

# Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

## April 2022

### Introduction

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April signalled the end of Term 1, bringing a well-deserved break for many students and staff. It was good to be able to mark the end of term and the Easter/Anzac break by offering staff buns and chocolate in acknowledgement of their efforts during Term 1.

As the April graduation ceremonies had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, UC looked for creative ways for graduates to mark the occasion with their whānau. So, during the week when graduation had been scheduled, graduates had the opportunity to hire regalia and have professional photos taken with the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor or one of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors. Activations around campus also gave the graduates more informal opportunities to take photos.

On a very positive note, the Times Higher Education (THE) have released the 2022 THE Impact Rankings with UC improving to a global ranking of 150<sup>th</sup> from last year's ranking of 201 – 300. The Impact Ranking assesses university research, policies and operations that advance any four or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). UC submitted for seven SDG's with the four best being 'Responsible Consumption and Production', 'Climate Action', 'Life on Land', and 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions'. Of particular note was UC being ranked first internationally for 'Responsible Consumption and Production' and 11<sup>th</sup> for 'Climate Action'.

### Engagement

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The Centre for Freshwater Management celebrated World Water Day with a video and a poster exhibition in Te Puna Mātauraka o Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | James Hight Library. A group of the Centre's postgraduate students had developed the display, based on their research, to celebrate water and reflect on its vulnerability.

The Art of Science, a national competition run by the Faculties of Science and Arts, is now open. The competition invites school students from years 5 to 13 to submit entries in formats such as video, music, poetry and illustrations. The competition runs until the end of July. Entries are shared on social media channels and displayed at the WORD Christchurch Festival schools event held at UC.

In the past month, UC staff have featured in media and public events in a wide range of contexts.

Dr Mahdis Azarmandi, School of Educational Studies and Leadership, spoke on human rights issues in a Plains FM radio interview on *Speak Up – Kōrerotia*. She also contributed to an episode of the Māori Television documentary series *Giants*. This legacy whakapapa and heritage programme explores the perspectives of different migrant communities in Waitaha Canterbury and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Professor Bronwyn Hayward presented a public lecture on livestream, “What does the new Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) climate report mean for our cities?”.

Māori health researcher Dr Annabel Ahuriri-Driscoll presented a deeply personal public lecture on “Who should be caring for our tamariki?”. She spoke on the closed adoption of Māori children, highlighting the thinking that led to the Adoption Act 1955 and its amendments, as well as the outcomes for adoptees and their whānau.

Professor Deirdre Hart and Dr Shane Orchard spoke at the Australasian Coasts and Ports Conference about understanding tides and predicting tidal heights in an extreme environment. They also discussed natural disaster recovery and resilience-building. Deirdre co-chaired the conference with Dr Tom Shand from Tonkin & Taylor.

MBA Director Elsamari Botha recently presented to members of the Institute of Directors on why companies do not need ‘digital strategies’, based on five years of research, a survey of over 600 Australasian companies and a review of how global retailers apply artificial intelligence technologies. In presenting her findings, Elsamari showed that rather than focusing on a separate digital strategy, organisations should have a clear strategy that is enabled by technology and puts people at the centre. The opportunity for her presentation arose from the partnership the UC Business School has with the Institute of Directors, where academics from the School can report on their research in up to six Directors’ Deep Dive presentations to directors from top Aotearoa New Zealand organisations.

Dr Sarah Whitcombe-Dobbs, a child and family psychologist and senior lecturer in the Faculty of Health, recently wrote an opinion piece reflecting on how effective our current mental health system really is. Her specific focus was on how our children and young people are under-served by a system that spends more resources on adults.

Faculty of Health Lecturer Piet van Hasselt has achieved international success as coach of the national 3x3 basketball teams, who were unbeaten at the qualifiers in Doha. Both the men’s (Tall Blacks) and women’s (Tall Ferns) teams are now heading to the world 3x3 basketball championships in Belgium in June.

Faculty of Health Senior Lecturer Dr Matthew Hobbs, in collaboration with Spatial Data Science Lecturer Dr Lukas Marek, has developed the Healthy Location Index, a new tool that breaks down the healthy and unhealthy elements of cities across Aotearoa New Zealand. It helps inform how our cities can be planned and modified to increase people’s physical activity levels and tackle important issues such as obesity and mental health.

Associate Professor Kathryn MacCallum, School of Educational Studies and Leadership, is the newly appointed President of the International Association for Mobile Learning. This organisation has a long history of supporting research on mobile and contextual learning.

UC information evenings kick off on 10 May. The series of evenings will consist of 10 in-person events in other regions of Aotearoa New Zealand and two in Ōtautahi Christchurch, plus one virtual event. Engineering, Product Design and Forestry will feature presentations at all or some of these events, with additional school visits planned alongside these where possible. New video content is also being created for the virtual event.

