

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



ACADEMIC SENATE

Meeting 25/03 of the Academic Senate, Western Sydney University was held on Friday 20 June 2025 at, 9:30AM, at, Parramatta South Campus and via zoom.

Present:

Dr Tuki Attuquayefio	School of Psychology (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Saba Bebawi	Dean, School of Humanities and Communication Arts
Professor Hind Benbya	Dean, School of Business
Dr Nathan Berger	School of Education (Level A, B or C Representative)
Dr Maria Bhatti	School of Law (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews	Director of Indigenous Research (Vice-Chancellor's Nominee)
Mr Glenn Campbell	Chief Executive Officer, The College
Professor Dennis Chang	Director, NICM, representing the University's Research Institutes
Dr Evan Crawford	School of Computer, Data and Mathematical Sciences (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Ann Dadich	School of Business (Level D, E Representative)
Dr James Dunn	School of Medicine (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Kevin Dunn	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Transformation
Professor Cath Ellis	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Quality and Integrity
Distinguished Professor Brian Falzon	Dean, School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment
Professor Miroslav Filipović	School of Science (Level D, E Representative)
Mr Nabin Gautam	Postgraduate Student Representative
Associate Professor Emilee Gilbert	School of Psychology (Level D, E Representative)
Ms Jess Gleeson	Director, Data Integrity, Quality and Operations
Associate Professor Ana Hol	School of Computer, Data and Mathematical Sciences (Level D, E Representative)
Professor Kurt Langfeld	Dean, School of Computer, Data, and Mathematical Sciences
Professor Sarah Lewis	Dean, School of Health Sciences
Dr Ranjith Liyanapathirana	School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Samanthika Liyanapathirana	School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment (Level D, E Representative)

Professor Robert Mailhammer	Chair of Academic Senate
Professor Rod McClure	Dean, School of Medicine
Associate Professor Jennifer Mensch	School of Humanities and Communication Arts (Level D, E Representative)
Professor Graciela Metternicht	Dean, School of Science
Professor Susan Page	Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Education
Associate Professor Alexie Papanicolaou	University Research Institutes Representative
Mr Prasad Perera	Higher Degree Research Candidate Student Representative
Dr Ben Perry	School of Science (Level A, B or C Representative)
Dr Margarite Poulos	School of Humanities and Communication Arts (Level A, B or C Representative)
Dr Ata Samad	School of Business (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Michele Simons	Dean, School of Education
Dr Erika Smith	School of Social Sciences (Level A, B or C Representative)
Associate Professor Liesel Spencer	School of Law (Level D or E Representative)
Dr Kylie Steel	School of Health (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Brian Stout	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching
Professor Corrinne Sullivan	School of Social Sciences (Level D, E Representative)
Professor Deborah Sweeney	Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Enterprise and Global
Professor Michelle Trudgett	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership
Distinguished Professor George Williams AO	Vice-Chancellor and President

Apologies:

Professor Ian Anderson	Pro Vice-Chancellor Research
Dr Maria Bhatti	School of Law (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Maryanne Dever	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education
Professor Gabrielle Drake	Interim Dean, School of Social Sciences
Professor Jane Frost	Interim Dean, School of Nursing and Midwifery/School of Nursing and Midwifery (Level D, E Representative)
Professor Wendy Hu	School of Medicine (Level D, E Representative)
Dr Peter Lewis	School of Nursing and Midwifery (Level A, B or C Representative)
Professor Amir Mahmood	Pro Vice-Chancellor and Provost, Surabaya campus
Dr Nicolene Murdoch	PVC Global Partnerships and Transnational Education
Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy	Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Success
Professor Jeff Powell	Interim Dean, Graduate Research School
Professor Catherine Renshaw	Dean, School of Law
Professor Brian Stout	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching
Associate Professor Mourad Tayebi	Deputy Chair of Academic Senate
Associate Professor Chloe Taylor	Vice-Chancellor's Nominee

Associate Professor Jacqueline Ullman	School of Education (Level D, E Representative)
Associate Professor Gabrielle Weidemann	Interim Dean, School of Psychology

Absent:

Professor Geoff Lee	Deputy Vice Chancellor - Western Sydney & External Engagement
Ms Fiona Salisbury	Executive Director, Library Services
Ms Tiffany Sharpe	Indigenous Australian Student Representative
Associate Professor Lei Si	School of Health Sciences (Level D, E Representative)
Ms Ananta Vig	International Student Representative

