



**Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board
held on Tuesday, 5 November 2024 at 1.00pm
in the Hunter Council Chamber**

The meeting was opened with a karakia and everyone was welcomed.

The meeting was held face-to-face and was convened by the Vice-Chancellor Nic Smith.

PART A

62.24 Apologies, acknowledgements and welcomes

Apologies were taken as read (see appendix 1).

The Convenor advised there were no new members to welcome.

63.24 Part B of the agenda – items brought forward

No items were brought forward to Part A from Part B.

64.24 Vice-Chancellor Oral Report

The Vice-Chancellor's oral report was noted.

Universities are now required to have speech and academic freedom guidelines in place. With keeping a focus on academic freedom and freedom of expression it was requested that everyone engage in topics they feel are important and to discuss in the context of the university. Members of the Academic Board were invited to attend the panel discussion taking place on 20 November 2024.

Indications are that the budget for this year has been managed well under significant pressures. Budgets are currently being set for 2025.

Focus is on enrolments for 2025 and retention. Enrolments look positive, and domestic/international enrolments are significantly up.

An invitation was extended to attend the Living Pa opening. Today is practical completion, which is an important milestone in handing over the infrastructure, and the building will open on 6 December.

The November 2024 report was received from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori and Engagement), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Students.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Report

Professor Robyn Longhurst spoke to her report.

It was noted that Title 5: Work Integrated Learning should read *Academic Promotions Process Review*.

Nine proposals for 2024 Round 3 have approved by CUAP. Graduating Year Reviews (GYRs) were also approved by CUAP and received positive feedback.

The online survey for the Academic Promotions Process Review received a strong response, and feedback will be addressed shortly. It was noted that many of the respondents think there are too many bars.

A webpage is being prepared to provide an update on the review and will sit on the HR site. The decision-making panel will meet on 15 November 2024 and will then be in the position to advise on improvements to the process.

A request was made that CAD's work on designing and redeveloping the First Year trimester courses for 2025 to be added to the First Year Retention Project. Committed tutors have been attending meetings and at times undertaking extra work on a voluntary basis. Robyn advised she was heartened that students are engaged enough to want to be involved and acknowledged that rewarding, reimbursing and recognising all students is an issue across the university. A further conversation is required to take place with CAD and faculties to come to an alignment.

The Mata project is moving forward and is expected to go live on 25 May 2025.

Te Hiwa decided on their top four projects at their recent away days: new finance model, promotions process review, teaching workload review, and curriculum mapping. Recently, information about curriculum mapping project was shared in the University News, but it was noted that it was challenging to find. Further communications will be shared with staff through the University News in a more prominent location. Curriculum mapping is essential for supporting student success and customisation, as well as being financially important. Discussions have also taken place with Te Hiwa regarding resourcing for the top four projects.

A further update on the curriculum enhancement work and a general announcement about the curriculum mapping will be advised soon.

It is hoped the agreement for the Tūwhitia programme (Accelerated Learner Success Fund) will be signed in the near future. This programme is joining forces with Canterbury University in relation to student retention, and particularly utilising data to understand more about our students. It was noted that retention is significantly better than the previous year.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Report

Professor Margaret Hyland spoke to her report taking it as read.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Students Report

The report was taken as read. It was noted that Logan is on leave.

There have been ups and downs in the enrolment process but signs at this stage are positive.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Māori and Engagement Report

The report was taken as read.

The courses part of the SQC project is moving forward and will be aligned with Mata. A business case is being written and the project has been split into separate areas to better align with the interdependencies of the other systems.

The Karakia for the opening of Living Pa will start at 4.30am and there are over one thousand people expected to attend.

66.24 CUAP Deletions: Notifications out of round

AB24/76

The following deletions were endorsed by APC for submission to the Academic Board.

- Bachelor of Tourism Management (APC24/76) - carried
- Master of Innovation and Commercialisation (APC24/77) – carried.

