



# minutes

## Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Date:            | 2024-09-12      |
| Scheduled Start: | 1300h           |
| Scheduled End:   | 1500h           |
| Location:        | Microsoft Teams |

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| MEETING OPENED: | 1300h |
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### SECTION 1 – NGĀ KUPU ARATAKI | PRELIMINARIES

#### Item 1.1 Karakia Tīmatanga | Opening Prayer

#### Item 1.2 Mihi Whakatau | Welcome from the Chair

The Chair warmly welcomed members of the committee to the meeting including Mel Wong from MIT's School of Social Work, representing the MIT Research Committee.

### SECTION 2 – STANDING ITEMS

#### Item 2.1 Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status

##### **Members Present**

1. Hadley Brown (Chair)
2. Arun Deo
3. Tanya White
4. Leon Tan
5. Christine Fusio
6. Lian Wu
7. Kambiz Bornha
8. Daisy Bentley-Gray (from 1.10pm)

Total members represented: 8 members

##### **Apologies**

1. Kristie Cameron
2. Xinxin Wang
3. Helen Gremillion

4. Hamid Sharifzadeh
5. Nora Md Amin

Total apologies: 5 members

#### Absent

1. Khaled Ibrahim

Total absent: 1 member

#### MOTION

**That the committee accepts the apologies for today's meeting.**

**Moved: Arun Deo**

**Seconded: Lian Wu**

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### Quorate Status

A minimum of seven representatives is required; the meeting was quorate.

#### Hunga Mahi | Staff in Attendance

1. Brenda Massey, Acting Secretary
2. Mel Wong, MIT Committee Representative

#### Item 2.2 Pitopito Kōrero o Ngā Hui | Minutes of Previous Meeting

#### MOTION

**That the committee approves the minutes of the 2024-08-08 meeting as a true and accurate record.**

**Moved: Leon Tan**

**Seconded: Lian Wu**

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### Item 2.3 Mahia Atu | Matters Arising

| Agenda Item(s)         | Action   | Responsible | Outcome  |
|------------------------|--|-------------|--|
| 2.3 (July URC meeting) | Provide an update to the committee on a draft submission to IT and Academic Committee on the difficulties Unitec's IT policies and procedures are posing to teaching and research endeavours.  | Leon Tan    | A memo has been submitted to TKM for consideration at their Sept meeting.                |
| 4.1 (July URC meeting) | Propose a new exclusion criteria for the RPTL to Te Komiti Mātauranga: that staff returning from extended medical leave be excluded from the RPTL for a period of one year following the sickness; extended leave being defined as a period of medical leave lasting three months or more.<br><br>Ensure the RPTL guidelines are explicit that programmes have the option to exclude staff returning from maternity or extended medical leave, as some staff may still | Arun Deo    | Complete. The request for RPTL criteria change has been approved by TKM. Marcus Williams |

|     |  |                                 |   |
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|     | produce outputs during these types of leave, and it would therefore be beneficial to include them in the RPTL.   |                                 | wishes to thank committee members for their mahi. Arun has implemented the wording change into the terms of reference, and Marcus thanks him also for his work on this. |
| 2.3 | Present a memo to the committee on proposed revisions to the Actions under Priority One of the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan.   | Hadley Brown                    | Complete – on agenda  |
| 3.1 | Distribute the 2023 Research Report once it has been approved by TKM as follows: Senior Leadership Team, Heads of School, Research Leaders, Academic Programme Managers. Recipients should be encouraged to distribute it as they see fit, with a note that it is a document produced predominantly for internal purposes. | Arun Deo                        | Complete  |
| 4.1 | Summarise the committee's feedback on the UAG's consultation and supply it to Martin Carroll and Jamie Smiler.   | Brenda Massey / Marcus Williams | Complete  |

### SECTION 3 – MEA HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

#### **Section 3.1                      Nomination for Appointment of an Honorary Research Fellow – Joanne Aley, Environmental & Animal Sciences**

The nomination for the appointment of an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences for a term of three years was approved.

#### **MOTION**

**That the committee approves the appointment of Joanne Aley as an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences.**

**Moved: Arun Deo**  
**Seconded: Leon Tan**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Action:** Brenda Massey to advise the nominator, A/P Laura Harvey, of this outcome.

#### **Section 3.2                      Nomination for Appointment of an Honorary Research Fellow – Dr Pouroto Ngaropo, Creative Industries**

Tanya White advised that this nomination is fully supported by the Maia marae whānau, including Matua Hare Paniora.

