



NSW Legislative Council – Portfolio Committee No 3 – Education
Inquiry into the future development of the NSW tertiary education sector
Hearing – 7 September 2020

University of Wollongong responses to Questions on Notice

Question: In terms of those campuses externally and internationally, are they campuses that are combined with any other institution or are they solely for University of Wollongong students?

Response: Students at the University of Wollongong Global Enterprises (UOWGE) campuses at Dubai, Hong Kong and Malaysia are solely University of Wollongong (UOW) students. Other locations eg PSB and SIM in Singapore, INTI in Malaysia, CCNU in China have UOW students taught on the campuses of the partner institution. Those partners may have teaching arrangements with other international institutions under a similar model to UOW.

Question: And in terms of your operations now with COVID, are you seeing more students transferring to these domestic institutions? If you have got, for instance, a student who may have been coming to or intending to come to the University of Wollongong out of Hong Kong or other parts of China, are they now transferring to that Hong Kong campus?

Response: The University has been working with the offshore campuses to provide an option for inbound international students to commence their degree in one of UOW's offshore campuses and then transfer to the Australian campus. In respect to Chinese students there is a 10% cap on the number of students who can come from mainland China and study in Hong Kong.

Question: Rates of permanent, fixed term and casual staff, including just raw numbers and also full-time equivalents

Total staff full time equivalent (FTE) in 2019 is 2,351. Actual headcount is 2,592 and, in addition to that, total FTE for casual staff, is 498.

Response: Total staff as at 30 June 2020:

	FTE	Head count
Continuing	1524.9	1645
Fixed Term	935.6	1106
Casual	388.6	2373

Question: As you would all know, there is a State provision in Victoria where these workforce makeup details for each of the universities are provided to the State Government on the assumption that it covered the full gamut of information—permanent, fixed term, casual and then both numbers and full-time equivalent—so you have the full picture. Would any of you have any objection or would you support, a requirement to provide that kind of information annually to the New South Wales Government/Parliament?

Response: UOW publishes workforce data annually and it is publicly available in the publication ‘UOW in Numbers’ and the UOW Annual Report, each of which are publicly available:

<https://documents.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@pmed/@smc/documents/doc/uow258797.pdf>

<https://www.uow.edu.au/about/annual-reports-and-financial-statements/>

Question: The precise figure of the Vice-Chancellor's current salary, can you provide that on notice? (current salary after the 20 per cent cut)

Response: The UOW Performance and Remuneration Committee is responsible for the processes relating to the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor, determining the Vice-Chancellor’s performance targets, and for monitoring the Vice-Chancellor’s performance. Additionally, the Performance and Remuneration Committee determines the remuneration of the Vice-Chancellor. The Committee is chaired by the Chancellor and its members include a Deputy Chancellor and two additional external Council members.

Figures relating to executive officer salaries, including the Vice-Chancellor, are contained in UOW’s Annual Report, notes to the financial statements, page 134 (<https://www.uow.edu.au/about/annual-reports-and-financial-statements/>). A 20% reduction can be applied to this figure to indicate salary reduction made to salaries of UOW Senior Executive, including the Vice-Chancellor, in response to challenges of COVID-19.



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1. *Universities are significant economic hubs, due to their physical presence. Have you done any modelling on job losses on campus - not academics, or professional staff, but in the retail, food and other outlets? I understand they often aren't run by the university, but they are almost solely reliant on them.*

Job losses in retail, food and other outlets on the University of Wollongong's (UOW) main campus are estimated to be up to 200-300 individuals. Job Keeper has limited these losses to some degree, however as Job Keeper is wound back job losses will increase.

2. *What efforts have you made to diversify the make-up of your university's international students in recent years?*

UOW has made significant effort to diversify international enrolments. No individual country exceeds 30% of total enrolments, with less than 65% made up of 3 source countries. The University also operates campuses offshore to provide diversification and generate onshore enrolments outside of the current largest cohorts.

UOW Council Key Performance Indicators for the period 2015-2020 set out the target of decreasing the percentage of gross international onshore fee income from the largest source market country, which at the time of setting the target was China. The reliance on the largest source market has decreased each year over that period, moving from 42% in 2015 to 26.5% in 2019.

UOW has worked to maintain a portfolio of core source markets to provide a reliable base of new student commencements, as well as increasing recruitment activity in other markets in order to decrease reliance on any single source market and achieve greater diversification. This approach aims to diversify the commencing student population across levels of study and course disciplines as well as providing additional risk management for any unforeseen downturns in the major source markets which may occur due to political, regulatory or socio-economic factors.

At UOW there has been a program of work to broaden market exposure beyond the traditional drawing pools of China and India. This has led to increased investment in Vietnam and Nepal, as well as targeted expansion to non-traditional markets, such as Canada for recruitment to the UOW Medicine program, Norway and Sweden to capitalise on growing interest in postgraduate programs in that region and the USA for its outbound study abroad market through partner institutions. Other UOW expansion markets, such as Sri Lanka, Thailand and Singapore, provide additional diversification through a variety of credit transfer agreement programs popular in those countries.

UOW has invested in local representatives based offshore who are able to enhance existing service provision in country to the University's agent and partner institution network. Having these representatives in-country offshore also allows UOW staff to allocate more resourcing to business development for new markets, by reducing offshore time for our Australia based staff. In recent years UOW has increased the proportion of budget allocated to international marketing activities, which includes digital marketing and investment in third party lead generation across multiple source markets, which we would not travel to for face to face recruitment purposes, but where there may be growing interest in study in Australia and specifically at UOW. This activity across a number of diverse source markets compliments the face to face physical more traditional recruitment activity.

