

SENATE NEWS

The Academic Senate Communiqué

11th August 2026 Meeting



What's New

Welcome

Professor Jennifer McDonnell PVCSE
Mr Jodan Perry Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Student Representative

Elections Update

Closed

3 positions of Academic Senate

Call for Nominations:

Academic staff on College Boards
Students representatives for
Academic Senate and College Boards

Upcoming

College Board representatives for
Academic Senate (28th September)



Quality Assurance

Annual NAIHE Report 2025

Members noted that NAIHE remained financially sustainable, reporting a positive net surplus, strong asset levels and sound governance arrangements. NAIHE entered 2026 with a stable governance framework, strong partnerships, growing confidence in its postgraduate portfolio and a clear pathway towards EduTrust certification.

College Progress and Appeals Committee Report - 2025

Members noted the overview of activity included appeals against a final result, student academic progress outcomes, and factors affecting student academic performance. The report identified opportunities to improve data capture, monitoring, reporting capability and student support processes, and noted that future assessment reforms and enhanced reporting capabilities could provide greater insight into appeal activity, academic progression outcomes, and student support needs.

College Third Party Arrangements - Education Annual Report 2025

The report presented an overview of the University's third-party education arrangements across Colleges, meeting annual reporting requirements under the Third Party Arrangements – Education Procedure. CESE and CHMW had no reportable arrangements in 2025 and ongoing consultation on future governance and reporting responsibilities was noted.

Proposals Approved

Discontinue the Use of Turnitin AI Detection at Year End 2026

Following detailed discussion at the TLC and at Senate, Academic Senate approved the discontinuation of Turnitin AI Detection following the implementation of more secure assessment practices, growing awareness of the limitations of AI detection technology, and an increasing sector-wide move away from AI detection platforms.

Continue the Use of Zoom Supervised Assessments for Online Courses

Senate approved after robust discussion at the TLC and Senate, the use of Zoom supervision beyond T2/S2, 2026 as a secure assessment approach in School administered in-term assessment and informal exams for online courses only.

Program Level Assessment

Senate approved the pathway for approving, implementing and monitoring the use of program-level secure assessment, and the approval process for program-level secure assessment action plans through the College Board and the PCAC for noting.

Forum Item

Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAP) Support Resources and Staff Guidance



The Senior Manager AccessAbility and Support provided Academic Senate members and Course Coordinators guidance in using the Adverse Circumstance Workspace in ServiceNow to manage Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs).

The presentation included details on accessing the Workspace, navigating dashboards, reviewing RAP records, and customising lists to support monitoring and reporting. Whereas the associated guidance documents outlined processes for saving, exporting, and sharing personalised RAP lists.

Members discussed the ongoing collaboration with DTS to address digital issues affecting RAP systems as well as efforts to improve information between Canvas and AccessAbility. Members were advised of increased staffing to support RAP related enquiries and encouraged staff to contact support staff as early as possible for student needs.

[ServiceNow Employee Portal](#)

[Adverse Circumstance Workspace](#)

Policies

New

Research Integrity Support and Evaluation (RISE) Policy
Research Integrity Support Procedure
Awards and Programs Schedule

Amended

Policy Framework
Animal Ethics Procedure Manual
Animal Regulatory Manual

Rescinded

Associate Degree – Awards and Programs Schedule
Associate Degree in Health Schedule
Bachelor Degree (240) – Awards and Programs Schedule
Bachelor of Education Studies Schedule
Bachelor of Health Schedule
Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) and Bachelor of Psychological Science Schedule
Bachelor Honours Degree (320) – Awards and Programs Schedule
Bachelor Honours Degree (80) – Awards and Programs Schedule
Diploma – Awards and Programs Schedule
Diploma in University Studies Schedule
Graduate Certificate – Awards and Programs Schedule
Graduate Diploma – Awards and Programs Schedule
Graduate Diploma in Education Studies Schedule
Masters Degree (Coursework) – Awards and Programs Schedule
Masters Degree (Extended) – Awards and Programs Schedule
Maximum Time Completion of Program Schedule



Academic Risk Items



Governance Risk

RADs approved without correct authority

Following the identification of issues with a RAD approved in July, a number of enhancements have been implemented to strengthen governance and ensure compliance with delegation requirements. These improvements include refined processes, enhanced staff training, updated guidance materials, and the introduction of monthly audit activities.

The Senior Manager, Student Progression, has confirmed measures are in place to reinforce approval controls, support consistent adherence to established requirements, and reduce the risk of future occurrences.

Non-Compliance Risk - Third Party Arrangements Reporting

Issues have been identified over the past months regarding the Academic Senate's oversight of Third-Party Education arrangements. As this is a focus area for TEQSA, the PAS is currently seeking alternative reporting arrangements and systems in conjunction with the OSDVCAG and University Registrar to ensure correct oversight by Senate.