The nomination for the appointment of an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Creative Industries was approved for a term of three years.

#### **MOTION**

**That the committee approves the appointment of Dr Pouroto Ngaropo as an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Creative Industries.**

**Moved: Leon Tan**

**Seconded: Tanya White**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Action:** Brenda Massey to advise the nominator, A/P Leon Tan, of this outcome.

### **SECTION 4 - WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

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#### **Section 4.1 URC Representation on the MIT Research Committee**

The committee discussed whether two URC committee members should join meetings of the MIT Research Committee as a way to socialise toward speculative integration. Two MIT Research Committee members have already been invited to attend URC meetings – today Mel Wong was in attendance.

A summary of the committee's discussion was as follows:

- This represents a good opportunity for knowledge exchange and to get an understanding of each other's research governance.
- There are issues of capacity within Unitec roles at the moment, however if the time commitment is only one hour per month, and if the load is spread between members, attendance should be achievable.
- With the VET reforms, we don't know where we're going to be, however a continuation of networking between the two organisations irrespective of what happens, could be valuable. Reciprocation like this can only be good for both institutions.
- Mel Wong has planned to join the next few URC meetings, after which the MIT Research Committee will consider who else might like to attend and who else might be available.

The committee was supportive of the initiative. Helen Gremillion (not in attendance today) has indicated availability to attend the final two MIT Research Committee meetings of the year. Tanya White and Daisy Bentley-Gray also indicated their interest in attending MIT meetings. Leon Tan is unavailable this year but may be in a position to attend meetings next year if the initiative continues.

**Action:** Brenda Massey to forward details of the committee's discussion to Marcus Williams to progress the initiative.

#### **Section 4.2 Feedback from the VET Reform Unitec Kaimahi Workshop**

The committee received an overview from the Chair of discussions and feedback from the VET Reform Unitec Kaimahi Workshop facilitated by Prof Martin Carroll on 26 August.

The VET consultation document outlines three new directions which were discussed at the workshop and are summarised in Appendix 1 of the consultation document:

1. A redesigned ITP network that retains access to ITP provision in all regions, through a combination of stand-alone and federated ITPs.
2. Options for an industry-led system for standards-setting and industry training.
3. Changes to vocational education funding from 2026 (in addition to those agreed for 2025) to better support the reformed system.

#### Direction One

Tertiary Education and Skills Minister Penny Simmonds' favoured option is that the non-financially viable ITPs would form a federation which would see core services such as programme development and online delivery provided by the Open Polytech. The Minister indicated in an [RNZ interview last week](#) that there are 1 or 2 ITPs that are financially viable at this point in time and 3-4 which are on the road to financial viability. These 5 or 6 ITPs would remain outside the federation. It was noted at the workshop that Unitec and MIT are both on the path to financial solvency.

Workshop attendees stressed the importance of Unitec remaining outside of the federation and strongly advocated for a merger between MIT and Unitec, the rationale being:

- Unitec and MIT have a lot of complementary programmes.
- Financially we're more viable as a merged organisation covering Tāmaki Makaurau.
- We have programmes that are distinct from each other's, and this would give us further reach and coverage of the student population in Tāmaki Makaurau.

#### Direction Two

Proposal 2B is the favoured option from Unitec's point of view as this would ensure that Unitec would have access to, and/or be able to continue or coordinate some elements of work-based learning, e.g., the coordination and execution of apprenticeship training.

#### Direction Three

There was strong endorsement for a return to the pre-2020 funding model which was more advantageous to ITPs.

The Chair also provided an overview on discussions and feedback from Tūāpapa Rangahau. The team favour Unitec being independent of the federation of ITPs, and the integration of Unitec and MIT. With regards to Direction Two, the team also supported Proposal 2B. The team did not offer an opinion on Direction Three.

A summary of the committee's discussions is as follows:

- Consolidated debt was reported as being \$50m in Te Pūkenga's Annual Report. However, Minister Penny Simmonds has argued the debt is actually much higher, at \$250m, and may increase as the ITPs untangle themselves from Te Pūkenga.
- Many staff are against the federation model because it will jeopardise institutions' autonomy. However, is there an alternative? It seems like the Minister and the Government are in favour of the federation model, and when TEC presented at the Mt Albert campus, they didn't appear to provide alternatives to that model.
- Another sentiment that's being voiced is that Unitec does not merge with MIT, but rather operates as a stand-alone institution.