In Attendance:

Ms Shubha Devadasen	Associate Director, Office of Governance Services, Secretariat
Ms Prashana Fernando	Senior Governance Officer
Associate Professor Leeanne Heaton	Deputy Dean, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Dr Leanne Hunt	Interim Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching
Ms Bianca Jordaan	Chief Information Officer
Professor Freya MacMillan	Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor Research
Professor Juliette Overland	Deputy Dean, School of Law
Ms Karen Rae	Executive Officer

MINUTES

1. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 INTRODUCTION, WELCOME, AND APOLOGIES

The Chair of Academic Senate, Professor Robert Mailhammer formally opened the meeting at 9:30am and welcomed members and attendees.

Dr Kylie Steel, School of Health Sciences (Level A, B or C Representative), delivered the Acknowledgement of Country.

On behalf of all members, the Chair extended a special note of thanks to Ms Sophie Buck, Director, Governance Service, for her significant contributions and longstanding support of the Academic Senate and wished her well.

1.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

1.3 STARRING OF ITEMS

Members were asked which items they wish starred for discussion.

Apart from procedural items, the items below were starred:

- Item 2.4 Ethical Decision Making in Research Partnerships
- Item 2.6 Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP)
- Item 3.3 Question on Notice/Hot Topic
- Item 4.1 Chair's Report
- Item 4.2 Vice Chancellor's Report
- Item 4.3 Student Report
- Item 4.4 External Review of Academic Senate Implementation
- Item 4.5 School Review Update
- Item 4.6 Product Review Update
- Item 4.7 Teaching Quality Framework
- Item 5.2 Academic Planning and Curriculum Approvals Committee
- Item 5.3 Senate Education Committee
- Item 5.4 Senate Assessment Committee
- Item 5.5 Academic Senate Policy Committee
- Item 5.6 Research Committee
- Item 5.7 Research Studies Committee

It was resolved (AS 25/03:01)

That the documents for all unstarred agenda items were noted and, except where alternative action was noted as appropriate, all recommendations contained in those items were endorsed.

1.4 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There was no change to the order of business.

1.5 OTHER BUSINESS

No items of Other Business were raised.

1.6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on Friday 11 April 2025 (meeting 25/02) were attached.

It was resolved (AS 25/03:02)

That Academic Senate confirmed the minutes of the Senate meeting held on Friday 11 April 2025 (meeting 25/02) as an accurate record.

1.7 ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members were requested to report on any developments in relation to the items.

Action 25/02: 4.6 | Transnational Academic Governance

Update on Transnational Academic Governance to be provided when possible.

Update 25/03: The update to be held over until the ongoing restructure of the Transnational/Third Party Provider Academic Governance structure is completed.

Action 25/01:4.2 | Vice-Chancellor's Report

Vice-Chancellor to trial new format for VC report.

Update 25/03: It was noted that reports from individual portfolios should be submitted to Senate separately, as opposed to being incorporated in the VC report. As a result, the VC report will be more focused and concise in nature.

Action Arising:

Chair to liaise with the University General Counsel to organise this reporting process.

Action 25/01:4.3 | Student Report

RSC to provide data on PhD completions, fee waivers, reasons for extensions and discipline averages. Chair, RSC to talk to Deans about alternative options. Report to be presented when available.

Update 25/03: No update provided. Action to remain open.

Action 5.10.4 | Senate Education Committee

Senate Education Committee to provide an update on Credit for Prior Learning (CPL).

An update will be presented at the June 2025 meeting. Senate will be advised if this date is not possible following the next SEC meeting, as there have been competing priorities that may delay this presentation.

Update 25/03: Some progress had been achieved. Schools had been requested to produce procedure documents outlining their CPL processes for each discipline and program ensuring they align with the University CPL policy. A closing update would be provided at the next Senate meeting.

Action 25/01:5.10.7 | Research Committee Annual Report

Research Quality Forum to be presented at the June 2025 Academic Senate meeting.

Update: Item 4.8 Research Quality Forum Report

Update 25/03: Report on agenda at Item 4.8. Action closed.

Action 24/05: 3.3 | Student Report

Professor Maryanne Dever to talk through AI document with Mr Nabin Gautam.

Professor Dever advised that a meeting has not been possible; an update to be provide at the June 2025 meeting.

