by the Kaurna people, and extended her respect to Kaurna elders past, present, and emerging, as well as Aboriginal people present at the meeting.

1.2 TABLED PAPERS

2 There were no tabled papers.

1.3 STARRING OF AGENDA ITEMS

3 Agenda Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2 and 9.5 were starred for discussion.

1.4 APPROVAL OF UNSTARRED ITEMS

2024/2/33 Academic Board resolved:

that all unstarred items be received and noted or approved without discussion.

Moved: Prof Rachael Vernon Seconded: Mr Richard Irons

CARRIED

1.4 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2024/2/34 Academic Board resolved:

to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2024 as a correct record subject to minor amendment.

Moved: Mr Oliver Shephard-Bayly Seconded: Dr Malgorzata Korolkiewicz

CARRIED

ITEM 2 – BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2.1 MY COURSE EXPERIENCE – SUPPORTING APPROPRIATE FEEDBACK INITIATIVE

4 The Director: Teaching Innovation Unit (TIU), Assoc Prof Sheridan Gentili, reported on myCourseExperience (mCE), which was a tool used at UniSA to collect student's qualitative feedback about their learning experience, as outlined in University Policy A-35A *Quality Assurance and Improvement: Programs, Courses and Teaching Arrangements* and the *Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) (2021)*. While students were reminded of their obligation to provide constructive feedback (*Code of Conduct for Students*), from time to time they might post inappropriate responses. The TIU had recently reviewed the information available to staff and students about mCE. As part of the review, the information provided to students had been strengthened in relation to appropriate feedback and the likely consequences of submitting offensive feedback. Assoc Prof Gentili suggested to academic staff members that they might like to include a note about the mCE and feedback in their course introduction or prior to the release of mCE questions to students. Requests could be made to remove inappropriate comments through the *Comment on removal procedure*. If any comments caused distress staff were encouraged to reach out to their Dean of Programs, Executive Dean or the Academic Director of UniSA Online, and reminded of the *Employee Assistance Program* which was available to all staff.

- 5 Members noted that the myCourseExperience, or mCE tool, was established in 2012 in line with university policy and the HESF. The mCE consisted of two parts within a single evaluation tool: course evaluation, 7 questions (core questions), teacher evaluation, 6 questions (core questions), and 2 optional questions. In 2020, in consultation with the Provosts Office, the TIU implemented default open and close dates for mCE questionnaires aligned with the published open/close dates on the TIU website, open 30 days prior to the end of the Study Period (ie., the last day of teaching). Staff's ability to change or set their own mCE dates meant students could receive up to 8 emails per Study Period, not including the reminders. The aim of creating default open/close dates was to minimise the number of emails students received and improve the quality and professionalism of the communication. Since then, some changes had been implemented to the system to accommodate the bespoke Study Period end dates in some Academic Units.
- 6 It was further noted that the TIU had recently reviewed and scoped several initiatives to support staff health and wellbeing. Those initiatives had been paused due to implementation timing issues, which would result in these initiatives being implemented at the same time as the new university came into operation. The key priority was how to best support the health and wellbeing of staff. It was acknowledged that staff often felt powerless when it came to managing or dealing with poor student feedback. Students often misunderstood their obligations when providing feedback, or the anonymity provided by digital communication sometimes led to individuals acting in a way they may not otherwise behave in. It was therefore important to raise student awareness. So, the initial and reminder notices to students were subsequently reviewed. This communication outlined UniSA's duty of care to provide a safe teaching and learning environment, and students' responsibility to provide respectful and constructive feedback on their teaching and learning experience as outlined in the *Code of Conduct for Students* (the Code). Tips were provided on what constituted good feedback, and what was inappropriate. It reminded students that their responses were anonymous, but that they could be identified should their conduct breach the Code and that any breach would be managed according to the procedures outlined in policy.
- 7 During discussion, a number of points were made by members in relation to: the fact that racist, sexist, discriminatory or sexual comments were completely inappropriate and not tolerated by the University; the psychological impact of student comments on staff; the use of the Likert Scale which was not used by other universities; the timing of course evaluation opening and closing dates; and the perceived ability of staff to challenge inappropriate comments.

