

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wananga o Waikato

VISION AND WAY FORWARD

*Tēnei te Whare Wānanga o Waikato e whakatau nei i ngā iwi o te ao ki roto i te riu o te awa e rere nei, ki runga i te whenua e hora nei, ki raro i te taumaru o ngā maunga whakaruru e tau awhi nei.
Nau mai, haere mai, haere mai.*

(Introductory mihi from the University of Waikato Charter)

The Vision

The University of Waikato has come a long way in its first 40 years and offers high quality teaching and research in several areas, but it is not currently achieving its full potential, and is in need of change. The University must pursue new challenges and new successes, and this must be done as a matter of urgency.

The primary functions of a University are:

- (1) To provide research-led teaching that inspires students to achieve their potential
- (2) To generate new knowledge through research
- (3) To provide leadership in the economic, social and cultural development of the region and New Zealand
- (4) To develop a wide range of intellectual and professional skills needed to service the complex needs of a modern society
- (5) To be a critic and conscience of society.

The University of Waikato has an important role in its local region. It must relate to, and contribute to, the region and to the local community. But it should not be too narrow or restricted in its outlook. The Waikato region wants a world-class university. The University must therefore deliver excellence in everything it does for the benefit of this region, and for the nation as a whole.

While the University of Waikato is, and will remain, in the mainstream of higher education, it needs to have a distinctive mission, which separates it from the other tertiary education providers. It needs to be part of a coherent system of tertiary education, with each institution playing its distinctive, but complementary, part. It must offer a “Waikato experience” that is unique in the educational system in New Zealand. That experience must reflect its partnership with Maori as intended by the Treaty of Waitangi.

Modern universities benchmark themselves against the best on the international scene. The University of Waikato must be internationally connected in order to deliver the best teaching and research opportunities for students and staff.

This paper, developed by the Senior Management Group, and informed by consultations with staff, students and stakeholders, describes a shared Vision and way forward for Waikato over the next 10 years. It is essential that the University takes advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead and, in so doing, responds to the needs and aspirations of students, staff and stakeholders.

The Vision for the University in 10 years time is as follows:

The University of Waikato will

- 1) deliver a world-class education and research portfolio
- 2) provide a full and dynamic university experience which is distinctive in character
- 3) pursue strong international linkages to advance knowledge.

The over-arching themes of this Vision are:

- Excellence
- Distinctiveness
- International Connectedness

The main aspects of the Vision may be expanded as follows:

The University of Waikato will deliver a world-class education and research portfolio.

The University of Waikato will become a byword for excellence. It will continue to be an inclusive and broadly-based university, but it will not allow breadth to compromise quality. It will be research-driven, at all levels and across its whole teaching portfolio.

It will define, promote and invest in the areas in which its research is, or can be, truly world-class. To equip its graduates to deal with the complex issues of the modern world, its approach to teaching and research will be multi-disciplinary. Its education portfolio will be shaped by its research strengths, by student demand and by the needs of industry, employers and the community. Delivering highly motivated and competent graduates will be central to everything the University does. Encouraging academic excellence, fostering innovative teaching and enhancing the thinking skills of students will be a key objective. The University will review its approach to teaching and learning development.

The University will pursue all means to ensure that students, from whatever background, will have access to a first-class education.

An academic and research plan will be produced for each Faculty/School, based on a set of agreed criteria, to establish where rationalisation may be possible, and where new subjects might be added. The University will define a clear rationale for the range of subjects that it offers, and its curriculum as a whole will be part of its distinctive identity.

All programmes will provide the opportunity for independent learning, and will enable students to develop key transferable skills. The University will facilitate direct engagement with future employers to help define more accurately the specialist and generalist competencies that need to

be built into its teaching programmes. It will build on its reputation for innovation in teaching and research, and for the pastoral care provided to its students.

The University will ensure that it is offering genuine research-led teaching in all disciplines, and that all staff share the same understanding of what 'research-led' means. It will decide how it defines and how it achieves 'world-class' status in different disciplines.

It will build a teaching and research portfolio which

- is relevant to its regional economy,
- is distinctive within the New Zealand tertiary education sector,
- complements the profiles of other tertiary education providers in its region and nationally,
- is aligned with government's Tertiary Education Strategy.

The University of Waikato will provide a full and dynamic university experience which is distinctive in character.

The University will develop a clear identity based on a unique "Waikato experience". It will promote the concept of a full university experience, which is more than just the accumulation of knowledge. It will establish a clear rationale for the particular range of subjects that it offers. It will enhance not only the quality of its degrees, but also the entire intellectual, cultural, political, social and recreational life that students enjoy while they are enrolled.

The University of Waikato will work in partnership with local authorities to foster a positive and vibrant student culture throughout the community, and will raise the profile of its campus as a shared resource.

