Meeting the Need and the Challenge:
What Future for the Faculty of Medicine?

Volume 1:
The Decadal Ambition as Strategic Plan.
## Document History & Version Control

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Preface

Breaking with the past

Nine months ago, at my instigation as Acting Executive Dean, the Faculty of Medicine embarked on a considered and structured reflection about its intended decadal future.

Commissioning the reflection in early 2017 was a matter of good management practice. Every organisation benefits from calling the occasional pause to allow its leaders and operators to take stock of their position and direct their thoughts to the ordering and prioritising of everyday actions in the years ahead.

At that particular time in the Faculty’s evolution, such a reflection was a pressing necessity. The circumstances in which the Faculty found itself were such that the exercise could not be a mere textbook pause, called in the course of ordinary business. Instead, it had to be a full ‘pause-and-reset’ effort.

Soon after joining Medicine in mid-2016, it was apparent to me that management practices were struggling to meet our needs as a Faculty. And though the service façade was still holding, the once sturdy shell that supported it was being eroded by significant forces, both internal and external. This was compounded by issues with our underlying management systems: many of them were poorly specified and disjointed – effectively a patchwork of tools that generated significant work in reconciling differences, yet were ultimately unhelpful in guiding our decisions making.
Likewise, the academic performance of our Faculty was under pressure. A growing workload, staffing imbalances, the accretive complexity of the Faculty’s business endeavours and mounting performance expectations were exacting a heavy toll on our competitiveness in education and research. Unsurprisingly, we were hearing increasingly vocal concerns from our stakeholders regarding our value and our standing in the community we serve.

On the way to an inspiring future

Such was the backdrop against which, in March 2017, we embarked on a strategic reflection that was as urgent as it was needed. It is fair to say that the project was well-received – indeed welcomed – by staff who were eager to operate under a sense of renewed purpose that pointed the way to a promising future and, in so doing, to leave behind the trials and tribulations of the previous years.

The time had truly come for us as a Faculty to press the ‘reset’ button and step away from the practices of the past.

The strategic reflection that took place over four carefully-planned and executed workshops was positive and hopeful. Its focus was resolutely set on the future. Its task was to affirm and extend the Faculty’s established capabilities in education and research, and find new ones to complement them. It sought to direct those strengths toward sustainable, meaningful and demonstrable contributions, nationally and internationally. Most importantly, that strategic reflection sought ways in which students and staff could realise their personal and professional potentials in a supportive and forward-thinking environment.

The outcomes of this strategy development process are set out in this document. They speak to the breadth and the frankness of the deliberations of those who took part in the workshops, and of those who agreed to interviews that prepared the ground for each of the four events. It is a document filled with hope and ambition, and one that sits in contradistinction with the difficult events and emotions of the past several years.
If we are to bring about this bright future, we must be purposeful and determined in implementing this plan, and we must do so in the spirit of unity that characterised our deliberations. If we can achieve this, then I am convinced that our Faculty will have an outstanding, rewarding and robust future.

Professor Robyn Ward AM
Acting Executive Dean
Faculty of Medicine
University of Queensland

19 December 2017
Introduction

About this Document:
Purpose and Relationship to Earlier Records of Proceedings

Volume 1 presents the distilled and summarised outcomes of four strategy developments workshops, held between April and November this year, in the form of a decadal, strategy-level plan (2018-2027) for the Faculty of Medicine.

The narrative of the plan is succinct enough to enable readers to absorb its contents in one reading, but not so terse as to do away altogether with the rationale that underpins the strategies it enumerates.

While we hope to have struck an acceptable balance in this respect, readers interested in the fuller version should turn to Volume 2, which holds the successive Records of Proceedings for workshops 1 to 3.
About this Document:
Genesis

The directions that this document reflects are the product of a suite of Faculty-wide conversations that took place as part of four structured and facilitated workshops between May and November 2017.

Beginning with the initial May workshop dedicated to whole-of-Faculty matters, its August and September successors explored the Faculty’s education and research intentions. The last workshop, held at the end of November, revisited these early themes and nuanced them with the benefit of some distance in time and argument.

The outcomes of participants’ deliberations were incorporated into Records, each building on the preceding output. These Records are the foundation of the thinking now presented in this statement of decadal intent.

About this Document:
Connection to the University’s Strategic Plan

The Faculty of Medicine is an integral part of the wider University.

The Faculty’s decadal vision, as set out in this document, takes close account of the University’s ambitions and intentions. The associated strategies support both in all material respects.

Where appropriate, the links between the two plans have been underscored by quotations taken from the University’s 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

About this Document:
From Earlier Resolutions to Strategies and Projects

The following reference marks will assist the reading of this document. They will also guide those who may have become used to the format used for the earlier Records of successive workshop proceedings:
1. All resolutions taken in the course of earlier workshops have found their place in this shorter document (Volume 1). The material generated during Workshop 4, designed as a check-point at the close of the 2017 strategic reflection, has been introduced in the sections to which the various enhancements pertained.

