



INQUIRY INTO NEW SOUTH WALES UNIVERSITY SECTOR

Hearing: Friday 7 November 2025

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Council Members – Panel 1

- (1) How have you gauged the impact of the OSI on the university for yourself? Who have you spoken to at UTS outside of the Council, the Chancellery and Management in order to understand the impact of the OSI and the veracity of the assumptions on which it is based such as the teaching data?

I did not. I trust the capability of the UTS leadership team and the veracity of the information supplied in support of their recommended approach ie to take the OSI out to consultation

- (a) What questions did you ask about the veracity of the claims of financial crisis and the 'one' way to approach it that were presented through the OSI?

I don't recall the questions I asked but I recall paying close attention to the discussion and to the papers. It was clear to me that the university needed to reduce our cost base and expenditure to address the range of external pressures the university was facing. I am not sure where the language of a "financial crisis" came from but I do not recall that it was referred to in that way at Council. Nor did I understand that the OSI was a "one way" approach. Rather, it was a proposal that would be sent out for consultation within the university. The process was for submissions on the Academic Change Proposal and the Operating Model Change

Proposal to be released by UTS leadership for consultation with responses to be submitted using the process outlined in those documents.

- (b) What alternatives were put to Council? Did you consider the alternative plan or were you offered a briefing on the alternative?

See 1 (a) above. The consultation is ongoing and a range of helpful suggestions have been made that are being incorporated.

Yes I have been briefed on the alternate plan by the finance committee in their report to Council.

- (c) Have the concerns of the professoriate relayed to you?– or did you request an independent audit?

Yes I am aware of some of the concerns.

I did not request an independent audit

- (2) Who have you consulted at UTS in order to prepare you answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions?

I have not consulted anyone but Anne O’Driscoll and I have shared our answers with each other

- (3) When and how often do you meet with academics at UTS to gauge their concerns and give them the opportunity to raise issues with you or just sense check the information that you are provided at council?

Academic and professional staff are members of Council as is the chair of academic board – the peak academic body of the university. I also regularly attend graduations with large numbers of academic staff. I always made myself available should any member of staff wish to wish to discuss matters of concern.

- (4) The OSI says UTS needs to reduce expenditure by approximately \$100 million next year and maintain this reduced level in future years to support generation of approximately \$360 million in cash reserves, why? a. How long have you been on council why didn’t you see this ‘financial crisis’ coming, what questions did you raise? How were you briefed

I spoke to this issue in our panel session and refer to you page 40 of the uncorrected record.

I have been on council for 5 years.

This issue was regularly discussed in the context of our financial forward plans. By the end of 2024 it was clear that the compounding effects of the external financial challenges the university was facing would require greater action. I don’t recall specific questions I

asked but I was well briefed through attending council meetings and reading the papers

- (5) In the Operating Model Change Proposal indicates that ‘The Operational Sustainability Initiative (OSI) is UTS’ pathway to achieving operational and financial sustainability while also enhancing our education and research offerings and reputation.’ Can you explain to me how such a significant cut to courses, academics and research and teaching support could possibly enhance the Universities education and research offerings?

All well-run organisations regularly reassess how they allocate their resources to best achieve their overarching objectives. In times of resource constraint, those decisions can encompass doing less of some things in order to focus on core activities where there is higher demand and that will provide most benefit over the long term.

- (6) What role did the UTS Council play in approving the contract to KPMG for advice on the restructure of the university, and its subsequent extension?
- (a) How has the information provided by KPMG, and other deliverables under the contract, been used by the Council in its decision making about the OSI?
- (b) If not used – was it value for money ?

The work by KPMG was not commissioned by Council and to the best of my knowledge it was not presented to Council. Nor would I have expected Council to have done so as I believed the work to be to be quite operational and therefore a matter for management.

- (7) UTS Professors have proposed an Alternative Proposal to the OSI. Have you received a briefing on this plan from the proposal authors? Have you received a briefing on the plan from anyone else on UTS Council?

I did not receive a briefing from the authors of the alternate proposal. The authors of the alternate proposal presented to Finance Committee of council and a report was provided from that committee and its members in the following council meeting.

- (a) I understand some members of the Council were invited to meet with the proposal authors, were you invited, if so why didn’t you attend?

I was not invited

- (b) The Alternative Proposal states that ‘UTS is *not* currently facing a genuine financial crisis and that this is *not* the time for a radical reorganisation or downsizing of the University’, what would you say to this?

As I have said I don’t believe we are facing a “financial crisis” however I do feel that we should take significant steps to reduce our cost base and ensure we have funds available

to support key priority areas going forward.

- (8) Have you ever received instruction verbally or by email asking council members to send through any correspondence you received about UTS external stakeholders – such as myself – to the VC's office for him to answer?

See my answer to supplementary question 3

- (9) Are you aware that Attempts by NSW TAFE between 2016 and 2020 to deliver rapid simultaneous operational and academic change (“OneTAFE”) have been extensively critiqued by the NSW Audit Office.? Are you aware that the person responsible for the One Tafe incident was employed at UTS as COO -Glenn Babbington?

No

No

- (10) How much has UTS spent on consultants in the 5 years up to and including 2024? Have you ever asked why this is so high? Why/Why not?

No, as I do not consider the amount of spend to be material in the context of overall University expenditure

- (11) In the UTS submission to the NSW Higher Education Strategy, it is stated that “Partnership and collaboration are core values at UTS.” Would you say your current leadership style supports these values?

Yes

- (12) Has the OSI process genuinely reflected UTS's stated commitment to partnership and collaboration?

Yes, I believe so. The OSI process has a significant focus on consultation

- (13) The UTS submission to this inquiry claimed that “shifting public expectations” and “internal cultural shifts” are challenges facing higher education. What exactly did you mean by that?

That question is best addressed to the Vice Chancellor

- (14) You claimed that governing bodies at UTS possess deep expertise and commitment. Did you hear the earlier evidence from the NTEU and expert panel about the lack of appropriate governance? On what basis do you make your claim?

I didn't make that claim although I would concur

- (15) What awareness do you have of the Campus Masterplan 2040/what does it entail?

I am aware of the overall Campus Masterplan but am not across the detail

- (16) Given the ongoing governance crisis at UTS members of your community have felt compelled to set up the UTS Governance Project similar to events at ANU. The project survey found over 95% of staff, student and alumni respondents believe UTS governance is not fit for purpose and needs reform. Are you concerned or embarrassed about this?

I am aware there was a survey. I look forward to seeing the details and testing the validity of its findings before I form my response.

- (17) It's clear from UTS 2024 annual report that the university has engaged consultants to work on Masterplan activities. What is your understanding of the implementation timeline/commencement of works on the Masterplan?

- (a) Are you aware of the estimated costs for the developments in the Masterplan? This is obviously a significant investment, what is your understanding of how this will be funded? Is there an expectation the university will need to borrow money to fund developments under the Masterplan, if so what's the timeline?

The Masterplan is be overseen by the infrastructure committee and its funding will form part of the financial forward plan.