The University's partnerships with Māori are, and always have been, an essential and integral element of its identity. From the outset, it has been committed to providing leadership in research and education relevant to the needs and aspirations of iwi and Māori communities. The University of Waikato will continue to engage in productive and meaningful partnerships with Māori. The distinctive character that it develops, and the unique "Waikato experience" that it offers to its students, will have many dimensions. Its distinctive origins and unique regional and cultural resources will continue to be a fundamental aspect of every dimension of its identity, manifest in its physical campus, in its campus culture, in its teaching and research portfolio and in the educational experience that it offers.

The University will define the details that will help it to deliver on its distinctiveness, in terms of its curriculum, its campus facilities, its campus culture, its commitment to te reo, kaupapa and tikanga Māori within its campus environment, its alliances, its role as a key driver of social and economic growth in its region, and its partnerships with Māori.

Its distinctive identity will be institution-wide. While particular areas of the University may be unique in terms of their specific roles, cultures and aspirations, they will reflect the identity of the whole, and all the elements will be complementary. The strategic decisions and directions of the component parts will be directly aligned with the overall Vision and University-level strategies.

The University will articulate its distinctiveness clearly in the message that it uses to recruit students who are highly motivated and who are likely to achieve and thrive in the unique academic environment that it offers.

A key part of its strategy will be to create a superb campus, by concentrating its investments on a single physical location in Hamilton. It will create unique facilities that attract the best staff and students. They will include state of the art facilities that are not available anywhere else in New Zealand. The campus experience and facilities will be designed with the different needs and preferences of different types of students, including mature students, in mind.

The University's determination to be student-centred will be a key criterion in all its planning and investment decisions. Its first project will be to create a unique student-centred physical resource. It will be the focus of a major fund-raising campaign, and will be something that the local community can benefit from also.

The University of Waikato will pursue strong international linkages to advance knowledge.

The University will play a more prominent role on the international scene, especially in areas where its teaching and research are of a demonstrably world-class standard, and will collaborate more extensively with centres of international research excellence. It takes seriously its role as a key driver of social and economic growth in its region, and the strength of its alliances with major institutions internationally will be pivotal in bringing international excellence for the benefit of the region.

The University will select its international markets carefully. It will develop strategic alliances to ensure quality and stability of these markets. It will understand and manage the risks associated with its international student markets.

Its international alliances will be of three main types. It will establish a small number of institutional-level strategic alliances, with highly reputable universities overseas, for the purposes of joint research initiatives, student and staff exchanges and community linkages.

At the next level, it will establish a larger number of institution-wide agreements which will also be strategic, but which will focus primarily on teaching programmes and student recruitment activities. Through this category of alliance it will develop various types of 2+2 programmes, off-shore programmes and study abroad programmes.

At the third level, it will foster the sorts of valuable relationships that are established through the collaborative endeavours of individual staff or units within particular Faculty/Schools.

Finally, it will set an institution-wide target for international students, though at the individual Faculty/School level the targets are likely to vary according to the Faculty/Schools' particular markets, circumstances and strategies. A key factor in the University's considerations about an overall target for international students will be its commitment to providing an education that exposes all its students to international connections, perspectives and influences.

Tauranga and Manukau

The University of Waikato has made a commitment to the community in Tauranga and it will sustain that commitment in manner that is focussed and directly aligned with its new Vision and its role as one of the key drivers of economic growth in the region.

It will work in partnership with the Tauranga community to identify existing (and possibly new) programmes that are tailored to the region's SmartEconomy strategy, viable, and able to be delivered to a standard consistent with its Vision. It will ensure that whatever it offers in Tauranga is sustainable and of the highest academic standard.

While maintaining its own distinctive identity, the University will continue to work in close collaboration with the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, playing a role that supports and complements theirs, using wherever possible the articulation and stair-casing models that have already been successfully established.

Over recent years, the University of Waikato has contemplated the establishment of a campus in Manukau. To pursue an initiative of this kind in Manukau, or any other part of the region, would not be consistent with its new Vision. So it is instead discussing with the Manukau City Council and the Manukau Institute of Technology alternative ideas for supporting their tertiary education objectives in a way that is sustainable and consistent with its new Vision.

The Way Forward

To achieve the Vision, the University will require top quality people, efficient structures and world-class facilities. To underpin these, it will be essential to have a strong financial base.

People

The University's motto, "Ko Te Tangata", which means "For the People", reflects its philosophy that it is in, of, and for the community. The recruitment, development and retention of staff of the highest international standard will be a priority. The University will offer competitive market salaries and will ensure that rewards to individuals take full account of personal performance and contribution to institutional objectives.

The University will foster and support an organisational culture in which the behaviours that people demonstrate reinforce and underpin the Vision. As the University considers the detailed strategies to realise this Vision, a guiding principle will be that the interests of the institution, not the interests of individual people or Faculty/Schools, should come first.

Each member of staff, whatever his or her position in the University, has an important contribution to make to securing the future of the University. The University must provide an environment in which all staff are supported in making their best contribution to meeting the University's objectives. Roles and expectations will be clearly defined, and they will be linked directly to the criteria used for performance and salary reviews. Procedures for promotion will be reviewed.

