

ACADEMIC SENATE COMMUNIQUE

12 MAY 2020 MEETING



President of Academic Senate Report

The Chair provided a verbal report, informing Members of key activities undertaken since the last meeting of the Academic Senate, including the establishment of the Academic Senate Executive Committee. The Undergraduate Student member provided an update on student concerns during Covid-19. The Academic Senate acknowledged and thanked all of the staff and students for their work, patience and resilience during this challenging time

Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the continuing and evolving Covid-19 management strategies, the focus on the health and wellbeing of staff and students, the continuity of the University as a priority, and the intention to return to face-to-face teaching in the second semester of 2020. The Academic Senate discussed how the Government's announcement regarding the Higher Education Relief Package, which includes discounted student fees for short courses, provides an opportunity to demonstrate the vital role the University plays in our community and region. The VC updated the Members on the launch of the Looking Ahead Strategic Plan discussions regarding its Key Performance Indicators; the Cloud Migration Strategy; the NUW Alliance Aerotropolis project; improvement in the Times Higher Education 2020 University Impact Rankings; and the recent appointments of senior staff.

Office of Indigenous Strategy and Leadership Update

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership provided a presentation, beginning with an acknowledgment of country, as well as an overview of the roles that exist within the Office of Pro Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Strategy and Leadership, their position within the organisational structure, and the strategic nature of their objectives. The Academic Senate noted how the Indigenous Education Framework 2020-2015 and the Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025 support the University's commitment to Indigenous engagement in the newly released Looking Ahead 2025 Strategic Plan. The Members noted the intention to build cultural knowledge across the organisation through the Cultural Capability Framework, and the intention for the University's cultural framework and reconciliation work to have a coordinated regional/community approach.

CONTACT

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NEXT MEETING: 8 JULY 2020

Managing Quality Assurance in Assessment during Covid-19

Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching provided a verbal update on managing quality assurance in assessment during Covid-19, including a number of flexible processes and regulatory mechanisms that have been utilised to deal with the required changes during the pandemic. The Members discussed the risks associated with online and remote examinations. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic provided an update about the results of a student pulse survey, which was designed to formalise the feedback received on how students are faring with the transition from face-to-face to online learning, with the overall results being mainly positive.

Student Feedback on the University of Newcastle Report

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic informed Members that the SFUN survey was run in September 2019, and the results saw improvements in student satisfaction across a wide range of services and facilities, along with a decline in satisfaction in some key areas which require improvement

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching Report

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic spoke to the report, outlining that the Social Research Centre released the results of the 2019 Student Experience Survey. The Members noted highlights such as the Schools of Engineering and Law and Paralegal Studies moving to first in sector. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Excellence outlined the intention to establish a systematic approach to using the QILT data for more strategic actions. Initially, the work has been centred on identifying strengths and best practices so that they can be benchmarked across the University.

External Program Review Update Report

The Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance provided a brief overview of the progress of reviews scheduled for 2020. The Members noted the recommended postponement of the Master of Clinical Medicine (Leadership and Management) and the Graduate Certificate and Master of Epidemiology scheduled for 2020, on the basis of it not being practicable to form a panel of experts during the Covid-19 health crisis. The Members noted that a review of the current Terms of Reference for external program reviews to ensure alignment with the TEQSA HES Framework Threshold Standards is underway.

Faculty Board Reports and Recent Activities in the Faculties

The chairs of each faculty board provided key highlights of work currently underway in their faculties and schools.