

UTS Council meeting reports

18 February 2026 meeting and 13 March 2026 meeting

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 18 February 2026 meeting and the Reserve Meeting held at the Strategy Retreat on 13 March 2026.

**The Report structure replicates the flow of the agenda.*

Welcome

The Chancellor welcomed The Honorable Linda Burney to her first meeting following her appointment to Council by the NSW Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education.

Strategic items of business

Organisational Sustainability Initiative (OSI)

The Vice-Chancellor briefed Council on the release of the Academic Change Implementation Plan. Council noted that work on the Operating Model Implementation Plan was advised that the University had received more than 1000 individual pieces of feedback to the change proposal which are being reviewed.

Council discussed staff morale and the impacts of ongoing change, including unintended consequences on its equity, diversity, and inclusion objectives. Members sought assurance that these impacts are being appropriately addressed.

2025 Annual Plan – End of Year Report

Council noted the significant achievements delivered despite the impacts of OSI and acknowledged the strong contribution of staff over the past year. Council further noted that the reported Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are largely lag indicators and that further work is required to consider how the KPI framework could better assist Council in assessing the performance of the University, including consideration of how information can be more effectively aggregated and disaggregated (for example, at faculty level).

Retreat Agenda

The Vice-Chancellor outlined the agenda for the Council Retreat to be held in March. Council discussed the opportunity to refocus on foundational questions regarding the University's purpose, strategic priorities, and assessment of the external environment, including consideration of top-down strategic interventions.

During discussion members emphasised the importance of Council setting clear priorities for Management, identifying opportunities to increase its visibility across the

University community, and reinforcing its oversight role. Council also discussed the importance of it being able to make objective and independent assessment of the University's performance.

Operations and performance

Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor provides a report to each Council meeting containing updates on key developments and events that have occurred since Council's last meeting. Updates include; the implementation progress of the UTS 2027 Strategy, State and Federal Government issues, updates regarding the university sector and internal matters, particularly achievements and awards.

The Vice-Chancellor advised Council that Emeritus Professor Greg Craven AO had been appointed to lead a national initiative to assess Australian universities response to antisemitism. It was also noted that The Honourable Virginia Bell AC had been appointed by the Australian Government to lead the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion.

Council was advised that the University is finalising the UTS Cultural Diversity and Anti-Racism Plan with the intention of making cultural diversity and anti-racism more visible, better supported and embedded in our systems. This Plan is timely given the release of the Australian Human Rights Commission report of its national study into antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and the experience of First Nations people in the university sector.

Workplace Gender Based Agency (WGEA) 2025 Reporting Requirements

The Acting Provost outlined the key aspects of the report, noting that Management is actively progressing actions to address the gender pay gap, while acknowledging that further work is required. Council discussed the gender equality indicators and noted opportunities to update and progress actions in the short term.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Early Implementation and Regulatory Update

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) provided Council with a progress report of the work undertaken since Council approved a number of gender-based violence governance instruments at its last meeting in November.

Council discussed matters relating to gender-based violence, including pay equity, institutional responses, the impact on the University community, and noted Council's oversight role in this area.

Reports from committees

Council has a number of sub committees, whose membership have particular expertise, to provide assistance and advice to Council on matters for Council consideration. These committees report back to Council. Not all of the Committee Reports are represented in this brief overview.

Report from Finance Committee

The Finance Committee advises Council on matters relating to the distribution and supervision of university finances, and acts on behalf of Council in areas of delegated authority.

The joint meeting of the Finance and Audit and Risk Committees discussed the University's 2025 Financial Performance Report.

Council was advised through the Report that the Committees noted that the 2025 net result was a deficit of \$63 million (2024: \$81 million deficit; Budget: \$95 million deficit). The improved position was driven by higher-than-budgeted international student revenue, due to additional visa approvals above the cap, along with favourable one-off benefits in other revenue. These outcomes were partly offset by increased leave provisions, an unfavourable opex/capex split in technology programs, and a fair-value loss associated with the new Power Purchase Agreement.