Academic staff will play a crucial role in the realisation of the Vision by conducting leading-edge research of world-class standard and inspiring students through their teaching. Strong, dynamic and confident academic leadership will be the principal agent of change. To this end, leading academics will be expected to accept their responsibility to contribute directly to the leadership of the University through academic and research mentoring, the establishment of research teams, professional links, community outreach, activities in support of the University's civic and conscience of society role, or taking on roles such as departmental and committee chairs. Academic leaders will be expected to be fully networked and influential with external education and research organisations and to make a leading contribution to the development of their broader discipline.

Academic-support staff also play a critical role in the realisation of the Vision. They provide the essential professional and other operational services that facilitate and support the achievement of the University's strategic objectives.

The University will recognise, encourage and support both professional and academic leadership, through the provision of appropriate infrastructural support and professional career development opportunities.

A review of the University's student profile will be undertaken to determine the most appropriate size and mix of undergraduate, postgraduate and international students relevant to the Vision for the University.

Key factors in this review will be:

- impact and influence on campus culture
- alignment with international expectations and benchmarks
- consistency with the University's Vision and academic structure
- demand
- Hamilton campus capacity and resources
- risk and sustainability

The University will actively recruit and support undergraduate and postgraduate students who can benefit from its curriculum and the unique educational experience that it offers. Investment in all aspects of the student experience will be a priority.

The University will enhance its engagement with alumni and external stakeholders, who are extremely important members of the wider university community, and whose relationships with, and investment in, the University, are a critical element in its future success.

Structures

The range of skills and competencies needed in order to lead and manage the organisation will be identified.

With external assistance, a review of the senior management structure will be undertaken. The key objective will be the creation of a streamlined senior leadership team, which fosters

integrated and efficient working across teaching, research and support areas, and which promotes much closer teamwork between academic and support staff.

The University must have a structure of relative simplicity, with clear lines of leadership, management and accountability at all levels. A prime objective is to promote a culture of openness in its high-level decision-making, to ensure that decisions, and their execution, are dealt with in an effective and business-like manner. Through these types of changes, and through greater role accountabilities, the amount of bureaucracy will be reduced and greater efficiencies will be achieved.

It will develop a seamless structure between support and academic staff. Once the streamlined senior leadership structure is in place, a review of the University's operational structure will be undertaken. The University will examine how it can support its core functions in a more efficient and cost-effective way. It will find means by which it can readily identify, and deal with, unproductive activities.

Key factors will be

- recognition that academic-support staff can be leaders in their field
- recognition that the partnership between academic and academic-support staff is crucial in creating and providing the best possible environment for world-class research and education
- the need for operational and administrative processes to be flexible and responsive
- the need for streamlining of managerial processes, tailoring them to the needs of the University today, and eliminating inefficiencies, duplication, redundancy and waste.

Once academic and research plans have been produced (see p. 2), and in keeping with the principle that form follows function, a review will be undertaken of the organisational structures within which the core activities of teaching and research take place.

Key factors in the decision about Faculty/School structures will be:

- the need for strong, inspiring and confident academic leadership
- the need to foster and support a creative and dynamic research-driven culture
- the need to allocate resources (human, financial and infrastructural) selectively in support of research and education priorities.

A review of committee structures will be undertaken, with a view to ensuring that they are streamlined, pertinent, efficient, and work to clear terms of reference.

Facilities and Finances

The University will require world-class facilities for teaching and research in order to attract top quality staff and students.

If the University is to invest in these types of facilities, it will be essential to achieve healthy operating surpluses. An important element in the delivery of the Vision will be the ability to demonstrate to government and other stakeholders that the University is financially well-managed. The University will adhere to sound financial operating principles. It will develop methods of understanding fully its revenue streams and costs.

A transparent business and financial model will be developed, to simulate relations among relevant costs, benefits, value and risk as a basis for supporting business decisions. The model will assist management to anticipate the economic consequences of potential strategy options and develop appropriate plans. It will also be used to inform internal allocation choices and to determine contribution rates to overheads and surpluses.

The financial model will enable the University to monitor and manage its student profile and its teaching and research portfolios, with a clear understanding of the opportunities and risks.

Targeted expansion of the University's student base (especially domestic students) will be a top priority. Increasing income from non-public sources will also be a priority, with a particular emphasis on full economic costing of an enlarged portfolio of world-class research fund-raising through the Foundation, and commercialisation of intellectual property.

Conclusions

The Vision of the University of Waikato must embody an ambitious strategic intent – a stretch target that is currently out of reach but not out of sight – which will force innovation and drive the University forward. Detailed proposals on each element will be developed and brought forward during the coming months. Through these developments, the University of Waikato will build successfully on what has gone before to achieve a Vision of being a world-class, research-driven and internationally-connected University.
