



COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday, 25 September 2017
From 12.30 pm to 5.10 pm in the Council Chamber, Level 2, Hunter Building,
Kelburn Campus**

PRESENT: Sir Neville Jordan (Chancellor)
Ms Robyn Bargh
Professor Grant Guilford (Vice-Chancellor)
Ms Jacinta Gulasekharam
Ms Traci Houppa
Associate Professor Kate Hunter
Dr Carwyn Jones
Ms Alexandria Mark
Mr Neil Paviour-Smith (Pro-Chancellor)
Dr Farib Sos
Mr Roger Taylor
Dame Therese Walsh
Ms Caroline Ward (Secretary to Council)

APOLOGIES: Nil

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Stephen Costley, Director Property Services
Ms Annemarie de Castro, Director, Human Resources
Ms Katherine Edmond, Associate Director, Communications and Marketing
Mr Simon Johnson, General Counsel
Professor Wendy Lerner, Provost
Mr Mark Loveard, Chief Operating Officer
Mr Wayne Morgan, Chief Financial Officer
Mr Phil O'Connell, Director Safety Risk Assurance
Ms Madeleine Setchell, Director Communications, Marketing and Engagement
Ms Alsu Sworder, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Engagement
Ms Pam Thorburn, Director Student Academic Services
Mr Tim Manktelow, Salient Reporter

FEES ITEM: Mr Rory Lenihan-Ikin, VUWSA President
Ms Vaelyn Luo, International Student
Ms Priyanka Roy, Postgraduate Student

17.196

WELCOME / APOLOGIES

- Noted:**
- 1 that the Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially acknowledged students in attendance for Item 5.
 - 2 that there were no apologies.

17.197

DECLARATIONS AND DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Noted:

- 1 that the following disclosures of interest by a member of Council, by way of a general notice under the Education Act 1989 Section 175 and the Local Authorities (Members Interests) Act 1968 were made:
 - Mr Paviour-Smith might have one or two of his children studying at Victoria in 2018.
 - Dame Therese might have one child studying at Victoria in 2018.
- 2 that the Disclosures of Interests Register was available at all times on the Resource Centre of Board books.
- 3 that the Chancellor reminded Council members to advise the Secretary to Council of any disclosures between meetings. The summary disclosures list was circulated with every public board book and the interests register was on the Resource Centre of Board books.

17.198

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 AUGUST 2017

Received:

the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 28 August 2017.

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 28 August 2017 be approved.

Sos//Hunter
Carried
170143

17.199

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 AUGUST 2017

Noted:

that an oral report on the Local Government and Official Information Act will take place later in the meeting.

17.200

2018 DOMESTIC TUITION AND NEW FULL FEE PROGRAMME FEES

Received:

a Council Paper from the Chief Financial Officer dated 12 September 2017 regarding 2018 Domestic Tuition and New Full Fee Programme Fees (document VUWC 17/112).

Noted:

- 1 that the Finance Committee considered the 2018 Domestic Tuition fees paper in detail at its meeting held on Monday, 11 September 2017.
- 2 that Ms Jacinta Gulasekharam and Ms Alex Mark spoke to the paper and confirmed that they could not support the fee increase.
- 3 that the following oral submissions were received, full transcripts are attached as appendix 1.
 - Mr Rory Lenihan-Ikin (VUWSA president)
 - Ms Vaelyn Luo (International student)
 - Ms Priyanka Roy (Postgraduate student)
- 4 that the Chancellor thanked the students for their well-articulated points. Council acknowledged the common threads and key concerns in the areas of more transparent information on fee increases and earlier involvement

in the fee setting process. This would be factored in to the 2018 fee setting process.

Resolved: that on the recommendation of the Finance Committee:

- 1 that Council approve:
Domestic (Government funded) tuition fees be increased by 2% for 2018.
Taylor/Paviour-Smith
Carried
170144
Against: Gulasekharam/Mark
- 2 full Fee tuition fees for new programmes be set at the amounts detailed in Appendix 2 of document VUWC 17/112.
Walsh/Hunter
Carried
170145
- 3 the 2018 Student Services Levy be set at \$756 for full time study, an increase of approximately 3.5% as recommended by the Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy (ACCSL), and supported by the University.
Gulasekharam/Mark
Carried
170146
- 4 the amendments to the Fees Statue for the 2018 academic year, as highlighted in Appendix 6 of document VUWC 17/112.
Sos/Hunter
Carried
170147

17.201 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2017

Received: the Financial Report to 31 August 2017 (VUWC 17/113).

Noted:

- 1 that the report was taken as read.
- 2 that the August University Group result (excluding the Foundation) at \$7.8m was \$3.0m favourable to budget.