Equity and Security Risks Central Coast Campuses

A Senate member provided a verbal report of issues relating the Central Coast campuses generally and Gosford campus specifically. The report elaborated on comments recorded in the recent SFUN survey which noted that the Gosford campus had access issues, lack of signage and standard resources for students, and a lack of student services.

Personal security risks were highlighted with lack of security after regular working hours and staff and students witnessing antisocial behaviour. The VC, SDVCAG and PVCSE have committed to work with staff from the Central Coast to mitigate these issues.



Academic Risk Update - Radicalisation of Students by AI and Social Media Algorithms

The Cyber and AI Governance Committee reviewed information provided by the PAS at its meeting on the 9th July and advised no further action on this item.

Executive Reports

PAS Report

The PAS advised members of the recent ballots held relating to the terms of reference for the Academic Workload Allocation Model (AWAM) review. Two member ballots on a proposal amendment for the terms of reference as well as a special session were held with feedback provided to the SDVCAG and PVC CHMW who is leading the review. As members expressed a lack of clarity for the process for member proposals and ballots, the PAS will undertake a review of the Standing Orders of the Academic Senate to provide greater direction and to ensure meeting processes remain clear and accessible in the future.



The PAS advised that student representatives raised concerns about delays in Higher Degree by Research annual report feedback and the availability of English language support for international students with relevant stakeholders advised of the concerns for action. The academic staff members highlighted issues relating to the AWAM review, including transparency, consultation, benchmarking, recognition of research in workload allocations, and access to survey data. Broader discussion focused on Senate oversight of projects, the evolving role and independence of Academic Senate, the Central Coast Campus Education Plan, and data relating to recent changes to adverse circumstances processes.

Members further received an update on academic risk and noted updates to the Education Quality Assurance Policy and the Weighted Average Mark (WAM) Calculation Guideline.

VC's Report

The VC provided a broad overview of University leadership, sector developments, student enrolments, and recent achievements. Highlighted were leadership changes, industry engagement activities, progress on staff enterprise agreements, legislative reforms, mission-based compacts, Commonwealth practicum payments, student enrolment trends, and international student visa matters.

Members noted the appointments of Professor Brett Nixon as Dean and Head of School (Science) and Professor Rachael Buchanan as Acting University Registrar. The significant contribution of Professor Karen Blackmore in the Acting PVC EI role was acknowledged ahead of her return to Head of School (Computer and Information Science) role in November.

The VC outlined recent amendments to the Higher Education Standards Framework, including strengthened expectations for governance, accountability, transparency, and responses to racism. It was advised that work was underway to develop the University's definition of racism, with consultation and legal advice informing the process. Members further noted the expansion of Commonwealth practicum payments to an additional ten health disciplines.



Discussion on student enrolments covered forthcoming negotiations on domestic student caps, opportunities to expand STEM and dentistry places, and the allocation of additional medical places. Members were advised of ongoing visa-related challenges affecting international student commencements and the University's continued advocacy for its full allocation of overseas student places.

Recent NHMRC grant successes were celebrated and members received updates on well-attended events including the HDR Student Festival, Industry Open Day and Welcome Week activities. Members were encouraged to support upcoming Open Days at the Callaghan and Central Coast campuses.

Committee News

Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) – 28th July 2026 Meeting

The SDVCAG and Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) provided an update noting key items included proposals to continue Zoom-supervised assessments, discontinue Turnitin AI detection, progress program-level assessment implementation, and advance the Credit Management System (CrMS) HES Discovery Project. Members noted the consolidation of 16 Awards and Program Schedules into a single Schedule, and an update was given on the development of a University-wide Quality Assurance Framework and the Student Retention and Success Framework. The TLC discussed assessment reform, lecture recording policy challenges, and the need to better align recording requirements with available technology. Members received updates on academic risk management, reducing compliance-related bureaucracy, and clarification regarding media coverage of avatar-based learning resources, which complement existing face-to-face teaching.

Research Committee (RC) – 21st July 2026 Meeting

The DVCRI and Chair provided an update from the meeting with members noting changes to the Animal Ethics Procedure Manual and the development of the Research Integrity Support and Evaluation (RISE) Policy and Procedure. The RC considered feedback from Colleges on the University's Research Plan, noting common themes included support for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) growth, researcher development, protection of research time, strengthening research culture, investment in infrastructure and support systems, recognition of diverse research outputs and impacts, and greater industry and community engagement. Members emphasised the importance of maintaining high-quality supervision and student support as HDR enrolments grow. An update was also provided on the continued development of the Research Plan, informed the feedback from Colleges and other stakeholders.