ChristchurchNZ and the UC Centre for Entrepreneurship are collaborating to present the 2022 Food, Fibre and Agritech Supernode Challenge, with the backing of KiwiNet and the Canterbury Mayoral

Forum. The Challenge supports participating industry representatives, researchers and students to bring to life and commercialise their innovative ideas in Waitaha Canterbury. The top 24 ventures have now been selected to move into the Accelerator programme. Participants are developing ideas that will solve problems in the food, fibre and agritech sector, making a positive contribution to the future of Aotearoa New Zealand as they support a cleaner and greener environment, more efficient production and the sustainable prosperity of the region.

Four Professors of Practice were introduced at a special event for Ōtautahi Christchurch business leaders that drew over 60 attendees. The event was also livestreamed via the UC Business School's Facebook page. Guest speaker Carl Davidson (ResearchFirst) presented on how Aotearoa New Zealand has entered a period of social change that is unprecedented in our history, meaning we all need to update our ideas about what is possible. I am pleased to welcome Lee Parkinson, Melissa Davies, Louisa Taylor and Alan Win as Professors of Practice within the Executive Education team.

## **Education – Accessible, Flexible, Future Focused**

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Over the seven weeks of the first term, the students were well and truly immersed in their courses and had a flurry of assessments toward the term's end. During the very busy enrolment period in the first few weeks of semester, kaitoko | first-year student advisors saw over 800 students. The Library also supported orientation activities, during which over 60 students completed the "Puna passport" challenge and 120 participated in online quizzes on library competencies. The number of students accessing support via Te Pātaka remained steady throughout the term. Feedback from students and staff is very positive, endorsing both its location and its range of services. Attention is now on making enhancements for Semester 2 and preparing for the return of international students.

Other student support programmes also had a successful launch despite the challenges of Omicron. For instance, under the excellent guidance of Daniel van der Walt, the ENGMe! programme has run as planned this term. Most of the 50 or so weekly sessions have occurred both face to face and online.

Term 1 was challenging for many work placements, as Faculty of Education students and staff in initial teacher education can testify. In navigating COVID-19, they have needed to be highly adaptable. By the end of the term, the bachelor's year 3 students had completed six-week placements, totalling 186 students in the primary cohort and 35 students in the early childhood cohort. Among graduate students, the primary and secondary cohorts (200 students) had begun a seven-week placement in schools and the early childhood cohort (29 students) had begun an eight-week placement in early childhood centres across the country. As work placements become more integrated across all degrees, UC has begun to connect with Work Integrated Learning (WIL) practitioners through the establishment of the WIL Community of Practice and a monthly newsletter called *Ako ā-mahi* (learning through working).

Innovative curricula that combine scholarship and practice are evident in new degrees. The Faculties of Arts and Engineering have been working hard behind the scenes to develop two proposed new majors to exist within the new (provisionally named) Bachelor of Screen Production. This new and exciting opportunity arose due to the shortage of new graduates going into the New Zealand games industry as programmers or 2/3D visual artists. In late March, an event in the Alternative Lab and Studio Delivery Options (ALSDO) project introduced the use of remote technology to develop tools

and quizzes that can help students understand basic health and safety requirements in laboratories. Design Engineer Dr Jonathan Davidson showed examples from two departments where remote learning can reduce pressure on laboratory time and space, reduce travel time to the campus and also present simulations of events that are too risky to show in physical situations. The new tools will be embedded in Learn when complete.

Finally, as students across all year levels become settled into the academic year, it is important to hear from them about their experiences. The annual UC Student Experience survey, the UCount, was launched in April. This year's uptake of the survey has been slow, likely a result of increased callouts to students around COVID-19 welfare; however, the results provide important information from students and, since an extension to the deadline, participation has improved. UCount results are expected to be widely available next month.

## **Research – Impact on a Changing World**

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The Public Based Research Framework (PBRF) Sector Reference Group, which the Tertiary Education Commission convened to advise on the operational design of the 2025 PBRF Quality Evaluation, is currently consulting widely on a range of topics. Consultation on the design of evidence portfolios, as well as on the roles and person specifications for the Moderation Team, is underway.

PhD students who began their studies from overseas have recently been nominated as part of the third and fourth border exemption cohorts. Some of these students have been conducting their research from their home country for nearly two years. They will now start the process of applying to come to Aotearoa New Zealand, with the aim of gaining approval and arriving in UC by July. Approximately 40 PhD students will remain in their home country until 'regular' visa processing resumes.

The first of three 2022 doctoral supervision workshops for new or new-to-UC supervisors was completed during March. Twenty-four academic staff, representing all UC faculties, participated in this delivery. Following some revisions to the kaupapa, future workshops will incorporate a bicultural contextual model with a focus on pedagogy and principles of effective supervision, in conjunction with the policies and practices associated with roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students.