Update 25/03: Professor Cath Ellis to liaise with Professor Dever for an update. A report of this conversation will be provided at Meeting 25/04.

2. APPROVALS

2.1 ACADEMIC PLANNING AND CURRICULUM APPROVALS COMMITTEE

Higher Education Standard(s): 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.2.1, 6.3.1a, c, 6.3.2c, d, f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 2, 3

The Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee report for meeting 25/03 held on 6 May 2025 was appended.

It was resolved (AS 25/03:03)

That Academic Senate noted the report of the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee meeting held on 6 May 2025 (meeting 25/03) and:

- i. Approved the retirement of 1723 Master of Education (Social Ecology) and its nested programs; 1724 Graduate Certificate in Education (Social Ecology) and 1725 Graduate Diploma in Education (Social Ecology) (exit only), from 2H 2025, and endorsed the transition arrangements.*
- ii. Noted the approval of the retirement of 2789 Bachelor of Business (Advanced Business Leadership)/ Bachelor of Laws from 2025.*
- iii. Noted the approval of suspension of Intake to program 4735 - Master of Nursing (Professional Studies) and its nested programs from Spring 2025.*
- iv. Noted the approval of the new Domestic Pathway Proposals 24L0141-24L0142 TAFE NSW MSF40222 Certificate IV in Furniture Design and Manufacturing, articulating into either the Bachelor of Design and Technology 3729 or Bachelor of Industrial Design 3730 at Western Sydney University, comprising of guaranteed entry only.*
- v. Noted the approval of the new pathways from the Foundation Studies (Science) program at Western Sydney University International College, articulating into the listed undergraduate programs, comprising of guaranteed entry only.*

The Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee report for meeting 25/04 held on 3 June 2025 was appended.

It was resolved (AS 25/03:04)

That Academic Senate noted the report of the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee meeting held on 3 June 2025 (meeting 25/04) and:

- i. Approved the introduction of the new program 1947 - Associate Degree in Applied Policing to commence in Policing Trimester 1, 2026 at the Goulburn campus.*
- ii. Noted the approval of the discontinuation of the Business programs listed in the memo from 2025.*
- iii. Noted the approval of the suspension of the 2793 M Financial Planning, 2794 GD Financial Planning and 2795 GC Financial Planning programs from Q3, 2025 and discontinuation of the 2787 B Business (ABL) from 2025, as listed in the memo.*
- iv. Noted the approval of the revised pathways 25L0001-25L0006 Western Sydney University International College Diploma of Information and Communications Technology (3 Term and 2 Term Accelerated Programs), articulating into either the Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology 3639, Bachelor of Information Systems 3687, or Bachelor of Computer Science 3506 at Western Sydney University, comprising of guaranteed entry and 8ocps of credit for prior learning.*

2.2 APPROVAL OF SCHOLARSHIPS

*Higher Education Standard(s): 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 6.3.1b, c, 6.3.2b, d
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 2*

It was resolved (AS 25/03:05)

The Academic Senate reviewed and approved the proposed new scholarships, reviewed and approved the amendments to scholarships and reviewed and approved the new donor funded prizes for immediate execution.

New Donor-Funded Scholarships for Approval

- GO Foundation Environmental Scholarship
- Eastern Tunnelling Package Indigenous Scholarship
- Network Rail Scholarship
- Turner Freeman Scholarship in Succession and Elder Law
- Turner Freeman Scholarship in Torts Law

Amendments to Existing Scholarships

- William Orule Memorial Law Scholarship
- Dean's Western Sydney Local Health District Master of Art Therapy Indigenous Scholarship
- The ACMA Charitable Trust Scholarship
- GPT First Nations Scholarship
- AirTrunk STEM Scholarships

New Donor Funded Prizes for Approval

- Built Australia Award for Academic Excellence
- Antigone Kefala Memorial Prize
- Buttar, Caldwell & Co. Solicitors Award in Revenue Law
- Australian Law Advocates Prize
- Riverwood Migration Award in Immigration Law
- The Nufail Ali Prize in History of Religion

2.3 GRADUAND LISTS, UNIVERSITY MEDALS AND POSTHUMOUS AWARDS

*Higher Education Standard(s): 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3, 1.5.4, 6.2.1h
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 2*

2.3.1 AWARDING OF UNIVERSITY MEDALS

The report of the Chair of Academic Senate approval on 22 May 2025 was appended for noting by members and consisted of the following item:

The approval of the award of the University Medal to the graduates listed in the Attachment – Graduates awarded the University Medal, by the Chair of Academic Senate on behalf of Academic Senate.

