

ACADEMIC SENATE COMMUNIQUE

8 JULY 2020 MEETING



President of Academic Senate Report

The Chair outlined that planning for the University's TEQSA re-registration is continuing, including a planned External Review of Academic Governance. The Members noted that the University has been offered an extension for re-registration to 2025 by TEQSA, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor informed Members of the success of the recent Appeal for students affected by COVID-19, the approval of the UON Singapore Business Case and the University's improvement in the 2021 QS World rankings into the top 200 Universities worldwide. An update on recent Higher Education reforms and policy matters from both State and Federal Governments was also given. Members also noted the progress on the Course Optimisation Project, an initiative aligned with the 'Life Ready Graduates' elements of the new strategic plan, with an anticipated completion date of mid-September 2020 (for the first stage).

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.

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

The University Secretary presented the University's draft *Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom* and provided an overview of the consultation process and feedback received. The Academic Senate recommended the University Council approve the *Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom* and requested a review of the *University's Media Policy and Code of Conduct* be undertaken.

2020 Domestic Admissions Report (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic provided a high level overview of the key admissions results for Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels for 2020 Admissions 'Main Commencement'. Members were informed that increasing the Domestic preferences and converting them to enrolments will be very competitive in 2021, due to the impacts of COVID-19.

2019 Financial Report

The Chief Financial Officer provided an overview of the current financial context of the University, informing Members that the University has identified savings targets to address both pre-existing financial sustainability issues (associated with our operating costs growing at a higher rate than operating revenues), as well as the expected impacts of COVID-19 on our operating revenue.

UON International Qualification Equivalency Review Procedure

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the proposal that the University create a documented International Qualification Review Procedure, which will include an embedded mechanism for monitoring the retention and success of the students admitted on these qualifications. The Members noted that the systemisation of these processes will bring the University in line with other Australian universities and will assist with the University becoming more responsive and agile. The Members noted that the new system will integrate with other existing international admissions CRM systems, and will improve the University's monitoring and academic quality assessments for the relevant cohort. The Academic Senate approved the *International Qualification Equivalency Review Procedure*, subject to the addition of a requirement to report performance of students admitted through the procedure to Teaching and Learning Committee and Academic Senate

Newcastle International College Report

The Director of the Newcastle International College (NIC) outlined the current impacts of COVID-19, informing Members that with teaching moving online, NIC currently has students that are onshore, offshore, and studying from home. The Members noted that NIC are monitoring academic integrity, and using many of the same methods as the University, including viva voce (oral examinations) where appropriate. The Members were informed that border closures, travel restrictions, and ongoing online teaching are impacting operations, but both commencing and continuing numbers are currently tracking well.

Contact

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Next meeting – 8 September 2020