2. Material published in earlier Records as ‘resolutions’ will, in some instances, have been re-phrased and appear in this document either as a value statement or as a subsidiary strategy. Where this has occurred, the modification is a faithful rendition of the original intent and often better reflects the thrust of the original idea.

3. The fulfilment of strategies often entails the execution of a task or set of tasks. Where this is the case, fulfilment of the strategy is expressed as a project.

4. Projects have been given one of three ‘immediacy ratings’. Those concerned with more complex and lengthier endeavours have been marked with a ‘●’ symbol. Less complex, more easily circumscribed efforts of likely shorter duration have been coded ‘○’, while – predictably enough – those deemed easier of execution have been tagged ‘●’.

5. When it comes to implementation, we suggest that the rating-associated time scales should be as follows: ‘●’ = completion within one month from project launch; ‘○’ = completion within three months from project launch; and ‘●’ = completion within 6 months or more (up to 12 months) from project launch.

6. At this time, it is important to note that the ratings are indicative of anticipated importance, complexity and duration only, as assessed during workshop conversations. They will be subject to review and re-ranking upon closer examination as detailed operational planning gets underway in early 2018.
About this Document:
Editorial Licence

The author has taken care to set out the substance of the group’s discussion in a manner faithful to the intent of the original comments. Nonetheless and with readability in mind, the author has exercised a measure of editorial licence in summarising, merging or developing individual propositions into the more structured and purposeful narrative that a paper on strategy demands.

About this Document:
On-Going Enhancements

This document represents a milestone in the Faculty’s 2017 strategy development effort. That notwithstanding, it is not a final product and will be refined further in early 2018, as part of the Faculty’s continuing decadal reflection and the ‘operationalisation’ of its strategic intentions. Readers are invited to comment on the material set out in this document through one of the following channels:

- Participation in the open information and discussions sessions proposed for Q1 of 2018
- By making their views known to their Heads of School or Centres
- By using the online response channel provided.

About this Document:
Confidentiality

The strategy development process the Faculty is engaged in is an open, consultative and collaborative one. Documents produced have as wide a circulation as possible within the Faculty, so that they can be commented upon and enriched by their readers. That said, the documents produced are to be treated with care and consideration, as should be the information they contain and the views they offer.
At this juncture, the material is not intended for distribution or comment outside the Faculty, unless it is at the express direction of the Acting Dean, Professor Robyn Ward AM. Questions surrounding the use of the material in this and subsequent iterations of the document should be referred to the Dean’s office.
Fundamentals:
Purpose, Ambition, Value Set

The Faculty’s Purpose

Through the education it provides and the research it conducts, the Faculty’s medical, biomedical and public health endeavours save lives and improve human health in material and lasting ways.¹ These endeavours make substantial contributions to our knowledge and to the improvement of our health practices and systems. In the process, they raise our quality of life and that of our communities – locally, nationally and internationally, and contribute to the Faculty’s standing as a leading institution of its type among its peers.

The Faculty’s Ambition

¹ The term health is used throughout in its most comprehensive sense to embrace its physical, mental and emotional dimensions (‘well-being’ included), as per WHO definition.
Over the years ahead and with renewed intensity, the Faculty will make material and lasting contributions to the health of individuals and populations in three ways:

**In education**

The Faculty educates graduates who, on completion of their studies, are eminently ready to make their mark as professionals and leaders in their chosen roles and disciplines.

**In research**

The Faculty produces research that, by virtue of its recognised excellence, makes a deep and lasting contribution to the advancement of our basic knowledge, to the betterment of health care and practice, and to the resolution of complex health questions.

**In health systems**

The Faculty will be known for its pioneering work in the design of the health delivery and health management systems of the future, and the role of professionals at work within them.2

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**The Faculty’s Value Set**

Values are the operating principles that define and animate the Faculty’s culture. They are the differentiating marks of its endeavours and associations. Values permeate the behaviours of those who work within the Faculty. As a prominent member of the University community, the Faculty endorses and supports a UQ culture that prizes:

- **The Pursuit of Excellence**
  
  We strive for excellence, seeking to apply the highest standards to benefit our communities.

- **Creativity and Independent Thinking**
  
  We welcome new ideas from our staff and students as well as from our alumni and our external partners. We support intellectual freedom, courage and creativity. We encourage the pursuit of innovation and opportunities.

- **Mutual Respect and Diversity**
  
  We promote diversity in the University community – through our people, ideas and cultures. We create a vibrant, inclusive environment in which ideas flourish and future generations, regardless of background are empowered. We respect our colleagues and work together for shared success.