- The MoE has presented a model which is a variation of the Te Pūkenga model, and would give more autonomy to the regions in terms of academic delivery. This model allowed for some centralised services, e.g., purchasing, HR, finance, and would potentially deliver cost savings for all the ITPs across the motu, in that each ITP wouldn't have to provide all these back-office services in-house.
- It is good that the TEC and MOE are leading the consultation process. This means that none of the ITP or WBL ELTs will yield undue influence over the outcome.
- There are concerns about Unitec potentially losing its autonomy in terms of its branding, its values, and its principles. Te Noho Kotahitanga (TNK) is our partnership document and the foundation on which our institution stands. If we merge with MIT, what will happen to those pou? It remains to be seen if we can continue to maintain our distinct ethos and values. Currently, TNK is embedded in the way we live and function as kaimahi. There is a concern that we could lose our mana and whakapapa without any in-depth discussion.
- If Unitec and MIT did merge there would be some effort to maintain Unitec's culturally distinct values. If your branding has strong resonance with your student market or community, why would you do away with that?
- When the Minister visited Unitec, it was raised that our TNK values are embedded right throughout what we do at Unitec. The Minister responded that there wouldn't be an expectation of values being compromised and that work will be done to ensure that the values we have will be maintained and continue to be core to what we do at Unitec. It was reassuring to hear that the effect of the changes that are coming should not have any impact on individual ITPs' values, including Unitec's.

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## SECTION 5 - NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

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### **Section 5.1 Outcome of Review of Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan**

The committee received the outcome of the review of the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan. The Chair explained that the purpose of the review wasn't to change the actions, rather the purpose was to tighten them up and make them more specific than they were. The action summaries and the actions haven't been radically altered, rather they have been made more specific, so they are more achievable. There was some vagueness in the original actions, and the review exercise aimed to make it clearer who is responsible for doing what.

All but one of the one of the improvements the committee recommended have been *adopted*. (NB: it was requested that the recommendation in the covering memo be changed from "...all but one of the research strategy action plan improvements have been *fully implemented*" to "...all but one of the research strategy action plan improvements have been *adopted*". The way the recommendation reads currently could make it appear that all the actions have been implemented, when in fact there is quite a bit of work still required to fully implement all the actions).

This is the recommendation that was not adopted:

**Review capability and plan for institutional research co-governance and leadership**

- consult with Ngā Wai a te Tūi on a research governance model in line with Te Tiriti
- consider research office structure in line with above
- consult with Unitec Research Committee on this
- submit a relevant proposal to ELT

Instead, the Action has been amended as follows:

**Review capability and plan for institutional research co-governance and leadership**

- Ngā Wai a Te Tūi leads the development of a research governance model in line with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Consider resourcing requirements in line with the above.

The rationale provided for the amendment is that “It is not appropriate to expect a Research Centre to lead the design of governance structures. All centres, including Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, must strive for financial sustainability through external funding, which is a challenging goal. The executive will determine the governance structure, receiving advice from appropriate quarters, as indicated in the existing Action Plan”.

It was felt that the original recommendation and the adopted recommendation are very similar, and the committee did not understand the rationale provided for the amendment.

**Action:** Brenda Massey and Hadley Brown to obtain further details from A/P Marcus Williams, Director Research and Enterprise, on the rationale for the original recommendation being amended.

## **Section 5.2 2024 Early Career Researcher Funding Progress Reports**

The committee received progress reports from the recipients of 2024 Early Career Researcher (ECR) Funding. Feedback was provided as follows:

Dr Caralyn Kemp

- The 2024 project was a continuation of a 2023 funded project.
- Wet weather, issues with the trackers, and research assistant issues have hampered the project.
- UREC approval has been obtained to collect data over spring/summer 2024/25.
- The research has been presented at a number of forums.
- Connections have been made with Animates (potential for external funding) and an Auckland Council animal shelter.
- Potential to work with Computing to develop an app mapping all Auckland dog parks.
- Expenditure on track.

A/P Kristie Cameron

- The project is on track according to the listed milestones.
- The PI is working with A/P Iman Ardekani in Computing on AI software to code animal behaviour data. This should lead to publications and the development of software that could be used for other types of animals.
- Expenditure on track.

Dr Mary Yan

- Strong collaboration with GMP Ltd.
- Developed potential formulas which include milk powder.