67.24 Draft Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Policy

AB24/77

A discussion took place on the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression policy and its importance from an institutional critic and conscience position.

There has been significant work on the policy covering three complex and interrelated concepts on academic freedom. The policy's intention is to give clear guidance on the university's position, while also trying to be clear in relation to balancing freedoms with responsibilities.

Points raised were:

- Whether we see the difference between freedom of expression and academic freedom and misinformation.
- Should this be a policy, statement or guidelines or even a statute as distinct from a policy. (The working group decided it should be a policy as a guide).
- Firmly defined terms are required where critical thinking turns into conspiracy theories so there is criteria to go by.
- As an academic, are there limits to what we are allowed to say. People's critical work can be problematic so it would be helpful if there were some ways of helping to define complex issues and the limits and boundaries between them.
- Do we see the difference between academic freedom and misinformation, and is there criteria re critical thinking, limits, definition of misinterpretations and boundaries, and how is hate speech recognised.

- Need to balance neutrality with freedom of expression, and look at our stance on being politically neutrality.
- One of the reasons to justify not having a position on every issue or having neutrality is to ensure that academics and staff don't feel their ability to have freedom of expression is constrained. This is a balancing act that we have to manage.
- Missing from clauses 3.1 and 3.3 is our role as an educational institution and how that translates into that space. We exist to help people learn how to enact themselves through their freedom of expression in ways that are effective and evidence-based, and achieve goals, which means getting it wrong and being in an environment where people are able to test things, and be supported in doing so, so wording is needed that acknowledges our place.
- It was felt that tying in legal definitions is not appropriate.
- Silence isn't seen as neutral, and does this impact on international exchange relations ie when teaching courses overseas and with any of our international exchange relations.
- Queried whether first sentence of the policy stating giving right of freedom of expression to everyone including visitors to the university is appropriate, and section 5 doesn't explicitly define 'visitors' as not necessarily working for or studying at the university.

(Margaret advised we have tried to articulate in a practical way in section 6 where we talk about university events, activities, and hosting of speakers amongst others, but noted this is a challenging area).

- Lack of economic and time resources gets in the way of freedom of expression.
- Consider the university opening a neutral platform like Twitter.
- Parameters of academic freedom ultimately expressed in statute in Section 267.
- Test cases to figure out what we are or aren't allowed to do.
- Recognise this is not black and white and focus on what is safe on students and staff.
- Would like to see more explanatory notes to understand the policy better.
- Run this and some of the other policies past a small group of academics who are experts in policy to review.
- Would prefer if the policy comes back through board/s more often so it can be reviewed more regularly.
- Re clause 4.3 in relation to public engagement, look at collectively protecting the university's capacity, noting reference already in place in the trolling guidelines.
- Remind people where to find the policies, and include in the University News.

Margaret was thanked for the work she and the group are doing. Ideas will be further discussed at the panel discussion on 20 November 2024.

68.24 Treaty Principles Bill

AB24/78

Rawinia Higgins discussed the upcoming Treaty Principles Bill due to be introduced into the House on 18 November 2024 with the first reading on 21 November. She encouraged people to attend the hikoi taking place on 19 November to show that public engagement is important by working together.

69.24 Work Programmes

AB24/79

A discussion took place in relation to the topic *Speaking Truth to Power* by Professor Rebecca Priestley, School of Science in Society. This is the second of five presentations over the next six

months. Rebecca discussed inspiring us to speak the truth and being openly political and align with students/young people.

Discussion included:

- This resonates with people going on the hikoi on 19 November, with the focus on public communication.
- Code of professional responsibility fosters students to become more involved in important issues for society wellbeing.
- Public engagement is important as it passes under the radar of communications. Work collaboratively to get knowledge out there. As an institution, provide solidarity to encourage people.
- Robyn is looking at the promotions process as a good mechanism for thinking about how this work is valued and the issue of the curriculum mapping. One of two things in scope is looking at where we are teaching Maturanga Māori and the quality of that delivery, and also sustainability, and encourage a broad institutional discussion about what we value enough to embed into our curriculum.
- Conversations to continue in relation to budget, and make commitment important.