A programme of postgraduate research student workshops is being implemented this year, with both on-campus and overseas students engaging with available offerings. A noticeable trend is that many students who completed UC's doctoral orientation programme are attending – suggesting that the early approach to engagement is having flow-on effects. Recent workshops include "Preparing for confirmation" and "Research ethics". A series of wellbeing-focused workshops to be presented by leading UC academics is in development and expected to begin mid-year.

The Centre for World University Rankings (CWUR) has recently announced 2022–2023 global institutional rankings, ranking UC 3rd in Aotearoa New Zealand, 25th in Oceania (including Australia) and in the top 2.8% of nearly 20,000 universities globally. CWUR rankings are founded on publicly available objective metrics, rather than on academic opinion surveys or institutional submissions. The four pillars of the metrics are education, employability, faculty and research.

Associate Professor Kathryn MacCallum, School of Educational Studies and Leadership, has begun a longitudinal research project, in partnership with the Greater Christchurch Schools' Network, on "Bridging the digital divide". This research includes a survey of students and parents on their digital experiences. The data will be used to engage with schools in exploring how to better support students

to develop digital capabilities and outcomes. Adjunct Professor Niki Davis is also working on this research.

Associate Professor Wolfgang Rack from Gateway Antarctica is one of 30 co-authors of a paper just published in the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* advocating a new structure of the sea ice Essential Climate Variable (ECV). Only one of the 54 ECVs within the UN Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) is currently 'sea ice', and within it are four sea ice parameters (concentration, extent, thickness, drift). The authors argue for an expansion to seven ECVs related to sea ice – concentration, thickness, snow depth on sea ice, surface albedo, surface temperature, ice age and ice drift – in the next implementation phase of GCOS.

Professor Jack Heinemann contributed to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, the most recent report in the assessment cycle. His contribution focused on the future of sustainable farming in chapter 5 of the report.

School of Earth and Environment Lecturer Tom Robinson has been appointed to the newly created Aotearoa Earthquake Science Advisory Panel (AESAP) as the Co-Lead of the Risk Science group. The National Emergency Management Agency (NZ) (NEMA) created the AESAP to coordinate the delivery of science advice and post-event science following an earthquake. The chair is Professor Thomas Wilson in his role as Chief Science Advisor to NEMA.

The Library has joined the Council of Australian University Librarians Open Educational Resources Collective: <https://canterbury.libguides.com/opentextbooks>. As a member of the collective, UC will have access to guides, communities of practice and grants, as well as the PressBooks platform, which enables UC to publish two open-access textbooks each year.

The Library has completed and acted on its reviews of two policies. First, it has updated the Information Resources Policy to increase the emphasis on a kaitiakitanga approach to the management of collections and resources. Second, it has rescinded the Digitisation Policy, as digitisation is now a regular part of everyday library work.

## **People – Nurturing Staff, Thriving Students**

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The focus this month has again been on ensuring that students and staff are well supported during this period of response to COVID-19.

With recent changes in government directives, guidelines and rules, many aspects of the response have become more business-as-usual in nature. The number of COVID-19 cases in our residential halls has declined markedly – only 34 at the time of writing, out of a total of 830 to date – but cases in flats and other private accommodation settings remain steady. The grocery deliveries and other forms of practical support via the joint efforts of UC and the University of Canterbury Students' Association have been very well received. Approximately 2,800 care packages have been delivered to students.

By the end of the first teaching term on 8 April, UC had delivered approximately 25,000 learning events. It is a tribute to all our staff and students that the University was able to achieve our objective of continuing with face-to-face teaching and research safely and effectively throughout that period and over so many lectures and tutorials. By working together to implement safe practices – for

example, mask wearing in lectures and tutorials – our community has been able to stay connected and engaged.

The annual influenza vaccination, paid for by UC, is currently being made available to all students and staff, starting with higher-risk groups. Alongside this service is an ongoing education programme, focused in large part on students, about the value of all vaccinations.

Term 2, starting on 2 May, goes for five weeks. We have retained the same programme of preventative measures in teaching and research spaces, including mask wearing by all.

UniLodge, our new Accommodation Services partner, has welcomed several new staff to its Ōtautahi Christchurch operations. UC has been involved in their orientation programme, to ensure that they are familiar with the various services UC provides to students.

It has been a pleasure to welcome Professor John Page, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Law, to UC. John started in his new role at the beginning of April. Additionally, we were delighted to announce that Professor Kevin Watson has been appointed as the new Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Kevin will start in his role in May.

On 27 April UC celebrated Administrative Professionals Day to acknowledge the pivotal contribution of our colleagues who have a range of administrative roles essential for the well-functioning of the University.

## **Internationalisation – Locally Engaged, Globally Networked**

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Work continues towards receiving offshore students in the fourth border exemption cohort from mid-2022. UC has been allocated 116 places within this cohort.

