



COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday, 23 March 2026
in Room 1209, Level 12, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus, Wellington
from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm**

PRESENT: Mr Alan Judge (Chancellor) (Chair)
Professor Richard Arnold
Mr William Bell-Purchas
Professor Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich
Ms Megan Evans
Ms Pania Gray (Pro-Chancellor)
Ms Asifa Hanif
Ms Mei Fern Johnson
Mr David McLean
Professor Nic Smith (Vice-Chancellor)
Mr David Smol
Mr James Te Puni
Ms Caroline Ward (Secretary to Council)

APOLOGIES: Nil

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Jackie Anderson, General Counsel
Mr Mairangi Campbell, Ngā Tauria Co-President
Mr Aidan Donoghue, VUWSA President
Ms Rochelle Gribble, Manager Strategic Projects
Ms Susan Hockley, Acting Chief Financial Officer
Professor Rawinia Higgins, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Māori & Kaitiakitanga
Professor Bryony James, Provost
Mr Clinton Jenkins, Associate Director, Planning and Performance Management
Dr Ryan Kerr, Director, Strategy and Planning
Professor Robyn Longhurst, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic
Mr Dan Mahoney, Head, Health, Safety, and Wellbeing
Professor Sally McArthur, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research
Mr Lachlan McKenzie, Communications Advisor
Ms Marianna Nicolou, Associate Director, Financial Operations
Ms Megan McPherson, Director of Communications, Marketing, and Digital Engagement
Mr Reece Moors, Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Ms Lisa Rountree, Executive Assistant to DVC, Students
Mrs Rachel Scott, Director, Governance, Risk, and Assurance
Ms Kate Tibbitts, Chief People Officer
Ms Tina Wakefield, Chief Operating Officer

26.23

Noted:

WELCOME / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / APOLOGIES

- 1 that Professor Richard Arnold led the Karakia
- 2 that Professor Sally McArthur, who recently started with the University as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, was welcomed to her first meeting of Council.

- 3 that the Chancellor acknowledged and welcomed all present.
4 that there were no apologies.

26.24

DECLARATIONS AND DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Received:

- 1 declarations and disclosure of interests by members of Council.
2 that Ms Evans advised that her son has commenced study at Te Herenga
Waka in Trimester 1; and Mr Te Puni also advised that his son is a student
at the University in 2026.
3 that Council members were reminded to advise the Secretary to Council of
any changes to their disclosure of interests listing between meetings.
4 that for item-specific disclosures, the Chancellor asked that Council
members alert him at the time.

26.25

COUNCIL MINUTES, MEETING HELD 9 FEBRUARY 2026

Received:

the public Minutes of the meeting of Council held 9 February 2026

Resolved:

**that the public Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 9 February 2026
be approved.**

**Te Puni/Bell-Purchas
Carried
260021**

26.26

REPORT FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Received:

an oral report from the Chancellor, Mr Alan Judge.

Noted:

- 1 that the Chancellor outlined events and activities since his last update to
Council as follows:
- attended an event to mark 'one year to go' until the opening of the
National Music Centre
 - attended the Foundation FRIC meeting
 - attended the Audit & Risk Committee meeting
 - attended the Chancellors' meeting, and the subsequent joint
Chancellors/Vice-Chancellors' meeting hosted by UniversitiesNZ
 - attended the Te Aka Matua Committee meeting
 - chaired the Victoria Honours Committee meeting
- 2 that since receiving Professor Nic Smith's confirmation that he had been
appointed to the University of Auckland Vice-Chancellor role, there had
been a major focus on recruiting the next Vice-Chancellor. For most of the
past month, this has involved the Chancellor chairing staff focus groups,
establishing and meeting with the Vice-Chancellor Appointment
Committee, confirming the appointment of a recruitment partner, Insight
Group, and finalising the role description, candidate information brochure
and advertising for the role. Regular updates are being provided to Council
via a board book, as well as updates to staff. The goal is to complete the
process at/by the 4 May Council meeting, however this is contingent upon
candidate availability following shortlisting on 17 April. Advertising closes
on 3 April. Professor Smith's final day with the University is 12 June.