ITEM 3 – CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- 8 The Chairperson, Prof Deirdre Tedmanson, reported on the May 2024 meeting of University Council where several membership changes were approved. Ms Pauline Carr stepped down as Chancellor to avoid any potential conflict of interest and to focus on her role as Chancellor of Adelaide University's Transition Council. UniSA Council members Ms Nicolle Rantanen Reynolds, Ms Carolyn Mitchell and Mr Jim Hazel also stepped down from University Council to concentrate on their roles on the Adelaide University Transition Council. In accordance with Section 12 of the University of South Australia Act (1990) the Hon John Hill was appointed Chancellor of the University with effect from the close of the May Council meeting until such time as the dis-establishment of UniSA. Mr John Hills extensive governance experience with industry and his previous ministerial roles as South Australian Minister for Health, Minister for the Environment and Conservation, and Minister for the Arts, would continue to serve the University very well in his new role. Distinguished King's Counsel Mr Michael Abbott AO KC was appointed as Deputy Chancellor of the University until May 2026 or the dis-establishment of the University whichever was earlier. Ms Mary Patetsos was appointed as Pro Chancellor of

the University until May 2026 or the dis-establishment of the University, whichever was sooner. Ms Elaine Bensted, Ms Ruth Blenkinsop FUniSA, Mr John Evans and Mr Terry Evans AM FUniSA were appointed members of Council for terms concluding 31 December 2026, or the dis-establishment of the University, whichever was sooner. Noting that no request for further consultation with respect to the appointment had been received from the University of Adelaide in advance of the Council meeting, Mr Jim Hazel was appointed as a Deputy Chancellor of the Transition Council for Adelaide University, and Mr Andrew Pridham AO was also appointed as a member of the Transition Council for Adelaide University both with immediate effect.

2024/2/35

Academic Board resolved:

to receive and note the Chairperson's Report.

Moved: Prof Deirdre Tedmanson (from the Chair)

CARRIED

ITEM 4 – VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

- 9 The Vice Chancellor, Prof David Lloyd, introduced his written report, which was taken as read, by drawing members' attention to two matters. Prof Lloyd reported that:
- 9.1 UniSA was ranked 43rd in the world for new universities and extrapolating from this the new Adelaide University would be ranked in the top 10 new universities in the world. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) had also released its World University Rankings by Subject in April 2024. QS ranked the world's top universities in 55 subjects across five broad faculty areas. UniSA ranked in the top 100 in the world in Nursing (rankings band 51-100, consistent with 2023) and Sports-related subjects (ranking 51-100, consistent with 2023). UniSA ranked in the top 10 in Australia in Hospitality and Leisure Management (ranked 7th in Australia) and Pharmacy and Pharmacology (ranked 10th in Australia).
- 9.2 The 2024 Federal Government Budget contained a range of measures that delivered the outcomes of the Australian Universities Accord. This included welcome reforms to ease cost-of-living pressure on students, improve equity, and increase access to tertiary education opportunities for more people, particularly in outer suburban and regional areas. Key measures included: lowering indexation of HELP debts; practical payments to support nursing, midwifery and social work students; fee-free Uni Ready courses; developing a new funding system for Commonwealth supported places to meet student demand and increase opportunity for students from under-represented backgrounds; supporting better student pathways between VET and higher education; and establishing a long anticipated new governance for the higher education system through the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC).
- 9.3 The Vice Chancellor had been appointed to the Australian Universities Accord Advisory Committee with its focus on needs-based funding. The Government had set an overall tertiary attainment target of 80 per cent of working aged people by 2050. The Budget also contained measures to enhance student safety and wellbeing. This included \$19.4 million over two years to establish a national student ombudsman to "provide a single, national mechanism for higher education students to escalate complaints regarding the administrative actions of (their institutions)". It also included \$18.7 million over four years to help establish a national higher education code to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. On a less positive note, blaming alleged international student "over-enrolments" for the national housing crisis and capping their numbers was a "populist bash linked to winning elections", with the Minister

being given “draconian powers” which threatened to half the \$50 billion export industry.

2024/2/36

Academic Board resolved:

to receive and note the Vice Chancellor’s Report.

Moved: Prof Deirdre Tedmanson (from the Chair)