- The project will take a little longer than anticipated as GMP is very busy.
- Cedenco Foods have provided pumpkin powder for free to the project.
- Expenditure on track.

Tanya White

- The project is focussed on kaitiakitanga of the wāhi tapu at Te Noho Kotahitanga (TNK) marae. Why and how we look after our wāhi tapu, what we are already doing with regards to kaitiakitanga, mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori, what our role is as an extended community of TNK marae, and how all these things are related to the wellbeing of our ākongā.
- The project is on track. The team is working towards conducting a series of interviews and a website.
- The PI has had approval from Tūāpapa Rangahau to transfer some of the budget to purchase new camera equipment so they can interview kaumātua and kuia with quality gear, starting with Matua Hare Paniora, Dr Pouroto Ngaropo, and Tā Haare Williams. The intention is to document their pūrākau (narratives) and the connections we have as a Unitec whānau to the whenua that we are a part of and that our institution is a part of.

These projects really illustrate where ITPs sit in the tertiary education sector. We connect into community and industry so well.

**Action:** Brenda Massey to write to all the PIs thanking them for their reports.

### **Section 5.3**      **2023 Early Career Researcher Funding Final Reporting**

The committee received a final report from Madhusudan Vyas and an article co-authored by Dr Irene Ayallo who both received 2023 ECR Funding.

Madhusudan Vyas

- This was a more time consuming and complicated project than was originally envisaged.
- The team did create a prototype to locate lesions of active PSMA.
- The PI is working with international researchers to progress the kaupapa - some of the international team visited Unitec earlier in the year.
- The project was regrettably underspent; a joint application for external NZ/China health funding has been submitted which if approved will enable the continuation of the project.

Dr Irene Ayallo

- Irene left Unitec before final reports were due, however she has provided a copy of a publication which clearly demonstrates that the goals of the project that she received funding for were achieved. Unitec's funding was acknowledged in the publication.

The breadth of research being undertaken at Unitec is outstanding.

**Action:** Brenda Massey to write to Madhu Vyas thanking him for his report.

### **Section 5.4**      **2025 MBIE Endeavour Fund Smart Ideas – Triaging Process**

The committee received details of the 2025 MBIE Endeavour Fund Smart Ideas opportunity, including that Tūāpapa Rangahau is operating a triaging (selection) process this year due to Unitec now being restricted to submitting only one Smart Ideas application.

Tanya White acknowledged the support that Tūāpapa Rangahau provides for PIs that are applying for external grants.

## SECTION 6 - KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

### **Section 6.1**      **Ētahi Kaupapa Anō | Any Other Business**

N/A

### **Section 6.2**      **Komiti Self-Assessment**

A comment was made that the meeting went well and achieved a lot. There was a great breadth and depth of agenda items.

Mel Wong thanked the committee for having her at the meeting. She commented that she learned a lot, and that the URC operates quite differently from the MIT Research Committee. Mel and the Chair jointly reflected that both committees could learn a lot from each other. If a couple of URC members start attending MIT Research Committee meetings, then it will be good that these members bring their learnings back to the rest of the URC.

### **Section 6.3**      **Karakia Whakamutunga | Closing Karakia**

**MEETING CLOSED:**      1420 h

## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

| Agenda Item(s) | Action   | Responsible                  | Outcome |
|----------------|--|------------------------------|---------|
| 3.1 & 3.2      | Advise A/P Laura Harvey and A/P Leon Tan of the approval of the appointment of their nominees for Honorary Research Fellows.   | Brenda Massey                |         |
| 4.1            | Appraise Marcus Williams of the committee's discussions around URC representation on the MIT Research Committee.   | Brenda Massey                |         |
| 5.1            | Change the recommendation in the covering memo on the outcome of the review of the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan from "...all but one of the research strategy action plan improvements have been <i>fully implemented</i> " to "...all but one of the research strategy action plan improvements have been <i>adopted</i> ". | Brenda Massey                |         |
| 5.1            | Obtain further details from A/P Marcus Williams, Director Research and Enterprise, on the rationale for the amendment to the recommended change to the Actions under Action Summary 'Review capability and plan for institutional research co-governance and leadership' of the Research Strategy Action Plan.                       | Brenda Massey / Hadley Brown |         |
| 5.2            | Write to all the 2024 ECR Funding PIs thanking them for their reports.   | Brenda Massey                |         |
| 5.3            | Write to Madhu Vyas thanking him for his final 2023 ECR Funding report.  | Brenda Massey                |         |