2.3.2 JUNE CONFERRAL OF UNIVERSITY AWARDS

A paper and list of the conferral of awards to students identified in the June 2025 conferral was appended.

It was resolved (AS 25/03:06)

The Academic Senate:

- i. *Approved the award of degrees with distinction to graduands listed Attachment A – Graduands for awards with distinction.*
- ii. *Approved the award of the University Medal to the graduates listed in Attachment B – Graduates to be awarded the University Medal.*
- iii. *Noted the conferral of awards to graduates with pass or honours coursework degrees as listed in Attachment C - Graduates with pass and honours coursework degrees approved within SAC delegation.*
- iv. *Noted the conferral of awards to graduates with a research degree as listed in Attachment D - Graduates with research degrees approved within RSC delegation.*
- v. *Noted the conferral of the posthumous award as listed in Attachment E – Posthumous graduates with research degrees approved within RSC delegation.*

2.3.3 POSTHUMOUS AWARD

Higher Education Standard(s) Satisfied: 1.5, 6.2.1h

There were no posthumous awards for noting.

2.4 ETHICAL DECISION MAKING IN RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

*Higher Education Standard(s): 4.1.1.a, 4.2.4
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1,3, 6*

Professor Freya MacMillan, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research advised Senate that the paper was based on the draft submitted to Academic Senate in July 2024 and included feedback from comprehensive consultation with Schools and Institutes, the Indigenous Leadership Group, HDR Candidate Group and other stakeholders. A mapping of the current due diligence process had also been undertaken. The updated framework and the associated checklist had been submitted to the Vice-Chancellor and Provost, re-circulated to the Schools, then presented to the Senior Executive Team and to the Research Committee in April 2025. Professor MacMillan noted that the document and check list would be adapted as needed.

The Committee was requested to support the document being embedded into the Western Research Policy and ensure all colleagues are aware of the framework. With support from Schools and Institutes the Central team will be populating the SharePoint Site with relevant resources.

It was confirmed that another Research Quality Forum would be held. Schools were invited to contact Professor MacMillan with topic proposals.

It was resolved (AS 25/03:07)

That Academic Senate endorsed the use of and embedding of the Ethical Decision Making in Research Partnerships framework within the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy.

2.5 RESEARCH COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE UPDATE

*Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1a-c, 6.3.2.d-f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 2*

It was resolved (AS 25/03:08)

That Academic Senate approved the updates to the membership in the Terms of Reference of the Research Committee.

2.6 COMMONWEALTH PRAC PAYMENT (CPP)

*Higher Education Standard(s) :6.3.3
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 3*

Ms Jess Gleeson, Director, Data Integrity, Quality & Operations and Registrar thanked all contributing parties including Mrs Katie Aguilera, Mr Simon Potts and Professor Michele Simons. She advised that the Commonwealth payment was the result of a change to Government policy, which had been a key point in the recent Federal election. The guidelines on eligibility had been published on 18 June 2025 with an amendment to the HES guidelines. The guidelines were set by the Department of Education (Department) and inform the criteria. Ms Gleeson said only a limited number of programs would be eligible for this payment, despite there being other programs with placements. She advised that students needed to satisfy extensive criteria including submitting supporting documentation and personal information. The application and assessment process would be comprehensive and managed internally and manually. Supporting documents and FAQs were being developed and would be published on the e-CPP website, as a high volume of student queries was expected. Applications would open next week in time for the payments which will commence on 1 July 2025. Students in eligible programs would receive communication encouraging them to apply.

Senate was advised that plans to extend the scheme to other Schools were uncertain at this stage. However, there was merit in engaging with the Department regarding the possibility of this, given placement poverty affected other disciplines as well.

It was resolved (AS 25/03:09)

The Academic Senate reviewed and approved the proposed details the Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP).

Mr Nabin Gautam entered at 10:04am.

Associate Professor Tania Perich entered at 10:10am.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE/HOT TOPICS

Higher Education Standard(s): 2.1.2, 4.1, 5, 7.3.3
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3

Professor Ann Dadich, School of Business (Level D, E Representative) provided a contextual overview of the item, noting that data regarding the number of classes after hours and the location of these classes had not readily been available and posed the question 'How can Academic Senate ensure that the current levels of information technology (IT) support promote 'academic quality' and 'quality... research' in the University?'

