



COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday, 1 December 2025
in the Council Chamber, Level 2, Hunter Building, Kelburn Campus, Wellington
from 11.00 am to 3.45 pm

- PRESENT:** Mr Alan Judge (Chancellor) (Chair)
Professor Richard Arnold
Mr William Bell-Purchas *until 2.50 pm*
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:** Mr William Bell-Purchas (for early departure)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr Liban Ali, VUWSA President *via Zoom*
Ms Jackie Anderson, General Counsel
Dr Logan Bannister, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Students
Ms Rachel Bruce, Chief Financial Officer
Mr Ivan Burton, Project Delivery Manager
Mr Aidan Donoghue, VUWSA President elect *via Zoom*
Dr Emma Dunlop-Bennett, Assistant Vice-Chancellor, Pasifika
Ms Sarah Forster, Content Manager
Professor Margaret Hyland, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research
Professor Bryony James, Provost
Professor Robyn Longhurst, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic
Ms Kirsty McClure, Director, Student Experience and Wellbeing, Acting Director Titoko
Ms Megan McPherson, Acting Director Communications & Marketing
Mr Reece Moors, Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Ms Marianna Nicolou, Associate Director, Financial Operations
Mrs Rachel Scott, Director, Governance, Risk, and Assurance
Mr David Stevenson, Director, Property Services
Ms Kate Tibbitts, Chief People Officer
Ms Tina Wakefield, Chief Operating Officer

25.187

WELCOME / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / APOLOGIES

- Noted:**
- 1 that Ms Asifa Hanif gave the Karakia.
 - 2 that the Chancellor acknowledged all present and especially welcomed Ms Megan Evans, and Ms Fei Johnson, attending their first formal meeting of

Council following their appointment by the Minister to a four-year term which commenced on 1 November 2025.

- 3 that the Chancellor acknowledged and thanked Professor Margaret Hyland, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research as she attended her final meeting of the University Council prior to leaving Te Herenga Waka at the end of the year.
- 4 that an apology for early departure from the meeting was received from Mr William Bell-Purchas.

Resolved: that the apology from Mr William Bell-Purchas for early departure from the meeting be sustained.

Judge/Smith
Carried
250174

25.188 DECLARATIONS AND DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Received: declarations and disclosure of interests by members of Council.

- Noted:**
- 1 that the disclosure of interests listing had been updated to add new Ministerial appointees, Ms Mei Fern Johnson, and Ms Megan Evans.
 - 2 that Council members were reminded to advise the Secretary to Council of any changes to their disclosure of interests listing between meetings.
 - 3 that for item-specific disclosures, the Chancellor asked that Council members alert him at the time.

at 11.05 am the Vice-Chancellor assumed the Chair

25.189 ELECTION OF CHANCELLOR AND PRO-CHANCELLOR

Received: a Council paper from the Secretary to Council, Ms Caroline Ward dated 20 November 2025 regarding the election of the Chancellor (1.1.26-31.12.26) and the Pro-Chancellor (1.12.25-31.12.26) (document VUWC 25/132).

- Noted:**
- 1 that one nomination was received for each position by the closing date and time of 5 pm on 19 November 2025 - Mr Alan Judge for a second term as Chancellor from 1 January 2026; and Ms Pania Gray for Pro-Chancellor, with a term commencing from 1 December 2025.
 - 2 that the earlier commencement of the Pro-Chancellor term was due to the former Pro-Chancellor, Hon Maryan Street, completing her appointment to Council on 31 October 2025.
 - 3 that the Vice-Chancellor extended his appreciation on behalf of all Council members to Mr Judge and Ms Gray as they commit to Council leadership roles. He noted that Ms Pania Gray is the second Māori wahine to be elected Pro-Chancellor of the University Council.
 - 4 that in congratulating Ms Gray and Mr Judge on their election and re-election, Professor Smith closed with a Whakataukī – *Mā mua ka kite a muri, mā muri ka ora a mua – Those who lead give sight to those who follow, those who follow give life to those who lead.*

Resolved: 1 that Mr Alan Judge be declared duly re-elected to the office of Chancellor for the period from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026;

Te Puni/McLean
Carried
250175

- 2 that Ms Pania Gray be declared duly elected to the office of Pro-Chancellor for the period from 1 December 2025 to 31 December 2026.