- **Honesty and Accountability**
  
  We act with integrity and professionalism and uphold the highest ethical standards. We are committed to transparency and accountability. Our decisions ensure responsible stewardship of

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2 Former Resolutions 3, 4 and 5
the University’s resources, reputation and values. We lead by example in all areas including our approaches to sustainability.

Inclusiveness and Well-Being

We ensure the safety and wellbeing of our people. We create an inclusive and supportive university community in which achievements are celebrated and rewarded. Our people have the opportunity to enrich their lives and pursue their goals.³

In addition to these fundamental values, the Faculty will also be known for five distinguishing attributes:

For its Entrepreneurial Spirit

The Faculty will embrace the challenge that accelerating and ubiquitous change presents. It will seize the transformational opportunity before it and respond to it in an intelligent, productive and collaborative manner.

For its Collegial Ethos

The Faculty will operate in an open, transparent, collegial and united manner. The advancement of the Faculty will provide the first point of reference. Decisions will be taken on the basis of shared information.⁴ Professional courtesy, along with a deep service orientation and a matching sense of accountability for outcomes, will be hallmarks of the Faculty’s management culture.

For its Unity and its Equal Appreciation of Education and Research

The Faculty will act as a body representative of a collection of equally-valued disciplines. It will leave behind cultural and organisational inequalities that hinder its progress – inequalities that have the potential to foster ‘class distinctions’ between colleagues who, at heart, share the same fundamental intent and work to an identical cause. Commonalities in philosophies, programs, courses, pedagogies and operations will be captured for the benefits they bring; where differences exist, they will be understood and valued appropriately.⁵

For its Collaboration-Fostering Approaches

The Faculty will lift its ‘collaborative game’ and reputation. It recognises that, as extensive as its resources may be, the pursuit and attainment of its objectives demands active collaborations between itself and its partners, in mutually beneficial and responsive arrangements.

³ See uq.edu.au/about/mission-statement, accessed 12 December 2017
⁴ This is particularly so where financial information is concerned. Developing financial literacy among staff should be strongly encouraged and supported.
⁵ Former Resolutions 1, 7 and 6-8
The Faculty will become known for its diversity and inclusivity, mirroring the demographics of the community it serves in its student cohorts, among its academics and in the ranks of its researchers, to the ultimate benefit of community-wide health.

We return to the interpretation of these last three values in their education, research and operations contexts at appropriate points later in this document.
The Anticipated Environment

Missions are acted upon, visions attained and strategies fulfilled in the ‘real world’. When workshop participants sought to imagine the environment in which they anticipate that the Faculty will, in all likelihood, operate in the coming decade, they isolated the trends and characteristics set out in the pages that follow. Strategies specific to education, research and other matters canvassed in this document were later elaborated with those trends and characteristics in mind.

Universities have long-enjoyed positions of authority as ‘dispensers’ of knowledge and ‘certifiers’ of the competence achieved by those who enrol in its programs. That privileged position, however, is coming under threat: different bodies have entered the knowledge supply and competence certification arenas, a reflection of technological advances and, more importantly, of a deep shift in the approach to study, to the earning of degrees and to career-management patterns. In an age of increasingly self-curated education and multiple offerings, customer-students can combine options from different sources to suit their individual circumstances and aspirations.

Student expectations have altered, and behaviours along with them. Higher-education and the degrees conferred must, more than ever, translate to value. There is a transactional spirit to the
relationship between the student and the University – an expectation of return for the monies paid. One may agree or disagree as to the ultimate desirability of the change involved, but not about its existence. The only question, the only ‘thing’ that matters ultimately, is how an organisation (like the Faculty) chooses to respond.

Different working-life patterns are emerging: a life-long job or career may grow increasingly far from the norm. ‘Jobs’ are extended in definition and content, or combined in unexpected and specifically individual ways to suit inclination, circumstance or an evolving sense of purpose. Work patterns are increasingly discontinuous, moving from full- to part-time, casual to contract, employee to self-employed. Generally speaking, learning – the updating or diversification of one’s knowledge and skills – has become a life-long affair. None of these trends reconcile easily to fixed education offerings. How will the Faculty adjust those offerings to make them compelling?

As the government’s taxation-based, revenue-generation model struggles to grow in any meaningful way, a relatively static pool of public funds must satisfy rising levels of demand for services and infrastructure, both of them to be had only at increasing cost. When, at best, the revenue pie can barely maintain its size, the contest for a share of it can only grow more intense and/or the portion reduce in size. In such circumstances, it is inevitable that government will look to the returns (societal, economic or other) that the allocation of its limited resources generates. What implications will this have for the Faculty’s degree offerings on the one hand and its research endeavours on the other?