Ms Bianca Jordaan, Chief Information Officer, advised Senate that based on the data considered by the service desk team, approximately 30,000 calls were received in a week. Of these, calls after 6:00pm numbered less than 1,300 calls and calls before 8:00am were even fewer in number. She said that the Service Desk was manned from 8:00am to 5:00pm, and at times until 6:00 pm. Ms Jordaan noted that possible ways to move forward included staggering staff and extending work hours, however, to implement these solutions within existing costs, would mean lower service availability during core hours. A medium-term solution would be to consider chat-bots and after-hours support using technology, while the optimal longer-term solution was to upgrade existing technology to more reliable systems and devices. Teaching quality outcomes and cost implications were key factors to consider in reaching a way forward.

Senate noted that an immediate measure to improve support was to assure that the information on the Western website is accurate, pointing out that the support hotline was incorrect.

Senate was assured that University's expansion to Indonesia would not have any resource implications.

Senate members suggested a holistic approach be taken to also address other areas of support in addition to IT, such as student Work Health and Safety and lab support. But it was also noted that a distinction should be made between meeting student support needs and academic staff support needs which may impact the delivery of a lecture. It was critical to provide a solution to ensure successful class delivery.

New Action:

Professor Ann Dadich and Ms Bianca Jordaan to investigate the IT support issue further and submit an updated report to the next meeting of Academic Senate.

Ms Bianca Jordaan exited the meeting at 10.20 am.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 CHAIR'S REPORT

Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1, 6.3.2
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3, 5, 6

The Chair reported some sector developments of relevance to academic governance from the most recent meeting of the Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates (CoCABS).

- a) research integrity and the role of academic boards in monitoring and advising councils; The Chair encouraged Senate members to read the short paper by MinterEllison linked to in the report.
- b) University governance and the crucial role of academic boards in advising councils as councils are being scrutinised for inclusion of independent academic expertise.
- c) academic freedom and the role of academic boards in protecting it
- d) improved induction and information about academic governance with Co-CABS working with the Australian Institute for Company Directors (AICD) in revising materials for the university governance course; these materials may be useful for universities as well.

The Chair advised that the Board had approved the creation of three faculties, and that he had conveyed the broad endorsement of this committee but also pointed to the questions members asked and issues that were felt in need to be addressed, such as the relationship between faculties and schools.

Regarding research integrity, Senate was advised that a working party between Universities Australia, the ARC and NHRMC had been established to specifically consider research integrity.

Senate members asked how the academic risks of the School Review and the Product Review were managed, and whether both projects had appropriate risk registers that could be shared with Academic Senate.

Senate was advised that ongoing work on Academic Risk needed to integrate with a more holistic approach to risk at the University, beginning with the risk appetite statement.

It was noted that for the School Review three areas of risk and 12 mitigation strategies had been articulated to the Board of Trustees in the approval process. Given the validity of the concerns raised, it was agreed that the next steps of risk mitigation should be a key priority. Further detail in this regard was provided at Item 4.5.

It was noted that the Product Review was not an actual project yet, but that the Higher Education Standards Framework was relevant as an overarching form of a risk register.

New Action

To provide more visibility around risk assessment, it was requested that an articulation of the risk mitigation strategies against the HESF standards relevant to the Product Review be presented to the Senate.

It is expected that regular risk reports will be made available in future when the relevant capabilities are built into the system.

Mr Nabin Gautam exited at 10:47am.

4.2 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

*Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1, 6.3.2
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3, 5, 6*

Distinguished Professor George Williams AO reported on extensive consultations and information sessions that the Senior Executive and himself had held over the previous weeks. He informed Senate that Expressions of Interest process for the Faculty Executive Deans were underway. The Provost, Professor Deborah Sweeney, was managing this process. An announcement of the outcomes would be made the following week, and Expressions of Interest for other Faculty leadership positions would be called in the short term.

The Vice-Chancellor commented on the significant decrease of the University's position in the most recent QS Ranking (down from 384 to above 400). He said that the drop in the QS ranking would impact the willingness of other universities to partner with Western and international recruitment. There was critical work for the Research and Innovation division to do to improve performance in this area. Distinguished Professor Williams noted positively that Western had been ranked first in the world once again in the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking. The number of universities competing for this ranking had nearly doubled this year.