Te Puni/McLean
Carried
250176

at 11.10 am the Vice-Chancellor returned the Chair to the Chancellor

25.190 COUNCIL MINUTES, MEETING HELD 20 OCTOBER 2025

Received: the public Minutes of the meeting of Council held 20 October 2025.

Resolved: that the public Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20 October 2025 be approved.

Te Puni/Smol
Carried
250177

25.191 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 the 20 October 2025 Finance Committee meeting
- chaired the 29 October 2025 Council meeting
- hosted a farewell for former Pro-Chancellor and member of Council, Hon Maryan Street
- met with the Director of Taranaki Whānui
- met with the CEO of Laidlaw College
- discussed the Pro-Chancellor role with Council member, Ms Pania Gray
- co-hosted the Legacy Club with the Vice-Chancellor
- attended the Chancellors' Workshop
- attended the City Gallery Curator lecture
- met with the University's Chief People Officer, Ms Kate Tibbitts
- attended the 17 November Audit & Risk Committee meeting
- met with Council member Professor Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich regarding the Council annual performance review
- had an introductory meeting with new Ministerial appointees, Ms Megan Evans; and Ms Mei Fern Johnson
- met with the Provost, Professor Bryony James
- met with Professor Martien Lubberink
- attended the Finance Committee Workshop regarding 320 The Terrace
- attended the Te Herenga Waka VUW 2025 Leadership programmes awards
- met regularly with the Vice-Chancellor
- met regularly with the Secretary to Council.

- 2 that the Chancellor commented on two of the above items. First, the City Gallery Curator lecture provided an opportunity to understand the incredible opportunities and powerful connections that will arise from the Civic precinct development; and secondly the Te Herenga Waka Leadership Programmes awards had demonstrated the astonishing range and capability of our students in leadership, and voluntary initiatives. The opening speech from Erin Roxburgh was inspirational and the Chancellor was reminded as to why we do what we do for the University community.

Resolved: that the Chancellor’s oral report be noted.

Bell-Purchas/Johnson
Carried
250178

25.192 REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nic Smith, dated 24 November 2025 (document VUWC 25/133).

Noted:

- 1 that the report was taken as read.
- 2 that the Vice-Chancellor reflected on the current environment with the University in a place of changing regulatory frameworks, particularly the research system. He reiterated his earlier comments that Humanities and Social Sciences are a core part of Te Herenga Waka under his leadership and that the removal of humanities from the Marsden Fund is of significant concern.
- 3 that in 2026 Professor Smith will join the Minister’s University Strategy Group.
- 4 that the positive sentiment around belonging and diversity, and the nearly double-digit improvement in the overall satisfaction measure in the students’ *Have Your Say survey* results were commended by Council.
- 5 that maintaining vigilance on financial sustainability continues especially as the University heads into a challenging set of financial circumstances in 2026.
- 6 that despite the ongoing financial challenges, delivery of several significant projects is set to make 2026 more effective and this will ensure a high-quality experience to students.
- 7 that management is involved in active bargaining with the Union, and it is hoped to resolve negotiations soon to provide certainty to staff.
- 8 that the leadership of this year’s VUWSA President, Mr Liban Ali, and the Ngāi Tauira Co-Presidents, Ms Kaea Hudson and Ms Aria Ngarimu was commended.
- 9 that success in the Marsden funding round was applauded.
- 10 that Council was updated on the Vice-Chancellor’s recent round-the-world trip which included hosting alumni events in New York and London. The depth, breadth, and commitment of the University’s international alumni communities is strong, and allowed positive philanthropic conversations to take place. Professor Smith returned via Beijing, for the opening of the China Annual Conference and Expo for International Education (CACIE), where New Zealand was the country of honour. This gave cause to consider international student recruitment and how it makes sense for New Zealand Universities to collaborate to develop a larger and more diverse market overall, rather than compete with each other.
- 11 that work is underway on Human Capital Management (HCM) and Finance systems with Human Resources and Finance teams working closely together.
- 12 that there is a lot of attention on cybersecurity and the Audit & Risk Committee received a comprehensive briefing at its November meeting.
- 13 that there was discussion on Universities’ overall social license in New Zealand which was on the agenda at a recent Vice-Chancellors’ meeting. The Vice-Chancellors agreed to develop 3-6 initiatives to take back to the Universities NZ table focussed on how the tertiary sector can increase awareness and engagement. This topic will also be discussed at the Council’s first Workshop in the New Year.