CARRIED

ITEM 5 – OBSERVATIONS FROM THE STUDENT OMBUD ANNUAL REPORT 2023

- 10 The UniSA Student Ombud, Mr Franco Parrella, gave a special presentation on the role of the Student Ombud. The main points from the presentation were:
- 10.1 The Student Ombud (the Ombud) provided a free, confidential, and impartial dispute resolution service for students and Mr Parrella was the fourth Ombud since the position was created at UniSA 21 years ago. He acted as an advocate for fairness and was the ‘last port of call’ not the first ‘port of call’ with responsive educative and proactive responsibilities. The Ombud’s role was not to override University decisions, or to provide an emergency counselling service. At the same time, he did not represent the University, or act as an individual student’s representative. The Ombud acted as an advocate for fairness and took time with students to explore the best pathway(s), or referral options for them, while upholding confidentiality and impartiality.
- 10.2 The Ombud received a total of 141 service requests (SRs) in 2022 (compared with 154 in 2021). There was a 5% decrease in student complaints made to the Ombud and a 17% decrease in the number of ‘proactive’ requests received from staff for assistance in handling matters or seeking general advice from the Ombud. While the number of individual complaints dropped to 102 from 107 in 2021, key themes raised by students who approached the Ombud essentially remained the same. These often-included fear and apprehension in formalising a complaint, dissatisfaction with administrative decisions and reasons provided and problems experienced whilst on placements, and some confusion and complexity over which external review options were appropriate to escalate their complaints if necessary.
- 10.3 During 2023, suggestions and recommendations for improvement were made by the Ombud to various senior staff members within academic and administrative units across the University. These were usually raised following a complaint to the Ombud or initiated by the Ombud following complaints or enquiries received by students and/or staff. Examples included: an amendment to the ‘threshold criteria’ for determining which matters proceeded to the University Student Appeals Committee; review of refund causes contained in the Terms and Conditions of Payment and Refund of Fees for international students; a review of official communications to students who received their initial Academic Integrity letter; and feedback on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) policies and procedures. In 2023, the Ombud also received a greater number of complaints from Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students than in previous years.
- 10.4 The Ombud continued to receive requests for presentations, advice and suggestions on handling more complex matters and complaints at the local Academic Unit level. There appeared to be some correlation between the increased demand for *proactive* services provided by the Ombud and the decline in formalised student complaints over the past three years. The Ombud’s approach continued to be one which aimed to respectfully

'raise what needed to be raised' in relation to both preventing and/or addressing problems that could impact on students. By formally raising recommendations for improvements to practice and/or policy the Ombud aimed to contribute positively to the student experience within the University. The Ombud continued to focus on achieving greater balance between the *responsive* and *proactive* aspects of the role. The Ombud was also invited to present education and training sessions to both the Australasian Complaint Handlers and Ombuds (AUCON) Network and the European Network of Ombuds of Higher Education (ENOHE).

- 10.5 The feedback from students and staff on the Student Ombud service through the survey continued to be positive. This was often despite the student not always being able to achieve the desired outcome and staff not necessarily in agreement with a change in position. There were issues for the University to consider as it embarked on the transition to a new university. One thing remained clear, however, and that was the role required University staff to trust that the Ombud was operating in *good faith* and in the interests of all students while ensuring University processes were respected and adhered to. To date, the feedback suggested the role was very well received across the University community. It was important to celebrate what UniSA had achieved in this space, and to consider whether the new Adelaide University would have a Student Ombud position.

2024/2/37

Academic Board resolved:

to receive and note the report from the UniSA Student Ombud.

Moved: Prof Deidre Tedmanson (from the Chair)

CARRIED

ITEM 6 – MATTERS FROM ACADEMIC STRATEGY, STANDARDS AND QUALITY COMMITTEE (ASSQC) 2/2024

6.1 UNISA CLINICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES (UNSTARRED ITEM)

6.1.1 PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL – UNISA ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA IN AGED CARE (XUAC, XDAC)

2024/2/38

Academic Board resolved:

to note the out-of-session approval by the Pro Vice Chancellor: Teaching and Learning of the withdrawal of the Undergraduate Certificate in Aged Care (XUAC) and Diploma in Aged Care (XDAC) from Study Period 1, 2025.

6.2 OTHER MATTERS

6.2.1 ASSQC ANNUAL REPORT 2023 (UNSTARRED ITEM)

2024/2/39

Academic Board resolved:

to receive and note the Academic Strategy, Standards and Quality Committee Annual Report 2023.

ITEM 7 - MATTERS FROM RESEARCH LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE (RLC) 1/2024

7.1 RESEARCH DEGREE COMPLETION OF REQUIREMENTS (UNSTARRED ITEM)

2024/2/40 Academic Board resolved:

to receive and note the report from Research Degrees Committee.

7.2 COOPERATIVE RESEARCH CENTRES – CATEGORY 4 – PLAN ON A PAGE UPDATE (UNSTARRED ITEM)

2024/2/41 Academic Board resolved:

to note the Cooperative Research Centres – Category 4 – Plan on a Page Update.

