

# ACADEMIC SENATE COMMUNIQUE



8 SEPTEMBER 2020 MEETING

## President of Academic Senate Report

Preparations for the External Review of Academic Governance continue and it is hoped to commence in October. The Chair noted the continued and vital contribution of students to the Academic Senate. The Chair thanked those who had been involved with the Reconciliation Action Group and commended the University for making a stand on the Black Lives Matter campaign through its published statement.

## Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor provided updates on the Course Optimisation Project and the Faculty restructure. Assurance has been made to students that they will be able to complete their programs. Two Academic Workload Allocation Models (AWAMs) have been developed by PVCs FSCI and FEDUA to be trialled in 2021. An update was given on the COVID-19 Response including Semester 2 arrangements, the NSW Government guidelines to allow for a staged return to research activities and clinical placement arrangements. Following the June announcement of the Job Ready Graduates Package, the Department of Education released the exposure draft of the Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the University's primary concerns relate to the changes to cluster funding, and the removal of enabling loading from legislation without a replacement policy in place.  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Bills\\_Legislation/Bills\\_Search\\_Results/Result?bld=r6584](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r6584)

## Draft Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

Senate were advised that the University Council has approved the *Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom*, subject to a minor amendment allowing 'the right to peaceful protest'. The Minister for Education has announced an independent review and evaluation of the alignment of university policies with the principles of the Model Code, to be undertaken by Professor (Emeritus) Sally Walker AM.

## Faculty Board Reports and Recent Activities in the Faculties

The chairs of each Faculty Board provided key highlights including:

FBUSL has been successful in receiving a number of research grants and the Business School is building a brand and reputation in the area of COVID-19 recovery.

FEDUA have formed a partnership with BMG providing opportunities for students.

FEBE – the PVC acknowledged the FEBE peer to peer mentoring program and the exemplary support provided by a student to two vision impaired students.

FHEAM - Central Coast Medical School and Research Institute (CCMSRI). The B Medicine will be offered from S1 2021, followed by B Nursing in S2 and B Midwifery in 2022

FSCI – increased student load for Semester 2 with Bachelor of Psychological Science, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Coastal and Marine Science particularly popular,

## Pathways and Academic Learning Support Board Report (PALS)

The Director of PALS informed members that Open Foundation enrolments have been record breaking and ELICOS has been able to avoid a steep decline due to the impact of COVID-19. Highlighted in the report were the PALS Community of Praxis, the PALS small grants scheme for staff and the Excellence through Equity Pathway to Medicine. The historical move enables equity of access of PALS students to all undergraduate programs.

## Academic Integrity Report

The SACO Coordinator's presentation to Senate outlined the University's obligations stated in TEQSA HES Sections 5.2, 6.3 and 7. Risks to Academic Integrity are: contract cheating (the University has blocked 3200+ 'essaymill' websites); consistency in terms of detection and outcomes; and culture which needs to be embedded and would benefit from clarity of expectations and rules particularly for international students. An emerging risk relates to online assessment. Standard University procedures are being developed in relation to the use of Vivas to mitigate this risk. Online resources for staff and students, such as *InfoSkills*, provide ethical information on how to avoid plagiarism. All students complete an academic integrity module on enrolment and the University is continually developing and refining this. Members were reminded that Turnitin is an authorship investigation tool, helping academics to detect which work has been outsourced. It was noted that the Academic Integrity team are also considering impacts for the higher degree by research (HDR) space and will work with key stakeholders accordingly.

## Amendments to the Awards and Programs Schedule (Masters Degree Coursework)

Senate approved amendments to the Masters Degree (Coursework) – (including models for 160, 120, 80) Awards and Programs Schedule to award 40 units of credit from a cognate UON Graduate Certificate into a cognate 80 unit Model C Master's program.

## Contact

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Next meeting – 11 November 2020