Resolved:

that the Chancellor's oral report be noted.

Bönisch-Brednich/Hanif

Carried
260022

26.27

REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nic Smith, dated 10 March 2026 (document VUWC 26/16).

Noted:

- 1 that the report was taken as read.
- 2 that student experience and wellbeing activity had supported a fantastic start to the year. New Students' Orientation, following Tau Mai for hall residents recorded strong engagement, with cohort-specific welcomes for Māori, Pasifika, and international students. In addition, the Digital Solutions Team provided support to students bringing their own devices to get up to speed quickly to facilitate learning.
- 3 that engagement with VUWSA has been really strong and this has dovetailed with the efforts of student-facing staff contributing to the University meeting its academic and social mission.
- 4 that the Confucius Institute welcomed 28 Mandarin Language Assistants who are now teaching Mandarin language and Chinese culture in 64 schools across the lower North Island.
- 5 that student accommodation occupancy continues to track higher than the same time last year. In addition, the team at Capital Hall welcomed over 60 Massey students who were displaced following short notice closure of Massey's Kainga Rua Hall. Self-catered accommodation is facing unprecedented demand, and the team was able to stand up an additional location to meet this demand.
- 6 that science system reform continues with consultation underway via MBIE and TEC. The University continues to provide feedback and attend consultation sessions. Specific feedback on the detail of changes has not been announced.
- 7 that the University's efforts to gain Horizon Europe funding have been boosted with a grant of €508,745 for Dr Jeremy Owen in the School of Biological Sciences and his research on Bioprospecting and optimised production of marine/aquatic natural products in the omics and artificial intelligence era.
- 8 that doctoral graduates and prospective PhD candidates are at close to record levels. A change in the admissions process requires all doctoral candidates to undergo a compulsory interview.
- 9 that there is high demand for doctoral scholarships. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the vulnerable position some of these students are in as they commit to post graduate study in a time of ongoing increases to the cost of living.
- 10 that Wellington UniVentures reported its first operating surplus in 14 years.
- 11 that He Kokonga Whare e Kitea, the project to support data-driven student success has now completed four workstreams. Strong progress means Te Herenga Waka is now substantially aligned with our partner, the University of Canterbury. The work to achieve the Student Success plan is closely linked with the Curriculum Enhancement programme.
- 12 that a review of the Teaching Intensive Pathway is underway by the Provost.
- 13 that with one year to go to the opening of the National Music Centre, the Vice-Chancellor commended the work of Dame Kerry Prendergast in achieving the vision. The recent visit to the Wellington Town Hall by Council members and some of Te Hiwa had highlighted the new era of Music that is on the horizon. Under the leadership of Professor Kim

- Cunio of the NZ School of Music, and Provost Professor Bryony James there are exciting opportunities ahead.
- 14 that the upcoming Cuba Dupa event will showcase the University with the 'Vic Uni Glover Park Stage'. In addition, the Te Aro Campus will transform to become Whanga, an immersive visual arts sanctuary allowing a quieter place to relax, be inspired, and discover the breadth of the University's creativity.

Resolved: that the report from the Vice-Chancellor be noted.

**Bönisch-Brednich/Gray
Carried
260023**

26.28 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2026

Received: the Financial report to 28 February 2026 from the Chief Financial Officer, Ms Rachel Bruce (document VUWC 26/17).

- Noted:**
- 1 that the report was taken as read and Ms Susan Hockley was welcomed to the meeting as Acting Chief Financial Officer whilst Ms Rachel Bruce was on leave.
 - 2 that revenue was unfavourable to budget by \$3.1m primarily due to the timing of discounts for full fee students. It was confirmed that international scholarships are in line with budget and will ultimately be cost neutral.
 - 3 that expenditure was favourable to budget by \$6.2m, mainly because of lower spend on operating expenses and people costs.
 - 4 that the consolidated group deficit of \$3.1m includes the Foundation surplus of \$4.5m which was favourable to budget of \$5.6m primarily due to higher donation revenue.
 - 5 that the Balance sheet had increased significantly due to last year's property valuation.
 - 6 that borrowings are well below the same point in time in 2025.