Resolved: that the report from the Vice-Chancellor be noted.
Bönisch-Brednich/Arnold
Carried
250179

25.193 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31 OCTOBER 2025

Received: the Financial report to 30 October 2025 from the Chief Financial Officer, Ms Rachel Bruce (document VUWC 25/134).

Noted:

- 1 that the report was taken as read.
- 2 that the University remains on track to meet FY25 budget with a small surplus of approximately \$5m.
- 3 that the \$18m projected surplus in the October report is normal and this will reduce substantially by the end of the year due to significant outlay as project costs materialise, and revenue from halls of residence reduces.
- 4 that the Chancellor thanked the Chief Financial Officer, and her team for their excellent work this year.

Resolved: that the Financial report to 31 October 2025 be noted.
Te Puni/Gray
Carried
250180

25.194 CONFERMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

Received: the list of degrees, diplomas and certificates granted on 1 December 2025 (document VUWC 25/135).

Resolved:

- 1 that Council grants the degrees, diplomas and certificates in this University on the persons listed in document VUWC 25/135, and that their names be entered on the Roll of Graduates on 1 December 2025.
- 2 that a motion of congratulations to the Graduates be recorded.

Hanif/Bell-Purchas
Carried
250181

Noted: *Action:*

- 1 that there was discussion on the naming convention previously approved by Council in 2019 to have 'Wellington' in Faculty names.
- 2 that it was agreed to review this in 2026 to test if the time is right to remove Wellington from Faculty names, noting that this would require a Council decision.

25.195 APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBER FOLLOWING THE STAFF ELECTION

Received: a Council paper dated 10 November from the Chancellor, Mr Alan Judge, regarding the appointment of a Council member following the staff election. (document VUWC 25/136).

Noted:

- 1 that the Council paper was taken as read.
- 2 that Professor Richard Arnold had won the recent staff election with a strong mandate to continue on Council for a further four-year term. He was

thanked and applauded by Council members as his appointment was confirmed.

Resolved: that in accordance with clause 5.1(d) of the Council Membership Statute, Professor Richard Arnold be appointed to Council for a further four-year term from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2029.

McLean/Smol
Carried
250182

25.196 2026 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Received: a Council paper dated 24 November 2025 from the Chancellor, Mr Alan Judge, regarding the approach to 2026 Committee appointments (document VUWC 25/137).

Noted:

- 1 that the Council paper was taken as read.
- 2 that the Chancellor had decided to delay Committee appointments until after the January 2026 Workshop. At this meeting the overall structure of the Council’s Committees will be considered with a view to possibly merging Finance Committee with Audit & Risk. Further, due to the size of mandate this merged Committee would have the possibility of a new Health & Safety Committee which would also include security, both physical and cyber, in its Terms of Reference is open for discussion.
- 3 that the Te Aka Matua Committee will also be included in the overall review of the Council’s Committee requirements.
- 4 that Council members were asked to contemplate this, and their availability to serve on Committees, over the break prior to the discussion at the Workshop.
- 5 that in the meantime the current Chairs and Committee members will remain in place.

Resolved: that the update on the approach to 2026 Committee appointments be noted.

Judge/Gray
Carried
250183

that Mr Liban Ali, and Mr Aiden Donoghue joined the meeting via Zoom

25.197 STUDENT PRESIDENT REPORTS

Received:

- 1 a report from Mr Liban Ali, VUWSA President (document VUWC 25/138a).
- 2 a report from Ms Aria Ngarimu and Ms Kaea Hudson, Ngāi Tauria Co-Presidents (document VUWC 25/138b).

Noted: VUWSA

- 1 that the report was taken as read.
- 2 that outgoing VUWSA President Mr Liban Ali and incoming President for 2026, Mr Aidan Donoghue joined the meeting via Zoom. Mr Ali reinforced the Vice-Chancellor’s earlier comments on how effectively the University and VUWSA had worked together during 2025. He said it had been a rewarding year, and highlighted work on changes to put in place better postgraduate student representation. Mr Donoghue confirmed that he is

already working on initiatives for 2026, including reviewing the overall student representative model.