Program and Course Approval Committee (PCAC) – 17th June and 15th July Meetings

The SDVCAG provided an update on the meetings and noted major program revisions and changes to accreditation. The report further noted the external review action plans received for three Bachelor of Social Science related programs.

College Board Reports

Health Medicine and Wellbeing (CHMW) – 21st July 2026 Meeting

The PVC CHMW and Chair gave an update on the proposed Centre for Regional Dental Education, College Research Awards, graduations, an appointment for the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Community Health Hub endorsement and Mid-Year term and semester enrolments. Members were further advised of the delivery of Nursing and Midwifery at Tamworth from 2027 was pending accreditation and that a new suite of Dental courses for the Graduate Certificate in Dental Science and Master of Dentistry were planned for delivery from Semester 2, 2027.

Engineering, Science and Environment (CESE) – 4th June 2026 Meeting

The PVC CESE and Chair of the College Board updated members on the meeting and advised of the reopening of applications for the ARC Future Fellowships, research hubs and research training centres, and that the Australian Economic Accelerator Scheme had been discontinued. The PVC CESE also highlighted the research web presence, and an opportunity for a Technical and Architectural Advisor with the High-Speed Rail Authority of Australia. The PVC CESE concluded noting the engagement activities included the Callaghan College Inspire Awards, regional principles, outreach activities and Open Days.

Human and Social Futures (CHSF) – 28th May 2026 Meeting

The PVC CHSF and Chair of the College Board noted a significant year-to-date increase in research outputs and active participation in Category 1 funding schemes, including an ARC Laureate application. Growth areas included the Juris Doctor online program and Master of Social Work pathways, supported by Graduate Diplomas, alongside strong Mid-Year EFTSL figures and rising enrolments in photography courses. Collaboration through HClSS and shared counselling services was highlighted. Upcoming initiatives include a College Professoriate meeting to strengthen engagement and improved connections across the College. Preparations for graduation events were advised as well as the appointment of Professor Robert Parkes as Dean of Education.

PALS Board Report - Nil

2026 Academic Senate Membership and Attendance

President Associate Professor Marcus Rodriqs

Deputy President Associate Professor Geoffry De luliis

Ex Officio Membership

Vice Chancellor	Professor Alex Zelinsky AO
DVC (Engagement & Equity))	Mr Nathan Towney (Interim)- APOLOGY
SDVC (Academic)	Professor Belinda Tynan
DVC (Research & Innovation)	Professor Craig Simmons
CHSF PVC	Professor Robert Greenberg
CESE PVC	Professor Juanita Todd (Interim)
CHMW PVC	Professor Lisa Wood
PVC (Student Experience)	Professor Jennifer McDonnel
University Registrar	Professor Rachel Buchanan (Acting)
PVC (Education Innovation)	Professor Karen Blackmore (Acting)
PVC (Research)	Professor Rohan Walker (Acting) - APOLOGY
PVC (Industry & Engagement)	Professor Alan Broadfoot (Acting)
PVC (Indigenous Strategy & Leadership)	Ms Loren Collyer (Acting)
PVC (Global)	Professor Alek Vonninski - APOLOGY
Director PALS	A/Professor Anna Bennett - APOLOGY
Dean of Graduate Research	Professor Rohan Walker (Acting) - APOLOGY
PVC and CEO NAIHE (Singapore)	Professor Abhisek Bhati

Elected Staff Membership

CHSF

Dr Kate Ferguson-Patrick
Dr Tim Connor
A/Professor Bin Li

Professor Marianna Sigala
Professor Jesper Gulddal
A/Professor Nancy Cushing
Dr Justin Ellis
Dr Angela Page - APOLOGY

PALS

Dr Michelle Mansfield
Dr Annika Westrenius - APOLOGY

CESE

Dr Kyle Harrison
Dr Joseph Pegler
Dr Gabriel Rau (Alternate)

A/Professor Terrence Summers
A/Professor Geoffry Deluliis
A/Professor Michelle Kelly
Dr Boyang Li
Dr Mark Wallis

Non-Newcastle Campus

Professor Troy Gaston
Dr Joyleen Christensen

CHMW

Dr Shep Chidarikire
A/Professor Vanessa Murphy
A/Professor Adam Collison-
APOLOGY

Professor Allison Cummins
Dr Michelle Stubbs
Dr Catherine Johnston

Elected Student Representatives

Undergraduate

Imogen Reid
Omotola Abimbola - APOLOGY
Marie Ferguson - APOLOGY

Postgraduate Coursework

Cheryl Johanna Meeran
International
Ashutosh Chugh - APOLOGY

Postgraduate HDR

Thomas Tildsley
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
Jodan Perry

Vacant and disestablished positions removed.



nganggali ngara ngura
(Darkinyung language for Talking Listening Place)
Ourimbah Campus