Resolved: that the Financial report to 28 February 2026 be noted.

**Evans/Hanif
Carried
260024**

26.29 CONFIRMATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Received: the list of degrees, diplomas and certificates granted on 23 March 2026 (document VUWC 26/18).

Noted: that Professor Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich spoke regarding a PhD student from Afghanistan who is on today's list to be awarded their doctorate. She explained the incredible effort to get this student out of Kabul where they were trapped after the Taliban take-over, into New Zealand when it was fully locked down due to COVID. This was a team effort which showed the University Community and its networks and connections at their finest. The former student now has a job in Sweden but will fly back to New Zealand in May to attend their graduation celebration marking this incredible achievement. Brigitte recorded her sincere appreciation to all those involved in saving the life of, and supporting this student.

- Resolved:**
- 1 that Council grants the degrees, diplomas and certificates in this University on the persons listed in document VUWC 26/18, and that their names be entered on the Roll of Graduates on 23 March 2026.
 - 2 that a motion of congratulations to the Graduates be recorded.

Bell-Purchas/Hanif
Carried
260025

26.30 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Received: a Council paper dated 10 March 2026 from the Chief Financial Officer, Ms Rachel Bruce, regarding the 2025 Annual Report (document VUWC 26/19).

- Noted:**
- 1 that the Council paper was taken as read and Ms Hockley spoke to it.
 - 2 that the Audit & Risk Committee considered the 2025 Annual Report in detail at its meeting held on 9 March 2026.
 - 3 that since that meeting there had been some minor corrections, as well as one correction to page 78 of the Council documentation version to amend the staff number to 2,237.
 - 4 that the audit process had been smooth, and the Chancellor acknowledged the clean audit report.
 - 5 that it was confirmed that the report will be published online, with just a small number of copies printed as these are required by Parliament.

- Resolved:**
- 1 **that on the recommendation of the Audit & Risk Committee, Council:**
 - 1 **approve the 2025 Annual report**
 - 2 **approve the signing and release of the Representation Letter to EY;**
 - 3 **authorise the 2025 Annual Report for issue;**
 - 4 **approve the online publication of the 2025 Annual Report as soon as practical.**

Smol/Gray
Carried
260026

26.31 COUNCIL PROCESS – MODERNISING MEETING PROCEDURE

Received: a Council paper dated 3 March 2026 from Council member, Mr David McLean, regarding modernising Council meeting procedure (document VUWC 26/20).

- Noted:**
- 1 that the Council paper was taken as read.
 - 2 that the proposal aligns with international governance best practice and has the endorsement of several Director institutes (AICD, UK IoD, NZ IoD);
 - 3 that Council members were unanimously supportive of this change and appreciated the symbolism it represents in reinforcing the University's governing body as modern and progressive.
 - 4 that the Secretary to Council will take the necessary steps including updating the minute-taking templates to implement the revised procedure.

- Resolved:**
- 1 **that Council approve:**
 - 1 **the retirement of the practice for resolutions to be formally moved and seconded in Council and Council Committee meetings;**

- 2 that the revised procedural approach take effect from 24 March 2026 whereby the Chair may state a matter for decision and declare the outcome without requiring a mover or seconder.

McLean/Johnson
Carried
260027

26.32

CHANGES TO THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Received: a Council paper from the Chancellor, Mr Alan Judge, regarding changes to the Audit & Risk Committee (document VUWC 26/21).

Noted:

1 that the Council paper was taken as read.
2 that the Audit & Risk Committee considered this item in detail at its meeting on 9 March 2026, and prior to this there were discussions at the Council Workshop on 27 January, and Council only time on 9 February. Careful work took place to ensure the effect of combining the Finance Committee remit into the Audit & Risk Committee would ensure that Council's governance responsibilities would be fully met.
3 that as a result of the proposal, there will be a more fulsome financial report to each of the eight Council meetings per year, and this will include a CFO report covering treasury, capex, and TEC reporting.
4 that further to the Council paper, recommending four members of Council to be appointed under Clause 3.1(b), it was agreed that a fifth Council member be appointed to the Committee, Ms Asifa Hanif, and this is reflected in recommendation 5 below.