Ngāi Tauira

- 3 that the report was taken as read.
- 4 that the Ngāi Tauira Co-Presidents were unable to attend the meeting, however Council noted the excellent work Ms Aria Ngarimu and Ms Kaea Hudson had led throughout the year and particularly commended their efforts on ensuring Ngā Mokopuna was integrated as far as possible for students.
- 5 that a vote of thanks to all the 2025 Student Presidents was made in recognition of their leadership and contribution. The Chancellor wished them all the very best in their next endeavours.

- Resolved:**
- 1 **that the report from the VUWSA President be noted.**
 - 2 **that the report from the Ngāi Tauira Co-Presidents be noted.**
 - 3 **that a vote of thanks be recorded to the outgoing Student Presidents.**

McLean/Arnold
Carried
250184

Mr Liban Ali, and Mr Aidan Donoghue left the meeting

25.198 PASIFIKA REPORT

Received: a Council paper dated 18 November 2025 from the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika), Dr Emma Dunlop-Bennett, providing her first report since taking up the role (document VUWC 25/139).

- Noted:**
- 1 that Dr Emma Dunlop-Bennett was warmly welcomed to Council as she presented her first report.
 - 2 that the Council paper was taken as read.
 - 3 that Dr Dunlop-Bennett detailed her background, and explained how she sees the Pasifika strategy developing and her plan to have this ready in six months time.
 - 4 that she outlined a refreshed approach across three pillars: Pasifika identity, Pasifika student success, and Pasifika staff success.
 - 5 that work will take place to consolidate current Pasifika spaces into a malae, providing a one-stop space for Pasifika student and staff support.

Resolved: **that the Pasifika update report be noted.**

Johnson/Gray
Carried
250185

25.199 FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Received: a Council Paper from the Secretary to Council, Ms Caroline Ward, dated 17 November 2025 regarding Forthcoming Events (document VUWC 25/140).

- Noted:**
- 1 that the Council paper was taken as read.
 - 2 that Council members were encouraged to attend next week's December graduation events which include a Pasifika celebration, three Michael Fowler Ceremonies, two Ngā Mokopuna ceremonies, and a parade.

- 3 that venues for Council meetings in 2026 will include Level 12 Rutherford House, and Ngā Mokopuna. It is also hoped to have a meeting at Old Government Buildings if there is a suitable room. This possibility is being investigated by the Secretary to Council.
- 4 that the next meeting of Council will take place at 11 am on Monday, 9 February 2026 in the Council Chamber, Level 2, Hunter Building, Kelburn Campus, Wellington.

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

Gray/Bönisch-Brednich
Carried
250186

25.200 COMMITTEE AND ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

Received: the following Committee and Academic Board minutes:

- Finance Committee, 20 October 2025
- Academic Board, 4 November 2025
- Audit & Risk Committee, 17 November 2025

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

Smol/Evans
Carried
250187

25.201 RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Received: a recommendation that certain items be taken with the public excluded (document VUWC 25/141).

Resolved: 1 that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely agenda items 16-29).

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	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
16. Minutes of previous meeting held 20 October 2025	Privacy, commercial prejudice,	s9(2)(a), s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)

	commercial activities.		
17. 2026 Budget – for approval	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
18. 320 The Terrace Demolition business case	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
19. Rent Review for Old Government Buildings	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
20. Insurance Renewal Mandate	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, confidential basis.	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
21. Koha approval beyond VC delegation	Confidential basis.	s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
22. Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Q3 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)
23. Vice-Chancellor's 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)
24. Financial report to 31 October 2025	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, Confidential basis	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i), and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
25. Have Your Say survey report	Commercial prejudice,	s9(2)(b)(ii),	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)

	commercial activities, Confidential basis	s9(2)(i),and s9(2)(ba)(i)	
26. Foundation 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)
27. Digital roadmap – oral report	Commercial prejudice, commercial activities, Confidential basis	s9(2)(b)(ii), s9(2)(i),and s9(2)(ba)(i)	LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii)
28. Committee and Academic Board minutes	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)
29. 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 29, because of their knowledge of the relevant matters identified above which will be of assistance in relation to those matters.

Te Puni/Evans
Carried
250188