The trend to accountability speaks to the wider reach of the accountability concept in societal terms – i.e. the real, albeit often muted, ‘expectation’ that public monies directed to research will, in an open time frame, bring about improvements in our quality of life and, in the case of health and medicine, in improvements to our longevity, our physical well-being and our ability to combat disease. Society grants ‘market permission’ to those activities which it ultimately sees as beneficial to it. At its most fundamental, it is the unspoken contract that funded research, and the education of health and medical personnel, operate under. The Faculty cannot fail that contract.

A significant evolution is also underway in the community at large and the shape that health care will take within it in years to come: the long-established one-to-one, patient-to-practitioner
focus, along with its frequent hospital-centric (and patient-bed) locus, are shifting as the frame of reference widens and growing importance comes to attach to community health, disease prevention, the treatment and management of endemic diseases, and the self-management of individual health and illness in an increasingly widely-distributed, technology-influenced, multi-party health system.

**Data, Technology and the Future of Care**

Technology is rapidly altering the face of patient care. Remote diagnostics, monitoring and treatment capability will be profoundly affected and widely extended by developments such as those that are taking place in remote sensing; in data transmission, visualisation and management; and in computing power. Further enhanced by artificial intelligence, these elements will alter the act and meaning of consulting as they will medical and para-medical procedures. Boundaries and interactions between humans and machines will be re-set in reach and depth. We will see the consequential birth of vastly different health and case management systems. Inevitably, the curriculum and training of those who will manage and function in this re-shaped environment will demand substantial and, likely as not, frequent adjustment.

**Blurring, Porous Disciplinary Boundaries**

In parallel with the transformation of the practice of care, we will see the blurring of disciplinary domains that were previously strictly defined and interpreted. Bodies of knowledge and practice have already begun extending their traditional remit into germane areas, as a wholistic view of care takes hold. The extension of knowledge boundaries will mean change in roles and responsibilities, and in the manner in which those responsibilities are discharged. The change will reach into structures and operations, and eventually into certification and regulation. While we expect the fundamental knowledge and competency domains to remain, we also foresee that the defining edges of these knowledge domains will grow less sharp and more porous, defining new disciplines and specialisations at their borders.
In the widened reference framework that health will occupy, the Faculty’s engagement with industry will see substantial transformation. Future collaborators may well be drawn from among the manufacturers of technology as well as data and information behemoths, alongside the Faculty’s more traditional associations with biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, health service providers, government agencies and medical research institutions. Where research presses at the boundary of the interaction between humans and science, we are equally likely to see philosophers, ethicists, psychologists, computer scientists, behavioural scientists and social scientists take an active role alongside ‘pure’ medical, biomedical and health disciplines in communities of interest centred on the delivery of projects. Present-day models and forms of collaboration will have to evolve in order to have them satisfy the requirements of the different partners.
No organisation starts from a blank slate. All organisations, this Faculty among them, proceed from an acquired capital base that takes a number of forms—human, financial, operational, infrastructural, historical or reputational, to name some of the more common. But if we take note of strengths, we must also recognise the weaknesses, along with the concerns these weaknesses give rise to. As it did with regard to significant trends at work in the environment, the Faculty took note of its stronger and weaker attributes as part of the strategic reflection. The salient elements of that discussion are set out in the following pages. They too influenced the shaping of the education and research strategies.
Our Strengths

The Faculty’s strengths are many. Six of them carry particular weight when it comes to designing strategy: our staff, students, partnerships, size, infrastructure and reputation. Those strengths are to be consciously and purposefully protected, developed, extended and exploited to best advantage over the years ahead.

Our Staff

The Faculty is rich in intellects, at work in teaching, research and clinical care. The asset they constitute is deep and diverse, made up as it is of long-standing and new staff that reflect the extensive diversity of health expertise strands, from acute medicine to public health, and across regulated, non-regulated, managerial and administrative professions. The depth and diversity of the Faculty’s staff resources gives it resilience in the face of accelerating change.

Our Large Student Body

The Faculty has ‘pulling power’. Over the years it has consistently attracted, taught and graduated a substantial body of students, drawn from domestic and international markets. This ‘pulling power’ has also meant the ability to choose the better academic performers at entry. By and large and considered in their entirety, these attributes continue to amount to a distinct advantage for Faculty and University alike, in the form of a diverse and gifted student body of high academic achievers.

Our Partnerships

The Faculty has developed a broad array of relationships, ranging from short-term collaborations to full partnerships: with teaching and research institutions (nationally and internationally), with industry, with health-services providers and with government (State and Commonwealth), gathered into a network of considerable breadth, depth and diversity. These relationships constitute a valuable asset worthy of protection, care and development.