Resolved: that the Financial report to 31 August 2017 be noted and approved.
Paviour-Smith/Sos
Carried
170148

17.202 AMENDMENTS TO THE QUALIFICATIONS STATUTE

Received: a Council Paper from the Provost dated 14 September 2017 regarding Amendments to the Qualifications Statute (document VUWC 17/114).

Resolved:

- 1 that the proposed amendments to the Qualifications Statute, as marked up in the Appendix to document VUWC 17/114, be approved; and
- 2 that qualification certificates issued after 1 July 2018 be amended where necessary to refer to 'Regulations' in place of 'Statutes'.

Hunter/Bargh
Carried
170149

17.203 GRADUATES IN ABSENTIA – DEGREES TO BE GRANTED

Received: the list of degrees, diplomas and certificates granted on 25 September 2017 (document VUWC 17/115).

Resolved:

- 1 that Council grants the degrees, diplomas and certificates in this University on those persons listed in document VUWC 17/115 and that their names be entered on the Roll of Graduates on 25 September 2017.
- 2 that a motion of congratulations to the Graduates in Absentia was recorded.

Jones/Hunter
Carried
170150

17.204 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBER TO THE NOMINATIONS PANEL

Received: a Council Paper from the Chancellor dated 19 September 2017 recommending the appointment of a Member to the Nominations Panel (document VUWC 17/116).

Resolved: that on the recommendation of the Nominations Panel:

that Ms Brenda Pilott be appointed to the Nominations Panel as an External Member under clause 3.1(g) of the Nominations Panel Terms of Reference for a term of four years from 25 September 2017 to 31 December 2021.

Hunter/Paviour-Smith
Carried
170151

17.205 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE VICTORIA HONOURS COMMITTEE

Received: a Council Paper from the Chancellor dated 19 September 2017 regarding the appointment of a Member to the Victoria Honours Committee (document VUWC 17/117).

Resolved: that on the recommendation of the Victoria Honours Committee:

Council approve the appointment of Professor Miriam Meyerhoff to the Victoria Honours Committee under Clause 4.1 (f) of the Terms of Reference for a term from 25 September 2017 to 31 December 2021.

Walsh/Bargh
Carried
170152

17.206 REPORT FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Received: an oral report from the Chancellor.

- Noted:** that since the last meeting of Council on 28 August 2017 the Chancellor:
- Hosted the Governor General at “The Three Altos – A Viola Spectacular” at the Michael Fowler Centre
 - Chaired a Teleconference with the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of the Finance Committee
 - Attended the Finance Committee meeting
 - Met with the Vice-Chancellor
 - Attended the Book Launch – Wellington My Home – a Memoir of Brian Murray Fox
 - Met with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Foundation
 - Attended the Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting
 - Attended a Dinner with the RNZN Admiral – staff college success
 - a CAPE discussion with the Indonesian Ambassador

Resolved: that the Chancellor’s report be noted.

Taylor//Paviour-Smith
Carried
170153

17.207

REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor dated 22 August 2017 (document VUWC 17/118).

- Noted:**
- 1 that the report was taken as read.
 - 2 that in the interests of time there was no further comment.

Resolved: that the Vice-Chancellor’s report be noted.

Mark/Gulasekharam
Carried
170154

17.208

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Received: the Minutes from the following Committee meetings and the Academic Board report from the meeting held on 12 September 2017.

- *Finance Committee, 11 September 2017*
- *Academic Board Report, 12 September 2017 (VUWC 17/119)*
- *Academic Board Minutes, 12 September*

Resolved: that the Finance Committee Minutes and Academic Board reports be noted.

Gulasekharam/Sos
Carried
1700155

17.209

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND NEXT MEETING

Received: a Council Paper from the Secretary to Council dated 19 September 2017 listing Forthcoming Events (document VUWC 17/120).

Noted: that the next meeting of Council will take place on Wednesday, 25 October 2017 starting at 12.30 pm. The meeting will be preceded with a blessing of Te Toki A Rata and lunch at the new building.

Resolved: that the Council Paper on Forthcoming Events and the date and details for the next Council meeting on Wednesday, 25 October 2017 be noted.

Gulasekharam/Sos
Carried
170156

17.210

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Received: a recommendation that certain items be taken with the public excluded (document VUWC 17/121).

Resolved: that the public be excluded from the meeting for the discussion of items 14-28 for the reasons and duration outlined in the recommendation, with the exception of such members of the management team as the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor may request to remain for the public excluded part of the agenda as they have knowledge relevant to particular issues to be discussed.

Walsh/Houpapa
Carried
170157

Appendix: Fees item submissions

Student Council Members

Jacinta Gulasekharam

Every year fees go up because they can. But that does not mean they should. I am no longer a student but I see the effect of student fees every time I open my paycheck.