The joint Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Committee discussed the Moody's Higher Education sector review (January 2026), which examined long-term demographic, societal and policy trends influencing universities' credit profiles across Australia, the US, Canada, the UK, and Singapore.

The Committees noted Moody's assessment that domestic undergraduate enrolments are softening as cost-of-living pressures rise, more jobs no longer require bachelor's degrees, and the emerging impact of artificial intelligence reshapes labour-market demand. These factors are contributing to a gradual shift towards trade and vocational pathways and therefore impacting attractiveness of traditional undergraduate study.

The Committees further noted that international students remain critical to sector resilience. Australia and Singapore continue to benefit from more supportive immigration and policy settings, in contrast to tightening rules in the US, UK and Canada. Moody's observed that these structural advantages will continue to support Asia-Pacific universities, particularly those ranked in the global top 100.

Report from Governance Committee

The primary responsibility of the Governance Committee is to assist Council in regard to policy, general governance specified risk matters.

On the recommendation of the Governance Committee, Council approved revisions to the Remuneration Committee Charter to expand its remit. The revised Charter takes into account relevant recommendations contained in the Final Report and Principles of the Expert Panel on University Governance.

Council agreed with the Committee's recommendation that consistent with Council's internal governance framework, an external review of Council should proceed in 2026 and the review should commence in the first half of the year.

Council also agreed with the Committee's recommendation to establish a People and Culture sub-committee. A charter would be drafted for consideration at the April meeting of Council.

Items for approval

Council Committee Appointments

Council noted that Dr John Laker AO will retire at the April Council meeting and as a consequence an election process would shortly commence for the role of Deputy Chancellor. Council was advised that a new Council appointed member will be considered by the Nominations Committee.

Council also approved a number of amendments to membership and membership terms for some Council Committees.

Items for noting

Parliament Inquiries into University Governance

Council noted that in addition to the review undertaken by the Expert Panel on University Governance that was commissioned by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, there were two Parliamentary committees that conducted inquiries into University Governance.

The two committees were:

- the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee agreed to inquire into the quality of governance at Australian higher education providers; and
- the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues which is conducting an inquiry into the NSW university sector.

Both of the above Committees, in addition to receiving submissions to assist with their inquiries, also conducted hearings including participation from the Vice-Chancellor and members of Council.

Other reports noted by Council

- Interim Student Admission and Enrolment Report (2026)
- Health Safety and Wellbeing Standing Report
- Report from the Chancellor
- Use of the University Seal, Power of Attorney and Executive Action
- Annual Declarations of Interest

UTS Council Reserve Meeting 13 March 2026

The agenda for this meeting was focused on considering the Draft 2026 Annual Plan, the 2026 Budget and the Finance Plan.

Items for approval

UTS Draft Annual Plan

Council observed that delivery of the Plan in the coming year will be challenging given the scale of concurrent initiatives that include the Operating System Initiative (OSI), the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program, and ongoing capacity constraints across key functions.

Council emphasised the need for a sharper focus on a small number of critical priorities that will make the most significant contributions key objectives. These include the successful delivery of the ERP program, meeting key compliance and regulatory obligations (including Gender Based Violence initiatives), and ensuring the delivery of teaching, learning and research objectives remain critical areas of priority.

Council noted that the draft Annual Plan would be further refined and presented to Council for approval at its April meeting.

2026-2030 Finance Plan and UTS 2026 Budget

The Chief Operating Officer provided Council with a high level overview of the 2026–2030 Finance Plan and the 2026 Budget.

The Chair of the Finance Committee provided Council with a summary of the Committee's discussions in relation to the Finance Plan and Budget, within the context of significant external uncertainty, including domestic policy settings, visa settings and volatility in the international student market. The Committee examined key financial assumptions and risks, including revenue, student acquisition costs, OSI delivery, contingencies, capital prioritisation, liquidity, depreciation and asset management, and increasing teaching delivery costs.

Council approved the 2026 Budget and Finance Plan