Our Size

The Faculty is an impressive body by most measures: staff, students, partners, research outputs, reach within the community – all, in total, give the Faculty an anchored presence, a weight and critical mass that translates to a significant advantage when it comes to capturing economies of scale, fostering diversification and informed risk-taking on a scale denied to many other similar – and often competing - institutions.
Our Substantial Infrastructure

The Faculty has developed over time a substantial operating infrastructure of buildings, facilities (many of them highly specialised in design, capability and equipment), systems and practices, with their supporting data, communication and technology networks. The asset thus created, multi-faceted, weighty, deep-reaching, has substantial value. Yet that value may not be recognised at its true worth, given the dispersal and underlying, embedded nature of its constituent parts.

Our Reputation

When successes accumulate over decades, they accrue and form into an institutional story that eventually translates to a reputation – a ‘brand’, to use the commercial term. Reputation, in turn, attracts further interest that morphs into commitments: to undergraduate and post-graduate study; to involvement and participation in research; to investment and funding; to on-going association (alumni) and contribution (philanthropy); and to the shaping of multi-form cross-sector associations. Prestigious, successful institutions, like the Faculty, are influential in the community. Our challenge lies in recognising that influence and exercising it to beneficial ends.

Our Weaker Points

We have weaknesses as well as strengths. The seven that matter most to the fulfilment of our ambitions are listed overleaf. They concern the lack of clarity in the Faculty’s purpose and the shared nature of that purpose; inequalities in status between disciplines; a tendency to the reactive coupled with an aversion to informed risk-taking; an uneven partnership record; the increasingly challenged relevance of the Faculty’s education offerings in certain domains; the need for a parallel adaptation in the management and organisation of the Faculty’s research effort to have them match evolving funding models and practices; and the improvement of performance in the provision of services and the utilisation of infrastructure.
The Clarity of our Purpose

We lack a sense of clear purpose – an articulated, unifying, shared sense of direction by which to steer our course as a body. Without that reference, we struggle to determine which strategic priority or course of action should win over others. Absent that sense of common purpose, our unity falters; the well-integrated core gives way to loosely-connected units; energy dissipates between these units; and the greater opportunity slips away. ‘All things to all people’ amounts to a failure to exercise our responsibility to the whole.

Inequalities of Status between Disciplines

The Faculty is greater than its medical dimension and substantially greater than its MD program alone. Yet medicine has too often been the habitual prism through which the Faculty’s world is ordered. Inequalities of status between disciplines make for dysfunction, frustration and resentment. They must be resolved via educational, operational, organisational and behavioural adjustments if the Faculty is to reap the benefits of the discipline diversity present in its midst and exploit it for the strength that it constitutes.

A Tendency to the Reactive and an Aversion to Informed Risk-Taking

Faculty decisions have tended to the reactive rather than the proactive. Ultimately, the strategic risk is one of ‘me-tooism’ for those caught in that space, as they turn now this way and now that, in order to match the moves of nimbler, more alert, purposeful and determined competitors. This cannot be the way of the Faculty. Through the revisitation and affirmation of its purpose and intended future, the Faculty must give itself the base from which to lead and exercise its entrepreneurship and creativity.

The Uneven Quality of our Partner Relationships

The Faculty’s teaching and research activities depend on productive relationships with a suite of partners and associates in the broad domain of health. The organisation’s future successes, depend on the protection, enhancement and extension of these fundamental relationships, as well as on the addition of new ones. Too often however, these relationships have not been properly nurtured, tended or managed. Their true value has not been recognised and the care paid to them has been uneven. Attitudes and practices reach a much higher standard, if the Faculty is to be seen as an attractive, ‘first-choice’ partner.
The Increasingly Challenged Relevance of our Education Offerings

The relevance of the Faculty’s offerings to undergraduate and postgraduate student cohorts with different expectations, learning patterns and career ambitions is in need of review. This is not about forsaking scientific, professional or technical expertise. To the contrary, depth of expertise matters more than ever. Rather, it is how that expertise is taught, developed, acquired and applied that is called into question. The Faculty’s future offering must be about much more than pathways to medicine: it must be about pathways into health futures, medicine among them. Tailoring the Faculty’s offering to have it respond to new demands entails significant change: in program offerings, in courses and curricula, and in cross-disciplinary arrangements.

An Approach to Research often out of step with Shifting Priorities and Practices

The investment of resources in research is now taking place in a substantially different environment to the one in which past Faculty successes were garnered. Changing rules, growing demands on the public purse, sharper competition over available funds and evolving circumstances necessitate the adjustment – and greater cohesiveness – of responses, responses that in turn are expected to address meaningful problems associated with individual and community health. The Faculty must make sure that its approach to the conduct of research is well-directed and effectively structured to extract the best from prevailing conditions.