UC has already welcomed 34 Malaysian students back with the recent third cohort.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has finalised its consultation on changes to international student policy, which Cabinet is expected to discuss in May. The international team is preparing a paper on a recovery/reset for UC's international experience. Additionally, consultation is underway for the UC internationalisation strategy.

Meetings with alumni are scheduled in San Francisco and New York in May. UC will also participate in the Aotearoa New Zealand contingent at the NAFSA Annual Conference and Expo in Denver in late May. The event is the largest international education conference and trade fair in the world and will be the first significant offshore venture for New Zealand Inc. since the start of the pandemic. The Prime Minister is expected to travel to the United States in the week preceding the conference and to attend it along with Minister of Education the Hon Chris Hipkins.

## **Organisational Efficacy – of a sustainable scale by 2030**

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Recently, UC appointed a Risk and Insurance Advisor to support the Risk and Insurance Manager. and so the team can now focus on reviewing all business processes in both the risk and insurance portfolios to check that they are fit for purpose and meet the key objectives of the organisational efficacy theme. Early priorities are to use technology to more efficiently measure and report enterprise-wide risks, and to develop guidance on insurance requirements for contracts. The recent comprehensive reviews and updates of both the Risk Management Framework and Risk Appetite statement will continue to inform all advice and decision-making.

Work to protect UC people, assets and data continues with the development of a new cybersecurity strategy for UC. It will be delivered through a supporting programme to lift UC's cyber resilience significantly over the next three years. This programme will not only invest in technologies to protect UC but develop cyberculture awareness in our people. As part of that programme, the roll-out of multi-factor authentication (MFA) for Microsoft services to staff continues, with all faculties and service departments now enrolled. Implementation of MFA for all students is envisaged for 17 May 2022, which will be a crucial step in protecting UC.

Another focus of the UC cyber programme is to keep secure all remote methods that UC staff and students use to access non-Microsoft services. The Digital Services team is currently engaging with different faculties to leverage virtual desktops and labs (both Microsoft and Linux) as an alternative option for accessing physical labs and workrooms. This initiative will enable students and staff to use more modern capabilities in the future, avoiding the need to remote desktop onto on-premise physical machines, providing more flexibility and better experiences, while also strengthening UC's cybersecurity.

Another key project this year to improve communication and collaboration is the launch of the new UC Intranet. In March, Digital Services launched its new example of a departmental intranet site on Sharepoint Online while its team is busy working across UC engaging with content administrators to prepare for the build of the new Intranet. Digital Services supports a lot of projects and changes so this site is a great informational resource and is regularly receiving more content.

## **Environmentally Sustainable**

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The Sustainability Office ran a waste engagement programme through social media during Term 1, which has proved popular and helped further identify areas of our waste system that students find confusing.

The Biodiversity Projects Coordinator has been recruited and is working on a range of projects already, including identifying a suitable target for UC's tree canopy cover, and monitoring and trapping predators (in tandem with EnviroSoc and Predator Free Riccarton). Upcoming biodiversity events include an online panel discussion entitled "Riccarton Community: Working together to improve biodiversity" as part of the Ako Ōtautahi / Learning Days festival (9 May) and a campus biodiversity tour (23 May) to celebrate World Biodiversity Day (Sunday 22 May).

Work is continuing on waterways restoration. This includes planning for sediment removal from the Waiutuutu-Okeover Stream, daylighting the box drain along Ilam Fields and improving the water quality monitoring systems currently in use.

The twice-yearly count of bike stand use was undertaken in March. As expected, use was low at 31%. This count is conducted both for the University's information and for the CCC as a condition of a resource consent. The CCC has now indicated that, for future counts, it will no longer ask for our reports, suggesting it is happy with the validity of our data. However, the Sustainability Office will continue to explore why the rate is lower than it planned for.

The new [Sustainability Hub](#) website is now live. It includes options for studying sustainability and also links into research news with a sustainability theme. This is a site where new courses and degrees are added as they develop.





## VC Activities

<b>Events for April 2022</b>	
5 April 2022	Meeting with Joanna Newman from Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) via Zoom
7 and 8 April 2022	Universities New Zealand meeting in Wellington
12 April 2022	Attending a Regulatory Masterclass for Board members via Microsoft Teams
20 April 2022	Meeting with John Holt, founder of All Things Considered
26 April 2022	Chairing an ACU Executive Board Meeting via Zoom
27 April 2022	Speaker at the Administrative Professionals Day celebration
27 April 2022	Hosting a visit by Hon Dr Megan Woods regarding the Digital Screen Campus
27 April 2022	Meeting with Paul Fell, Chief Operating Officer at Cedar Pacific
28 April 2022	New Zealand Qualifications Authority Board meeting in Wellington