Resolved: that on the recommendation of the Audit & Risk Committee, Council:

- 1 approve the inclusion of the Finance Committee remit into the Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference;
2 approve the revised Terms of the Reference for the Audit & Risk Committee (attached as Appendix 2 to the Council paper);
3 approve the disestablishment of the Finance Committee effective 24 March 2026;
4 review the Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference one year after they come into effect.
5 that on the recommendation of the Chancellor, Council approve the appointment of the following members to the Audit & Risk Committee under clauses 3.1(a) and 3.1(b) of the revised Terms of Reference:

Clause 3.1(a) The Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor:

Chancellor, Alan Judge
Pro-Chancellor, Pania Gray

Clause 3.1(b) Up to five other members of Council (one of whom must be an elected staff representative):

Council Member, Professor Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich
Council Member, Asifa Hanif
Council Member, Mei Fern Johnson
Council Member, David McLean
Council Member and Chair, David Smol

Smol/Evans
Carried
260028

26.33

DVC MĀORI AND KAITIAKITANGA UPDATE

Received: a presentation dated 11 March 2026 from Professor Rawinia Higgins, DVC Māori and Kaitiakitanga, providing the DVC Māori and Kaitiakitanga update (document VUWC 26/22).

Noted:

- 1 that the presentation was taken as read having been circulated with the meeting documentation.
- 2 that Professor Higgins spoke to a slightly revised presentation – the updated version is on the file for the meeting.
- 3 that as of 5 March 2026, Māori student EFTS sit at 1925, up 53 on the same time as last year. Commencing EFTS are slightly down at 599, compared with 627 at the same time in 2025.
- 4 that Māori student retention rates have steadily improved over the past five years from 90.4% in 2020 to 95.7% in 2025. There was discussion on retention rates and what they mean in practice.
- 5 that Ngā Mokopuna is moving closer to living building certification and the team is on track to submit the paperwork. If certification is achieved, it is hoped to celebrate this achievement at Matariki. A benefits realisation will come back to Council in the future.
- 6 that there was discussion on the extra power the building is generating beyond its needs and how this could be used, noting some is going back into the grid. More information will be provided in a future report.
- 7 that following a planning day, the latest version of the Strategic outcomes framework for Māori, Mai I te Iho ki te Pae, with the addition of KPIs is on the [website](#).
- 8 that Professor Higgins was thanked for her presentation and mahi.

Resolved: that the presentation and update from the DVC Māori and Kaitiakitanga be noted.

Te Puni/Bell-Purchas
Carried
260029

at 12.05 pm Mr Mairangi Campbell, and Mr Aidan Donoghue joined the meeting

26.34

STUDENT PRESIDENT REPORTS

Received:

- 1 a report from Mr Aidan Donoghue, VUWSA President (document VUWC 26/23a);
- 2 a report from Mr Mairangi Campbell, and Mr Manaia Puha, Ngāi Tauira Co-Presidents (document VUWC 26/23b).

Noted:

- 1 that the Student President reports were taken as read.
Ngāi Tauira
- 2 that Mr Campbell took the report as read and conveyed Mr Puha’s apologies as he had encountered flight challenges this morning.
- 3 that Ngāi Tauira’s vision for 2026 *Love is our Foundation* captures why the student association does what it does. He noted increased engagement, up 40% on the same time last year and advised that Ngāi Tauira is providing leadership and support to smaller Māori student associations at the Law School, Business School, and the fledgling Architecture & Design association.
- 4 that there was discussion on how the relationship with VUWSA is formalised and comment was made as to how effective this relationship is.