Stretched and often Outdated Services and Infrastructure

For some time now, the Faculty has struggled with the delivery of information and services, as well as the efficient use of its infrastructure. Disparate (and at times opaque) systems, incomplete data, limited staff experience and uneven resourcing have meant that sense-making, informed decision-making and risk management have tended to be arduous, time-consuming and problematic tasks. This state of affairs has had two key consequences: it has denied much of the opportunity for optimisation of asset use; and it made for considerable inefficiencies. These weaknesses have been recognised and work carried out to remedy them. Yet much remains to be done still, if the Faculty is to have a business delivery system capable of powering the future education and research activities it envisages.
Education in the Future Tense:

Five Active Principles,
Four Areas of Concentration,
Twenty Supporting Strategies
in search of Excellence in Education
Congruence with the University’s Strategic Plan

The University Strategic Plan rests on three long-term objectives. The first one places students at its core by providing them with an education and experience capable of transforming them into ‘game-changing graduates who make outstanding contributions and address complex issues with a global perspective.’

“This goal directs us to ensure we develop an educational experience that maximises our students’ personal and academic development. We will support them to become enterprising, independent thinkers with the leadership, creativity and problem-solving skills that empower them to create positive change with industry, academia, the workplace and society more generally.”

University of Queensland, Strategic Plan 2018-2021

That objective, along with its suite of supporting strategies, resonates deeply with the Faculty’s own foundation principles in matters of education and the seven associated strategies it has crafted to actualise them. The foundation principles and strategies are set out below.

Education: Five Active Principles

Education is the first of the Faculty’s two fundamental activities and responsibilities. The Faculty’s mission, when it comes to education, rests on five mutually supportive active principles:

- **Education: More than ‘Teaching’**
  The Faculty’s responsibility is to the *education* of the students enrolled in its programs or courses. That responsibility includes, but is not limited to, teaching. It is, importantly, a shared, Faculty-wide responsibility and commitment, into which all will participate.6

- **Education & Research: Equal Value**
  The Faculty puts as high a value on the provision of education as it does on the conduct of research. Education and research are its dual, and

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6 Former Resolution 9
equal, responsibilities. They will be treated as such in the allocation of its energies and resources.\(^7\)

**Education: Three Key Goals**

The Faculty undertakes the education of the students it admits to its programs and courses with three objectives in mind:

- The development and attainment of the students’ potential
- Their verified mastery of the knowledge and skills associated with their chosen program of study, to a level where both can be readily and productively applied in the workplace; and, more widely,
- The acquisition of the intellectual habits that will equip them to adapt to rapidly-evolving job and work structures.

**Deep Knowledge as the Essential Foundation**

The acquisition of a sound knowledge base, coupled with the demonstrated proficiency in the application of that knowledge, remain the foundations of an education in the Faculty of Medicine. The addition of new skills must occur in parallel with the pursuit of these priorities – never at the cost of their dilution.

**Protection of Program and Degree Integrity**

The Faculty recognises the importance that students increasingly attach to flexibility in curating their preferred course of study. While the Faculty will seek to accommodate personal preferences in the selection of courses, it will not do so at the expense of degree integrity.

**Four Areas of Concentration**

All subordinated to the overarching pursuit of excellence identified earlier, the five operating principles reflect the spirit of the Faculty’s endeavour when it comes to education. To give the active principles effect, the Faculty has designated four areas of concentration. The areas of concentration are:

1. Shaping student cohorts for success [2 supporting strategies]
2. Devising programs fit for their purpose and time [4 supporting strategies]
3. Supporting excellence in educational practice [7 supporting strategies]
4. Delivering a superlative student experience [7 supporting strategies]

**Concentration 1:**

**Shaping Student Cohorts for Success**

The Faculty is intent on the pursuit of excellence, be that in regard to the products of its education or those of its research. In regard to education, this means

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\(^7\) Former Resolution 10
attracting and retaining the most capable students by aptitude and intellect. Attracting and retaining those who are most likely to succeed in their education endeavours translates to two cohort-shaping and cohort-enhancing sub-strategies:

**The Right Candidates: More than Academic Performance**

The conscious and active building of a student body whose attributes match six fundamentals supportive of the Faculty’s mission: gender balance; socio-economic diversity; demographic-experiential diversity; cultural, ethnic and geographic diversity; indigenous participation; and capability recognition.8

**A Beneficial Mix**

The purposeful and focused development of a healthy mix of domestic and international students, at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

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**Supporting Strategy/Project 1: Shaping Student Cohorts (Admission Practices)**

The Faculty will review its admission prerequisites and practices so that they integrate the six fundamentals (i.e. gender balance; socio-economic diversity; demographic-experiential diversity; cultural, ethnic and geographic diversity; indigenous participation; and capability recognition) in the design of its admission framework, in its application by staff and in the technologies used to drive and support it.

**Immediacy Rating:** ●

**Supporting Strategy/Project 2 Shaping Student Cohorts (Domestic & International Students)**

The Faculty will settle upon and articulate the rationale and set of guidelines by which it will determine the optimal mix of domestic and international students represented in its cohorts.