Professor Freya MacMillan noted that though Western's overall QS ranking had lowered, academic and employer reputation score saw the biggest increase in the last ten years. On this metric, Western has moved closer to the average within the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) group.

Responding to comments from members about possible reasons for the QS ranking development, it was noted that investment was required to bring the same rigour to the QS rankings as applied to the Impact rankings. A working group has been set up to manage the accurate capturing of citations.

4.3 STUDENT REPORT

*Higher Education Standard(s) :6.3.3
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 3*

Mr Prasad Perera, Higher Degree Research Candidate Student Representative provided a verbal report, and thanked Professor Freya MacMillan, for her active engagement with the HDR Student community about the use of Generative AI in research training.

Senate was requested to treat the concerns associated with the strict three-year completion deadline for a PhD student with urgency. It was noted that this matter was with the Research Studies Committee.

Senate members stated that a one-size fits all model was difficult to apply in fields such as STEM where experiments can fail, and ideal conditions are often not found. Ethical obligations and additional community engagement in disciplines such as Indigenous studies also often cause delays. Consequently, a rigid time frame constituted a risk factor. In contrast, it was asserted that while these concerns are valid, PhD projects should be designed in a way that they can be reasonably completed in three years. It was necessary for the University to take a holistic approach to support its students, and address wider issues such as ethics approval delays, system barriers and gatekeeping processes by external stakeholders, as opposed to only focusing on the timelines.

4.4 EXTERNAL REVIEW OF ACADEMIC SENATE IMPLEMENTATION

Higher Education Standard(s): 6.1.3d, 6.3

Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3, 5, 6

Professor Robert Mailhammer presented an update on the implementation of the recommendations in the external review report, assuring the process was thorough, consultative and considered a broad evidence base. The Chair presented a thematic overview of the nine recommendations from the external review and gave information on the timeline of implementation. He invited comments at the end of the presentation and via email. Key points:

- A revision of the functions of Senate to achieve greater alignment with the Higher Education Standards and to strengthen its role in oversight and advising on academic risk, quality, and monitoring; to strengthen the academic governance system.
- Reducing the size of Senate and rebalance its membership and reduce the proportion of ex-officio members. A draft of the revised and renamed *Academic Senate Charter* (previously the Academic Governance Policy) to be presented at Academic Senate in the August meeting for feedback with a view to present to the Board of Trustees for approval at its September meeting.

The Chair outlined work arising including elections and appointments in October/November 2025 for new terms commencing from January 2026. He noted that OGS staffing changes had affected the original timeline.

Professor Mailhammer also stated that changes were also being made to the Senate agenda with Senate Standing Committees reporting at every Senate meeting by providing a summary of last committee meeting included in Academic Senate papers and verbal updates from chairs. Items requiring resolution would be listed separately and biannual reporting from Senate Standing Committees summarising decisions would be required.

The forward planner already included some items to meet recommendations. A discussion on research quality benchmarking was expected to be tabled to the next Senate meeting. The Committee structure would be considered at the next meeting, noting that the approving body for the Committee structure is Academic Senate.

The review also recommended that new programs for approval must be submitted to Senate with sufficient information.

Attachment 1: External Review Implementation Update presentation

4.5 SCHOOL REVIEW UPDATE

Higher Education Standard(s): 5.3

Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 3

Professor Kevin Dunn, relayed that the basis for the School Review were the issues that had been uncovered in response to the question posed by the Vice Chancellor to staff: “*Are schools adequately resourced to meet the needs of staff and students?*”

An overview of the comprehensive consultation process was provided, along with a presentation of the material had been initially presented to Board in support of the faculty model.

It was noted that the SABEL faculty composition had been decided with consideration to various criteria including current collaboration and strategic

importance in the future. In advance of this, an ideation workshop had been run with the Deans of the Schools to consider the nomenclature for the groups.

Furthermore, the Board had been presented with a set of strategies to be implemented to lessen the load of academic staff and allow them more time to spend on learning and teaching activities.

It was noted that a rigorous process had been followed to map the disciplines to the right skills and thereby the right faculties.

Professor Dunn outlined the following next steps:

- The professional services model would be developed in Q3 in tandem with the broader Reset conversation.
- Consultation regarding faculty leadership and academic governance in schools.
- School Associate Dean positions would no longer be needed due to the establishment of faculty leadership; these changes require mapping.
- Issues regarding uneven workload allocations across Schools needed to be addressed.
- The process of calculating academic workloads needed to be re-considered and clear expectations on academic performance set.