VUWSA

- 5 that Mr Donoghue also highlighted incredible levels of student engagement with a number of events over subscribed.
- 6 that recent major events included the Student Action hui, and the Student Associations' conference.
- 7 that VUWSA prides itself on being the country's most political student association and in an election year is encouraging students to enrol under the new rules. A campaign around 'show up or shut up' will be run.
- 8 that Mr Donoghue expressed his appreciation of the working relationship with the Vice-Chancellor and congratulated him on his appointment to the Auckland VC role. Professor Smith noted how he has valued the relationship with all VUWSA presidents during his time saying they had been nothing but constructive. In an environment where tertiary education is under pressure alignment is important, whilst respectfully disagreeing at times.
- 9 that VUWSA is keen to work closely in the recruitment process for the new Vice-Chancellor, and they are staying in regular contact with the two student representatives on Council.
- 10 that the recent launch of the Student Hardship report had resulted in a flood of donations to the VUWSA office demonstrating the aroha and generosity of Te Herenga Waka's communities.
- 11 that the Chancellor reminded everyone that while the two student Council representatives are now ex officio attendees at VUWSA exec meetings, when they are at the Council table, they are bound by Council members' duties to make decisions in the best interest of the University. The Student President confirmed his understanding of this.
- 12 that the Chancellor thanked the Student Presidents for their reports and wished them every success with their 2026 work programmes.

Resolved: that the Student President reports be noted.

Gray/McLean
Carried
260030

at 12.20 pm Mr Mairangi Campbell, and Mr Aidan Donoghue left the meeting

26.35

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Received: a Council Paper from the Secretary to Council, Ms Caroline Ward, dated 9 March 2026 regarding Forthcoming Events (document VUWC 26/24).

Noted:

1 that the Council paper was taken as read.

2 that the next meeting of Council will take place at 11 am on Monday, 4 May 2026 in the Council Chamber, Level 2, Hunter Building, Kelburn Campus, Wellington.

3 that Council meetings during the remainder of 2026 will be held at venues as follows:
 15 June, Ngā Mokopuna
 27 July, Alan McDiarmid Building, Room AM103
 14 September, Rutherford House, Level 12
 19 October, Council Chamber
 30 November, Rutherford House, Level 12

Resolved: that the Council paper on Forthcoming Events and the date and details of the next Council meeting on 4 May 2026 be noted.

Judge/Gray
Carried
260031

26.36

COMMITTEE AND ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

Received: the following Committee and Academic Board minutes:

- Academic Board, 24 February 2026
- Audit & Risk Committee, 9 March 2026

Noted:

- 1 that the Committee and Academic Board minutes were taken as read.
- 2 that a question was raised on CUAP and it was advised that consultation is underway on this at the moment so there is nothing that can be said other than that a new qualifications approval framework is a possibility.

Resolved: that the Committee and Academic Board minutes be noted.

Smol/Smith
Carried
260032

26.37

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Received: a recommendation that certain items be taken with the public excluded (document VUWC 26/25).

Resolved: 1 that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely agenda items 16-28.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter The public conduct of each item below would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under the sections of the OIA identified below.		Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
16. Minutes of previous meeting held 9 February 2026	Privacy, commercial prejudice, commercial activities.	s9(2)(a), s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
17. Health, Safety, and Wellbeing report	Privacy, commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(a), s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
18. Vice-Chancellor's report	Privacy, commercial prejudice, commercial	s9(2)(a), s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)

	activities, confidential basis.		
19. Financial report to 28 February 2026	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, Confidential basis	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
20. Research update	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
21. Rescinding qualification	Privacy	s9(2)(a),	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
22. Changing faculty names	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
23. Naming rights	Privacy, commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(a), s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
24. 320 The Terrace demolition update	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
25. Digital roadmap quarterly report	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
26. Committee Structure review – Te Aka Matua Committee	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
27. Committee and Academic Board minutes	Privacy, commercial prejudice,	s9(2)(a), s9(2)(b)(ii),	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)

	commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	
28. Council only time	Privacy, commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(a), s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA, s48(1)(a)(ii)

In relation to each of the above items, no public interest consideration has been identified favouring disclosure of the particular information in public proceedings of the meeting that would override the need to withhold the information.

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 or section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982, as the case may require, which would be prejudiced by holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are set out above.

- 2 that such members of the senior leadership as the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor request be permitted to remain at this meeting, after the public has been excluded, with the exception of agenda item 28, because of their knowledge of the relevant matters identified above which will be of assistance in relation to those matters.

Te Puni/Johnson
Carried
260033