**Immediacy Rating:** ●

**Concentration 2: Devising Programs Fit for their Purpose and Times**

As part of its strategic plan, the University intends to extend a ‘systematic, UQ-wide’ movement to renew its courses in an effort to promote student engagement. The Faculty is at one with that intent, as the subsidiary strategies below demonstrate. In fact, in the case of its medical degree, the review work is

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8 Former Resolution 10
already underway. The effort the Faculty has in mind, however, reaches well beyond a single degree. It is based on a dual recognition:

**A Varied Collection of Programs with Low Flexibility**

Some programs and curricula, along with their delivery methods and materials, have remained unchanged for some years. Others have been the object of isolated updates. In other cases again, additional courses have been launched with low enrolments and little evident benefit to the Faculty. The resulting patchwork is hard for students to navigate, dissipates the Faculty’s focus and imposes a significant administrative burden. In some instances, the Faculty’s offering is actually uncompetitive when compared to the offerings of other institutions.

**Altered Student Expectations**

The market that the Faculty’s degrees is meant to address is undergoing profound changes: in the health industry itself, as well as in the students’ ambitions and aspirations; in knowledge acquisition methods; in information access and use; and in expectations of the learning experience. Ageing products that fail to keep up with evolving demand run the risk of obsolescence – higher education programs among them.

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“The success of our students is central to our mission and the quality of their educational experience is a priority... Expectations among students, government and the broader community are changing as technology advances, competition increases and the workforce and the economy undergo significant structural reform... A UQ degree must provide students with the skills, knowledge and attributes to successfully navigate a rapidly-changing world.”

University of Queensland, Strategic Plan 2018-2021
Acting on these imperatives translates to four sub-strategies concerned with:

- The review and adjustment of the Faculty’s programs and courses to ensure their fitness for the times
- The review and adjustment of its degree structures and of the pathways between them in order to enhance flexibility
- The review and adjustment of its post-graduate offerings
- The development of advanced education offerings to academic title holders, practicing clinicians and alumni.

**Supporting Strategy/Project 3: Review of Programs and Curricula**

The Faculty will review its programs to ensure their continuing fitness for purpose. As part of that exercise, care will be taken to ensure that each program is properly “framed” (i.e. end-objective; fitness of curricula; and assessable competencies). The review will also examine opportunities for the development cross-disciplinary degrees in emerging areas such as biotechnology and biomedical engineering.

**Immediacy Rating:**  ●

**Supporting Strategy/Project 4: Review of Degree Structures**

The Faculty will review the structure of its degrees in a bid to improve their alignment across disciplines in respect of both content and duration, as key elements in the development of flexible pathways between them. The exercise will also address the level of degree ‘tailoring’ that could be offered to meet student preferences, bearing in mind the ‘deep knowledge and competency’ principle.

**Immediacy Rating:**  ●

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9 In that regard, particular attention is to be paid to a structure in which the last year of a Faculty-offered three-year degree would be recognised as the first year of a medical degree (effectively shortening the acquisition of an MD qualification to six years rather than the present-day, uncompetitive, seven-year commitment).
Supporting Strategy/Project 5:  
Review of Post-Graduate Coursework Offerings

The Faculty will review each of its programs to ensure their continuing fitness for purpose. As part of that exercise, care will be taken to ensure that each program is properly ‘framed’ (i.e. end-objective; fitness of curricula; and assessable competencies). The review will also critically assess whether the Faculty has the mandate and expertise necessary to provide each of its current post-graduate offerings.

Immediacy Rating: ●

Supporting Strategy/Project 6:  
Development of Further Education Offerings

The Faculty will define what further education opportunities it could extend to alumni, academic title holders and practicing clinicians. These could range from simple library access and the maintenance of UQ email access for alumni, to more involved offerings centring on research methods, telemedicine practice and advanced technology use (for instance) for academic title holders and practicing clinicians.

Immediacy Rating: ●

Concentration 3:  
The Pursuit of Educational Excellence

Over the last two decades – and the last one in particular, the nature of teaching has evolved, as has the role of those who are tasked with teaching in higher-learning institutions: from undisputed authorities dispensing truth in their subject matter, they have increasingly become guides in the vast fields of knowledge and information pertinent to their disciplines, facilitators of learning, development mentors and curators of the education process.

The Faculty, like the University, recognises those changes and their implications for the development of those who teach and for the adjustment of teaching practices. Over the years ahead, the Faculty is determined that its teaching effort

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10 These three elements are extracted from the package of tasks reflected in Part 1, Diagram 1 of the Workshop 3 documentation, as conflated in Resolution 13.
will achieve four key outcomes:

**Curriculum Design and Delivery**  The Faculty will earn a reputation for advanced curriculum design and excellence in innovative delivery

**The Meshing of Teaching and Research**  The Faculty will achieve excellence in the productive fusion of its teaching and research endeavour, across disciplines

**Reputation**  The Faculty will see the quality of its teaching endeavour recognised in national and international teaching awards; and, ultimately,

**Recognition**  The Faculty will find itself in a position where there is healthy competition to earn a place within the ranks of its teachers.