Part C of the agenda

It was resolved that non-members be excluded from this meeting for consideration of agenda items 14, 15, and 16 in accordance with s9(2)(a), s9(2)(b)(ii) and s9(2)(i) of the Official Information Act.

The Resolution concerning exclusion of non-members was not required given there were no items for Part C.

PART B OF THE AGENDA

The following items, not having been brought forward, were confirmed.

70.24 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Academic Board meeting held 24 September 2024 AB24/80
(Numbers 61.24) were confirmed.

Note: Part C of meetings are excluded for reasons of confidentiality where applicable.

71.24 Report of the Academic Programmes Committee

The Academic Programmes Committee report was noted. AB24/81

The following following non-CUAP proposals were approved by the Academic Board:

- Amend the SCIS minor (APC24-73)
- Recode 3 courses and amend requirements (APC24-74)
- Amend the MNursPrac Programme (APC24-75)
- Make Special Topic RELI 310 permanent as RELI 312 (APC24-82).

The remaining items in the report were discussed/approved by the Academic Programmes Committee at its 15 October 2024 meeting.

72.24 General Business

There was no general business.

PART C MEMBERS ONLY

The minutes of 24 September 2024 were confirmed/approved.

AB24/82

Attendance: 50 members attended; 10 non-members attended; 28 apologies were received (refer to Appendix 1 for detailed record).

The meeting closed: 3.10 pm.

The next meeting will be held on 25 February 2025.

APPENDIX 1

Attendance 5 November 2024

Members

Professor Alejandro Frery	Assoc Professor Meegan Hall
Professor Anne Goulding	Professor Margaret Hyland
Professor Annemarie Jutel	Dr Monica Handler
Professor Averill Coxhead	Dr Nicola Gilmour
Professor Brigitte Bonisch-Brednich	Professor Nicole Moreham
Professor Bryony James	Dr Nigel Isaacs
Professor Carmen Dalli	Dr Noelle Donnelly
Dr Caz Hales	Professor Paul Teesdale-Spittle
Christine McCarthy	Professor Rawinia Higgins
Professor Dean Knight	Professor Rebecca Priestley
Associate Professor Diana Burton	Professor Rewi Newnham
Dr Eli Elinoff	Professor Richard Arnold
Ema Maria Bargh	Associate Professor Robin Fulton
Professor Geoff McLay	Professor Robyn Longhurst
Professor Graeme Austin	Professor Sally Hill
Dr Helen Rook	Professor Sarah Leggott
Professor James Renwick	Associate Professor Sasha Calhoun
Associate Professor Janet Pitman	Associate Professor Spencer Lilley
Professor Joanna Kidman	Stella McIntosh
Professor Joanne Crawford	Professor Stephen Marshall
Dr John Haywood	Assoc Professor Sue Cherrington
Professor John Randal	Dr Tim Corballis
Dr Linda Hogg	Professor Todd Bridgman
Luke Chu	Trish Wilson
Marcail Parkinson	

Non-members in attendance

Anita Brady	Elena Louverdis
Carol Morris	Joseph Habgood
Derek White	Reece Moors
Dr Natalie Lindsay	Varsha Narasimhan
Dr Stuart Marshall	Yang Liu

Apologies

Ben Egerton
Bev Lawton
Catherine Iorns Magallanes
Cathy Powley
Claire Freeman
Colin Wilson
Daniel Brown
Gary Evans
Jim McAloon
Kate Hunter
Kathy Holloway
Kirsty McClure
Marco Sonzogni
Margaret Hyland
Mark Wilson
Mengjie Zhang
Michael Winikoff
Nancy Bertler
Neil Dodgson
Nicholas Golledge
Nikki Hessel
Richard Arnold
Robyn Phipps
Sally Jane Norman
Siah Hwee Ang
Susan Ballard
Vanessa Green
Winnie Laban