UOW is working across the global network of campuses to ensure that options for students to start their studies in one location and complete in Australia are available. This approach ensures there are pathways for UOW to access a diverse set of prospective students who may not otherwise have the funds to consider studying in Australia.

3. *Have you piloted or introduced any innovative ways to support online learning either here or overseas as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? For example, learning hubs.*

All of our courses have been converted to online remote delivery, as well as our full range of student support services. We put in place multiple support mechanisms to assist students to access and succeed in online learning, including a laptop loan bank, access to software, online training, on-call technical assistance, and online study support.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic UOW implemented a number of initiatives aimed at supporting online learning. As part of UOW's remote delivery initiative, our Learning, Teaching & Curriculum Unit developed a comprehensive program 'Preparing to Teach Online' – a self-paced online program designed to support staff with the transition to online teaching supported by webinars, resource development and forums. Six key areas that align with the support needs of UOW staff and the delivery needs of the University for online teaching and learning were identified and for each of these areas an online module containing guides, videos, exemplars and resources were developed. The program covers all the essential elements to ensure a quality online learning experience for our students both here and offshore. Over 2,500 staff participated in the training webinars and the online program resources have been accessed over 150,000 times by our staff.

4. *WSU has recommended a conditional waiver of payroll tax for NSW universities. Would you support a waiver? What conditions would you support being attached to this waiver?*

UOW would support a waiver for 2020 and 2021. A waiver for this period would assist universities to deal with the lack of international students and reduce job losses until international travel and students return to normal. Conditions of receiving a waiver could be dependent upon factors such as Universities experiencing material reductions in international student enrolments, and or implementation of cost controls or reduction plans.

5. *Have you been invited or participated in any NSW government trade delegations in the past five years? Could you please provide a list of any delegations you have participated in?*

No participation.

Questions for all the Vice Chancellors

6. *What is the current amount in your reserve fund/general reserve fund?*

As at 31 December 2019 the value of the reserve was \$206M.

7. *What is the stated purpose of your reserve fund/general reserve fund? Where is this stated?*

The purpose of the reserve is stated in the University's investment policy. It is to provide an investment in perpetuity and to notionally cover superannuation and leave provisions by providing balance sheet stability and support to the Standard and Poor's AA credit rating.

8. *How much of the money in reserve has restrictions on how it can be spent?*

There are no restrictions.

9. *When was the last time you drew upon your reserve/general reserve? How much did you draw upon and for what purpose? When would you usually draw upon your reserves?*

It has not been drawn on.

10. *Is your general reserve more valuable than the total deficit you expect to achieve in the next five years due to COVID-19? How much more valuable?*

No. The expected budget deficit is in excess of \$280M.

11. *Do you plan to draw upon your reserve/general reserve in order to cover some or all of your total deficit over the next five years? If so, how much do you plan to draw upon? If not, why are you not planning to use your reserve/general reserve to cover some or all of your deficit?*

UOW does not intend to draw on reserves. The University intends on reducing operating and capital expenditure, and restructuring and reducing the scope of operations to meet the budget deficit.

12. *What measures do you plan to take to cover your losses in revenue due to COVID-19, and why have you chosen those measures rather than choosing to draw upon your reserves/general reserves?*

UOW intends on reducing operating and capital expenditure, and restructuring and reducing the scope of operations to meet the budget deficit.

The University has sought variations to Enterprise Agreements and has implemented an early retirement scheme to reduce staff expenses.

The University has consolidated investments to protect against capital loss. At the same time the University has liquidated some investments to improve liquidity and to meet short term commitments.

The University has borrowings and other balance sheet commitments. Maintaining the reserve provides capacity for the University should the financial situation continue to deteriorate beyond the short term.

13. *What proportion of job cuts at your institution are estimated to be a result of a drop in student enrolments?*

Without action to mitigate against loss of revenue job losses would be in excess of 450.

14. *How many highly paid executive staff will be made redundant in your institution?*

Two Executive staff positions have been reduced. One Executive Dean and one Pro-Vice Chancellor. Other positions will be considered as part of ongoing reviews.

15. *Will they be offered voluntary redundancies?*

Any staff exists are dealt with in accordance with employment contracts and agreements.

16. *How have your sources of corporate funding been affected by COVID?*

UOW has not sought additional borrowings at this stage. The University has reviewed existing lines of credit and borrowings for opportunities for rationalisation or refinancing.

17. *To what extent have your other sources of funding been affected - reduced or increased, and by how much?*

Fees and revenue associated with on-campus activities have been negatively impacted. Student Services and Amenities fees have been waived, parking, facility usage, property rentals, retail sale have all been impacted in excess of \$10M.

18. *What restrictions exist on funding – for what amounts, from what sources and what are those restrictions?*

Restrictions on funding exist mainly in relation to research grants (\$50-\$60M) and targeted government funding (for example Indigenous Support Program, Higher Education Participation Program).

19. *Please provide a breakdown of aggregate funding from all sources for the previous three years and forward estimates for the next three years including:*

- (a) *government funding,*
- (b) *corporate donations,*
- (c) *bequests,*
- (d) *commercial activities carried out by the University,*
- (e) *student fees - both domestic and overseas,*
- (f) *academic grants (provide sources), and*
- (g) *all others.*

\$'M	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Domestic C'Vealth	261	257	259	267	271	275	281
International Onshore	146	160	171	140	99	89	95
Investment Revenue	33	15	50	11	15	15	16
Consultancy and Contract	31	33	29	35	35	36	36
Grants	110	115	107	110	111	112	113
Other revenue	79	108	75	60	61	63	64
	660	687	691	623	593	591	605