Professor Dunn stated that for over a decade, some Schools had had an operating budget of less than 30% of their revenue, while other Schools have maintained a cross subsidy of their staffing profile despite load drops and lesser workloads. This raised an equity issue and was a risk from a business perspective.

It was noted that in time, the project management team would develop a risk register and make it available. The risks, as articulated to the Board were threefold: disruption to business as usual, staff morale and engagement and risks to partners and external stakeholders. Risk mitigation strategies included ensuring current work was accurately mapped to the new model design and implementing a deeply consultative approach.

Attachment 2: School Review presentation

4.6 PRODUCT REVIEW UPDATE

*Higher Education Standard(s): 5.3.1, 6.3.1d, 6.3.2c+f, 7.2.2a
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1,3, 5*

Professor Cath Ellis asserted a trend for students to spend little time at Western, with some choosing to stay for less than six months. While this behaviour was driven by complex reasons, from a curriculum design perspective, Western's current offerings were not compelling students to remain. She argued that product suite had to be reviewed to ensure that students have more to gain by choosing to stay at Western. Key foci of the Product Strategy would be the development of a new product line, taking up a holistic approach to curriculum, SME-driven curriculum design, enhanced market research and better financial modelling. Professor Ellis said the Product Strategy work had interdependencies with the Institutional Action Plan (IAP), the launch of the Curriculum Management Program, Campus Strategy, the planned Learning Management System uplift and the Schools Review.

Professor Ellis outlined four core pillars: program portfolio, a cost and revenue modelling, value proposition/brand, and a scalable curriculum design and development engine. Next steps: to commence implementation of the proposed work, which involved significant testing, collaboration and partnership with academics and the Schools.

Professor Ellis informed Senate that Program (Re)Development Principles are currently being developed. She extended an offer for interested members to join the relevant Tiger Team. Load and revenue data would be sourced from Competitive Intelligence Analysis (CIA). Revenue was one of many indicators used to build the product strategy. Not all programs would be revenue positive. Senate was advised that further details were forthcoming and that a steering committee would oversee the Product Strategy with deep engagement with Schools. All relevant processes, metrics and performance indicators would be monitored, measured and reported as part of the academic governance process.

Senate members were assured that the future approval process for a given program would be finalised as quickly as possible while maintaining and strengthening academic rigour. The aim was to create one curriculum owned by the academic community with the future faculties maintaining responsibility for overseeing the curriculum and its individual elements.

Senate requested that further details and data be provided to evidence the observation that student retention issues are related to curriculum design, and were advised that the relevant research done in this regard could be circulated at a later stage by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Students. Senate members emphasised that the definition of retention should be clearly articulated, as research shows that retention is influenced by both academic, as well as non-academic factors. Its multi-faceted definition should first be understood, to efficiently combat retention. Retention needed to be considered holistically, as it was significantly influenced by non-academic factors, with a better understanding of the phenomenon being required.

Senate was assured that the Product Strategy was not purely about curriculum design and that retention and load revenue issues could not be rectified through better curriculum design alone. The strategy also encapsulated a marketing strategy, the student support model, the classroom model, the digital experience for students and staff. As part of this, the University was considering fundamentally new capabilities which would be achieved through deep collaboration between divisional and academic colleagues. The proposed model for the Product Strategy would assist in identifying the depth and breadth of the current issue and better define the retention challenge by relying on data drawn from a single source of curriculum truth.

Clarification was also given that the universities in general had a practice of developing programs in a localised way without considering a holistic approach. The recommendation was that program development should instead take a more centralised and holistic approach.

Senate raised concerns that the recent narrative around the Product Strategy had failed to recognise the capabilities and achievements of the current state and denigrated the work of staff over the past years.

Members also noted that some students enrolled in Western with the pre-planned intention of leaving to their university of first choice once they have an opportunity to do so, as they were previously unsuccessful due to low ATAR. It was argued that the University should also take pride in the fact that such students are elevated and equipped at Western to then attend their university of first choice.

Attachment 3: Product Review presentation

4.7 TEACHING QUALITY FRAMEWORK

*Higher Education Standard(s): 3.1.3, 3.2.1-4, 6.3.1.a, 6.3.2.h
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1,3, 5*

This item was postponed until the August 2025 meeting of Academic Senate.