I believe in informed consumers. We know the price of goods and services from the Consumer Price Index. We know the price of milk from Fonterra announcements to their key stakeholders. Why are students any different? This university is founded upon the principle of democracy and that includes the partnership with its students. Until every student receives an email explaining how much fees are going up by and why the price is increasing I cannot vote for fee increases. We need to be transparent with our student stakeholders and inform them of their price changes so they can make informed choices about their higher education.

Alex Mark

Tēnā koutou katoa,
Ko Port Hills te maunga,
Ko Avon te awa,
Ko Ngati Pākehā tōku iwi,
No Ōtautahi ahau,
Ko Alexandria Lily Mark tōku ingoa.

Thank you for giving me the chance to speak to you all today.

When I sat down to think about what I wanted to say about student fees, we were staring down the barrel of a general election that seemed to promise real impact on the lives of tertiary students in Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, I almost felt like I needed to write two speeches - just to cover my bases. But then I realised that, no matter the outcome, what I felt was the same.

We are living in a time in this country of great uncertainty for young people. Where there once was opportunity - guaranteed jobs, stable income, housing and family - there are now hurdles, obstacles and question marks.

One of these hurdles is the financial barriers to study. This hurdle did not always exist to the shape or degree it does now. It was created and exacerbated by generations before us who happily climbed a ladder, only to turn around and pull it up behind them. In a society that now insists upon tertiary training (whether at a university, trade school, apprenticeship, or wananga) for even some of its most basic jobs, it is becoming increasingly harder to justify the cost of education as a personal choice. This is a bitter pill to swallow.

When I finish my time at Victoria this year, I will have completed my ninth year as a student in a tertiary institution. Throughout this time - almost a third of my life - I have seen the cost of my education grow and compound. While I am tremendously grateful for the opportunities my education has and will continue to grant me, I am perpetually aware of the house-deposit sized millstone I and my fellow students now carry around our necks.

We know that students face financial obstacles. We know that students pay exorbitant rents to live in damp, cold flats. We know that students rely on university food banks. We know that students cannot afford travel costs to get to classes. We know that the average student owes \$21 000, with total student debt now over \$15 billion dollars. We know that students from disadvantaged communities feel these effects the strongest.

So what sugar can we use to help this medicine go down? Practically speaking, we understand that costs are rising. We are, after all, an educated group. We do not begrudge fee increases. We begrudge fee increases when we cannot see what, where, or why that extra money is being applied. We begrudge being asked to dig even

further into our future pockets with no explanation or justification. We begrudge being left out of the conversation.

As fees increase, so do students expectations. In this year's VUWSA fees survey, one quarter of students reported wanting improvements to teaching facilities, with one in five wanting more contact time with lecturers and tutors. 85% of students feel that digital resources, such as recorded lectures, should be made available, with half of students feeling dissatisfied with the level of digital resources they currently have access to. Less than 6% of students feel that academic quality has increased with fee increases. Several expressed cynicism with the fee increase process - wanting improvement, but doubting they would see any extra for their money.

If this institution wants students to embrace - or at least understand - the need for continual fee increases, it must offer us a reason to do so. It must tell students what their money is being spent on, and why. It must be transparent. And right now, it isn't. It feels like a superficial hearing with a token protest vote - and then our fees increase the maximum they are legally allowed to anyway.

Until this process embraces reform and feels like a genuine engagement with students as partners and stakeholders, I cannot support it.

Ngā mihi nui, thank you.

Student Speakers

Rory Lenihan-Ikin, VUWSA President

Chancellor, Council members, Kia ora koutou katoa. Ko Rory tōku ingoa. Thank you for inviting us here to speak today.

Today is one of the few days it is probably possible to assume that the feelings which are so often top of mind for students - anxiety about mounting personal debt, worrying about being able to afford the weeks rent, and the day to day stress of the assessment carousel are well and truly shelved while the country waits for a certain Mr. Peters in Northland to make his next move.

However, the absence of student protest from this fees setting meeting is not an anomaly. Over the last few years, a meeting that was once an annual opportunity to give passionate voice to student opinion about fee rises, has become something of a non-occasion.

But I can tell you that this is not because students are suddenly strapped with cash. Or because they disaffected or disinterested by fee rises.

Rather the opposite is the case. With student debt having reached \$15 billion dollars last year, and with most graduates leaving Uni carrying debt the size of a deposit on a house, this pressure is being felt more than ever.

However, what is also felt, is a sense of powerlessness. A sense that no matter what, the system is setup in a way that requires maximum annual increases, and no degree of student voice within the institution could change this. In my opinion, this should be sadder and more disheartening than any lively disagreement between Council and Students ever could be.

