



OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 6, 2020 – 12 NOVEMBER 2020

Deakin University Council met on 12 November 2020 and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and 2020 business schedule.

Setting the strategic direction of the University

Council considered papers from the Vice-Chancellor on the new University Strategic Plan *Deakin 2030: Ideas to Impact*. At its previous meeting on 2 October 2020 Council had endorsed the direction set down in the plan. The Vice-Chancellor reported on changes made since that meeting and on key performance indicators and indicative goals aligned to the plan.

Council considered that the Plan sets an ambitious but realistic vision for the University over the next decade. Council endorsed the emphasis on achieving positive impacts for Deakin's communities. Council also welcomed the highlighting of organisational agility and responsiveness, specific research capabilities, digital capacity and the best possible blending of online and on-campus learning and working experiences.

Council endorsed the approach to key performance indicators put forward by the Vice-Chancellor, whereby a consistent suite of indicators will be used to track performance but reporting will remain alert to the story behind the indicators and to a broad range of evidence about the impact of the University's work.

Following full consideration of the Plan and the associated reporting measures Council approved the Strategic Plan *Deakin 2030: Ideas to Impact* for implementation from 1 January 2021.

Council expressed its appreciation to all members of the University community for their contributions to consultation on and development of the new Strategic Plan.

Monitoring current issues and actions

External legislation and policy

Council noted the impact on the University of Commonwealth Government legislation and policy on higher education funding, freedom of speech, foreign relations and national critical infrastructure.

Council also noted the status of discussions between the University and Victorian Government representatives about the State's support package for universities. The package will fund projects that generate economic growth and employment.

Workplace issues and enrolments

The Vice-Chancellor reported to Council on:

- the implementation of the major workplace change program
- campus reactivation as COVID-19 restrictions are eased
- enrolment trends:
 - i) international student enrolment has declined significantly due to COVID-19, as anticipated
 - ii) domestic demand is strong, having increased at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Trimester 3, 2020 and is looking robust for Trimester 1, 2021.

Overseeing the management and control of finances

Council considered the University's 2021 – 2023 Financial Plan, comprising the 2021 budget and projections for 2022 and 2023.

Council noted that the context for the Plan was enormously challenging. The decline in revenue experienced by universities in 2020 is set to continue over the triennium, driving budgets into deficit. Across the sector institutions are responding through a combination of pricing strategies, increased borrowings, liquidating and disposing of assets and cost saving and redundancy programs.

In this context Council approved the 2021 budget and noted the borrowing program projected to commence late in the year. Council noted that, alongside regular finance reports reviewed at each Council meeting, the budget and the projections for future years would be kept under review because there are significant areas of uncertainty, particularly bearing on the future years.

Campus Infrastructure and Property Strategy

Council received a presentation from the Chief Operating Officer on the Campus Infrastructure and Property Strategy 2021-2025 and noted that this latest iteration of the strategy involved significant changes from the preceding versions. This is due to reduced budgetary and capital expenditure capacity and an increased shift to blended on and off campus engagement. The focus over the next 5 years is supporting blended learning and working, renewing and repurposing existing infrastructure and delivering on the University's sustainability goals.

Overseeing and monitoring of academic activities

Council received a report from the Chair of the Academic Board about the attention being given by the Board to innovative and responsive course offerings such as increased micro-credentials and postgraduate units which could be taken on a standalone basis but could also contribute to a degree (stackable units).

The Board is also commencing work on the development of an Academic Freedom procedure to support the Academic Freedom policy. This work will take into accounts findings and recommendations from the review being undertaken by Emeritus Professor Sally Walker when her report is released. Professor Walker is examining the adoption by universities of the principles set down in the Model Code for Freedom of Speech at Australian Universities by Justice Robert French.

Policy Framework

Council received a report on the operation of the University's Policy Framework since 2018. Council noted that the Framework has served the University soundly. Council approved a series of amendments to the Framework. These amendments were enhancements arising from experience over the past three years, rather than any change of direction.

Council's own affairs

Council reappointed Ms Philippa Kelly as a Deputy Chancellor for 2021 and approved the membership of Council Committees for 2021.

Council approved updates to the [Council Operating Provisions](#).