4.8 RESEARCH QUALITY FORUM REPORT

*Higher Education Standard(s): 4.1.1a, 4.2.1f, 5.2.1, 6.3.2h
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3, 6*

This item was postponed until the August 2025 meeting of Academic Senate.

4.9 TEQSA RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION AND SELF-ASSURANCE

*Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.2
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1*

This item was postponed until the August 2025 meeting of Academic Senate.

4.10 UPDATE FROM SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTES

*Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1a, b, c, 6.3.2d-f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3, 5, 6*

There were no Updates from Schools and Institutes.

4.11 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE/HOT TOPICS

*Higher Education Standard(s): 2.1.2, 4.1, 5, 7.3.3
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3*

There were no Questions on Notice/Hot Topics.

4.12 WSU/CSU JOINT PROGRAM IN MEDICINE – TRANSITION PLAN

*Higher Education Standard(s): 3.1.4, 3.1.5, 5.4.2
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1,3, 5*

This item was postponed until the August 2025 meeting of Academic Senate.

5. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

All Reports were postponed until the August 2025 meeting of Academic Senate.

5.1 SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1a, 6.3.1d, 6.3.2d
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 3*

There were no reports from the Senate Executive Committee for noting.

5.2 ACADEMIC PLANNING AND CURRICULUM APPROVALS COMMITTEE

*Higher Education Standard(s): 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.2.1, 6.3.1a, c, 6.3.2c, d, f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 2, 3*

The confirmed minutes of the Academic Planning and Curriculum Approvals Committee (APCAC) meeting held on 6 May 2025 (meeting 25/03) and the unconfirmed minutes of the Academic Planning and Curriculum Approvals Committee (APCAC) meeting held on 3 June 2025 (meeting 25/04) were appended for noting.

5.3 SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1a-d, 6.3.2d-f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3*

The confirmed minutes of the Senate Education Committee held on 10 April 2025 (meeting 25/02) and the unconfirmed minutes of the Senate Education Committee held on 29 May 2025 (meeting 25/03) were appended for noting.

5.4 SENATE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1a-d, 6.3.2e-f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3, 5

The unconfirmed minutes of the Senate Assessment Committee held on 13 May 2025 (meeting 25/03) were appended for noting.

5.5 RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1a-, 6.3.2e-f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3, 6

The confirmed minutes of the Research Committee held on 19 February 2025 (meeting 25/01) and the unconfirmed minutes of the Research Committee held on 30 April 2025 (meeting 25/02) were appended for noting.

5.6 RESEARCH STUDIES COMMITTEE

Higher Education Standard(s): 6.3.1a-, 6.3.2e-f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1, 3, 6

The confirmed minutes of the Research Studies Committee meetings held on 8 April 2025 (Meeting 25/03) and 13 May 2025 (Meeting 25/05), and the unconfirmed minutes of the Research Studies Committee meeting held on 27 May 2025 (Meeting 25/06) were appended for noting by the Senate.

5.7 ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY COMMITTEE

Higher Education Standard(s): 5.2.1, 6.3.1a-c, 6.3.2.d-f
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 2

There were no Academic Senate Policy Committee minutes for noting.

5.8 THIRD-PARTY PROVIDER COMMITTEE

Higher Education Standard(s): 5.4.2, 6.3.1a, 6.3.1d, 6.3.2d
Mitigation against risk(s) in Academic Senate Risk Register: 1,3

There were no Third-Party Provider Committee minutes for noting.

5.9 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Friday 12 September 2025. Summaries and minutes of the Board of Trustees meetings are available on the University website at:

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/about_uws/leadership/board_of_trustees

5.10 2024 ANNUAL REPORTS

The purpose of this item was for Senate to ensure that all Standing Committees of Academic Senate are carrying out their functions in accordance with their Terms of Reference.

5.10.1 ACADEMIC SENATE APPEALS COMMITTEE

The Academic Appeals and Integrity Committee Annual Report for 2024 was appended for noting.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Academic Senate Committee (25/04) will be Friday 15 August 2025 at 9:30am at Parramatta South Campus, Boardroom 1 (PS-EB.2.02).

The meetings scheduled for 2025 is as follows:

- 25/04 - Friday 15 August 2025
- 25/05 - Friday 10 October 2025
- 25/06 - Friday 5 December 2025

The meeting formally closed at 12:30pm.