So what can we make of this situation? Since the introduction of user pays, students understandably see their education as a product they are purchasing. When fees rise, there is an expectation that the quality of the education rises too.

It is not the fault of students that SACS funding has decreased in real terms, but when this is being offset by student fees, students have a case that it should be clearly demonstrated how the quality of their education is improving in exchange for the increased cost.

The idea has been floated before of replicating the Student Services Levy setting model for fees. As you know, in this model, students and staff meet to discuss the needs of students in order to come up with recommendations for a levy increase along with a direction of where the money should be spent.

Some variation of this model for fees, which would give direct opportunity for students to feed in where they think their additional money should be prioritised, would at least help to instil confidence in students that if they are being asked to pay more, this money is going where they need it the most.

For example, in a recent survey we conducted, we asked whether given the fees students pay, they would expect to have access to digital resources such as recorded lectures in all classes. 79% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, demonstrating that there are particular areas such as this one where students feel that their money to go.

As far as I have observed there is pretty widespread agreement that the funding model for tertiary is not working. But I think we could be doing better within the institution to give students confidence that the University values their opinions when it comes to deciding where their money is being spent, and that this spend is contributing to improving the quality of education they are receiving.

Priyanka Roy, PGSA Presenter

You can't put a price on a good education! Actually, you can, and it turns out that the price is around \$8,000 NZD per year if you are a domestic student, or \$32,000 NZD a year for international students and not to forget additional student services levy. Unsurprisingly, many students are upset at the hike in student fees. It is easy to see that the Masters programme is a good source of revenue for the university but the hike significantly affects the students, both domestic and international.

The PGSA receives a lot of communications from researchers who have been impacted by the increased financial burden. There is less support from the government in terms of funding like student allowances, which adds to their financial stress. Unlike undergrads and PhD students, Masters students do not have access to StudyLink services. Therefore, balancing a one's studies and working to manage the finances can take its toll. Many masters students are part time, also working, have children, are returning to study – and many of these students that the PGSA deals with are ineligible to apply to even student loan funding from the government. This means that fees are a great difficulty for them as it stands, and that any increase will certainly act to further deter potential students already struggling to cope financially.

There can be no denial that many students who face undue stress opt out of courses or do not opt for further studies. According to the New Zealand Union of Student Associations (NZUSA)'s latest *Income and Expenditure Report 2017*¹, "Two in three students (67%) said that their student loan debt would have a significant impact on whether they would undertake further study." Mental health of students is also a major concern as 45% of students at Victoria University of Wellington have reported poor emotional wellbeing².

The reasons stated by the University for the increase in student fees, i.e. to maintain many existing services and manage operating costs are comprehensible. But to increase fees to the maximum extent allowed every year is detrimental to a lot of students who may want higher education, but without the resources they opt not to. In a recent survey that asked students about the effects of fee hike at Victoria University of Wellington, 24% of students asked for improved facilities like lecture theatres. In the same survey, when asked if increased fees improved academic quality at the university, 31% disagreed and 19% strongly disagreed with the statement that the fees hike had made any tangible improvement on the quality of their studies. For Victoria University of Wellington to remain competitive, it is necessary for its leaders to add value where it matters the most – academic resources like digital databases, recorded lectures and increased contact time with lecturers/tutors.

¹ NZUSA, *Income and Expenditure Report 2017*, 6 Apr 2017, https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/students/pages/194/attachments/original/1491392091/Income_Expenditure_Report_2017_for_online_publish.pdf?1491392091. Accessed on September 23, 2017.

² Hoffman, Gerard. "A Mental Health Crisis Among NZ University Student?", *Salient*, 10 Apr 2017, <http://salient.org.nz/2017/04/a-mental-health-crisis-among-nz-university-students/> Accessed on September 23, 2017.

While fees are necessary in the tertiary education environment we operate in, encouraging stability and avoiding fee increases to the greatest extent possible would provide the greatest benefit to postgraduate students.

In the eyes of employers across the world, a degree from a world ranked university like Victoria is an advantage, and it's an advantage many students like me would like to say they have. However, as universities keep raising their student fees, more graduates will find themselves discouraged at the prospect of high debts. The cost of higher education is not without its consequences on our culture. At what point does the inordinate costs obscure the benefits of a degree and become too much of a burden? Well, as the next batch of students graduate later this year with an average debt of \$21,000³ NZD, the onus is on the universities to ensure that these students have done adequately well to make this investment worthwhile. Thank you!

³ Dougan, Patrice. "Student loan debt 'balloons' by 37 per cent, with average student owing \$21,000", 24 Jan 2017, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/personalfinance/news/article.cfm?c_id=12&objectid=11787574. Accessed on September 23, 2017.