7.3 ENTERPRISE HUB – POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

11 The Deputy Director: Business Incubation with the Enterprise Partnerships Unit, Mr Craig Jones, introduced the Enterprise Hub Post Implementation Review (PIR). He reported that this was the second of three post implementation reviews with some good, consolidated recommendations. This was the second of three PIRs that would be prepared for the closure of this project. The Enterprise Hub project was developed to address the Academic Enterprise Plan's Strategic Priority 3 (Enterprise Engagement) which defined ambitions for a partnered approach to research and enterprise resulting in 15% of operational income from research activities with 60% of that activity directly linked to industry partners. The revamped building was a fantastic space and had been well received. The key objectives identified in the Enterprise Partnerships Hub Business Case had been completed. The main drivers for change identified in the creation of the Research and Enterprise, Enabling Research and Enterprise Partnerships for Enterprise 25 and beyond were in progress. Pipeline reporting had been established. At the end of Q4 2023, there was nearly \$300 million in open opportunities and 180 key partners had been identified.

2024/2/42 Academic Board resolved:

to approve the consolidated recommendations from the Post Implementation Review of the Enterprise Hub.

Moved: Prof Deidre Tedmanson (from the Chair)

CARRIED

7.4 READ AND PUBLISH AGREEMENT UPTAKE 2023 (UNSTARRED ITEM)

2024/2/43 Academic Board resolved:

to receive and note the paper and continue to encourage colleagues to utilise Read & Publish Agreements as a preferred option to make research outputs immediately available as open access.

ITEM 8 – BUSINESS

8.1 SCHEER HONOURS SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP (UNSTARRED ITEM)

2024/2/44 Academic Board resolved:
to approve the changes to the Scheer Honours Science Scholarship scheme.

8.2 SIR TERRY PRATCHETT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP (UNSTARRED ITEM)

2024/2/45 Academic Board resolved:
to approve changes to the Sir Terry Pratchett Memorial Scholarship.

ITEM 9 – FOR INFORMATION

9.1 VICE CHANCELLOR'S HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY UPDATE

2024/2/46 Academic Board resolved:
to receive and note the Higher Education Policy Update Report.

9.2 ACADEMIC BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023

2024/2/47 Academic Board resolved:
to receive and note the Academic Board Annual Report 2023 with minor amendment.

9.3 ACADEMIC UNIT BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023 (UNSTARRED ITEM)

2024/2/48 Academic Board resolved:
to receive and note the Academic Unit Board Annual Report 2023.

9.4 ADVISORY STRUCTURES ANNUAL REPORT 2023 (UNSTARRED ITEM)

2024/2/49 Academic Board resolved:
to receive and note the Advisory Structures Annual Report 2023.

9.5 UNISA TELL US REPORT 2023

12 The Registrar and Director of Student and Academic Services, Mr Richard Irons, provided a brief overview of the number and types of student complaints managed via UniSA Tell Us in 2023. Following the successful implementation of the *Student Complaints Resolution Policy* and

the accompanying procedures approved by Academic Board in 2021, the University had continued to refine and enhance its approach to managing student complaints. The UniSA Tell Us team, located in Student and Academic Services (SAS), commencing its operation in 2022, had now completed its second full year of coordinating student complaints under this new framework. Throughout 2023, SAS coordinated the initial receipt of complaints and directed these to the appropriate Academic or Central Unit, monitored response timelines, recorded outcomes, and provided summary reports and data analytics to relevant stakeholders. The Tell Us team had been instrumental in evaluating the timeliness of responses, ensuring that the University maintained a prompt response standard when addressing student concerns. In 2023, 209 complaints were received, which represented an increase of 51 from 2022, and 100 per cent of all complaints were managed within the prescribed timeframe. The total number of complaints, when viewed against the backdrop of the entire student population, remained relatively low, indicating a generally positive student experience.

2024/2/50 Academic Board resolved:

to receive and note the UniSA Tell Us Report 2023.

ITEM 10 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 CONDOLENCE MOTION

- 13 Members expressed their heartfelt condolences at the recent death of Prof Roger Eston former Pro Vice Chancellor (Health Sciences) and Executive Dean (Allied Health and Human Performance) who was a highly regarded academic and a great leader who would be greatly missed.

2024/2/51 Academic Board resolved:

to express deepest sympathy on behalf of the University to the family of Roger Eston.

Moved: Prof Jon Buckley

Seconded: Prof David Lloyd

CARRIED

ITEM 11 – CLOSURE

- 14 The Chairperson thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 3.55 pm.
- 15 The next meeting of Academic Board would be held on Friday, 28 June 2024, at 2.15 pm in Room RR 5-09, Rowland Rees Building, City West Campus. Closing date for papers – Monday, 17 June 2024.

**PETER CARDWELL
EXECUTIVE OFFICER**