Achieving these outcomes entails a long-term effort and the introduction of a number of supporting measures, expressed below as a suite of seven complementary strategies.\(^{11}\)

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**Supporting Strategy/Project 7:**  
**Articulation of a Faculty-Wide Approach to Teaching**

The Faculty will develop and articulate its Faculty-wide approach to teaching: its purpose, its intended outcomes and its anchor philosophies, pedagogies and practices, for both the academic and clinical branches of the teaching endeavour. It will also articulate the metrics by which adherence to those standards will be measured.

**Immediacy Rating:**  

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\(^{11}\) The seven supporting strategies ‘unbundle’ the former Resolution 21 into its constituent parts, so that these can be tackled as individual initiatives. See Record of Proceedings, Workshop 3, p65.
Supporting Strategy/Project 8:
Optimising the Use of the Faculty’s Full Teaching Capability

The Faculty will develop the means by which to harness to best effect the full educational capability available within its ranks: academics and clinicians certainly, but also alumni, HDR students and partner organisations, introducing students to the rich mix of knowledge sources and expertise they can access via the Faculty.

Immediacy Rating: ●

Supporting Strategy/Project 9:
Harmonising the Diversity of Contributions

The Faculty will develop the means of introducing those who teach to the whole of the curriculum, so that their contribution is contextualised and harmonised with the other parts of that curriculum.

Immediacy Rating: ●

Supporting Strategy/Project 10:
Updating the Teaching Support Capability

The Faculty will implement the technological base (specialist, technology-savvy support expertise, along with platforms, tools and facilities) needed to support effective, up-to-date teaching practice and delivery at scale in a digital age – material design included.

Immediacy Rating: ●

Supporting Strategy/Project 11:
Mentoring for Better Teaching

The Faculty will look to develop and introduce the on-going teaching improvement practices that will lift the quality of teaching, through means such as mentoring, ‘buddying’ and peer review.

Immediacy Rating: ●
Supporting Strategy/Project 12: Career Recognition of Teaching

The Faculty will develop and introduce a career model that acknowledges the contribution of educators to the Faculty’s (and the University’s) endeavours, whether academics or clinicians; that recognises the importance of on-going professional development; that rewards excellence in the provision of education and teaching; and that offers attractive career prospects for those whose gifts and passion lie in the field of education rather than that of research.

Immediacy Rating: ●

Supporting Strategy/Project 13: Succession Planning

The Faculty will develop and introduce Faculty-wide provisions for the protection and enhancement of the Faculty’s teaching capability through strategically-minded succession planning, so that the ‘teaching asset’ it holds grows in value and strength, and does not face depletion for lack of foresight.

Immediacy Rating: ●

Concentration 4: Delivering a Superlative Student Experience

The acquisition by students of the knowledge and skills prescribed for their profession or occupation takes place within a context that determines the quality of the experience they encounter. Like the University, the Faculty understands the criticality of that experience to the overall success of the education process. And like the University again, it is determined that the quality of experience generated by studies under the Faculty’s roof should prove not only beneficial but, wherever possible, transformational. Attaining that outcome poses a particular challenge, however, given patchy student satisfaction scores of recent years.

The Faculty will focus its energy on seven areas when it comes to the shaping an outstanding student experience. The areas are concerned with:

- The clarity of mutual expectations
- The quality of assessments
- The personalisation of the education process
- The better meshing of education with research
- The creation of a sense of community
- The broadening of experiential horizons
- The enhancement of administrative and support mechanisms.

Clarity of Expectations

When students enter into a program or course in the Faculty, they have certain expectations: about the substance of that education, the types and standards of teaching they will receive, the guidance and resources they will be able to call upon, and the general quality of their experience. As a Faculty, we have expectations of students too: about their application, for instance, about attendance and about attitudes and behaviours related to their performance. Clarity of expectations is fundamental to the success of the education process. These expectations should be articulated and communicated. Progress and behaviours can then be managed in the light of these expectations.

Supporting Strategy/Project 14:
Articulating and Communicating Mutual Expectations

The Faculty in the first instance (and individual Schools and disciplines in the second) will define, articulate and communicate, for each program, the mutual responsibilities and expectations of the parties involved in the education process when it comes to studying in the Faculty and its Schools.\textsuperscript{12,13}

Immediacy Rating: \textbullet
Quality of Assessments

Assessments are an integral, essential part of the University and the Faculty’s education package. Assessments serve the student as much as the institution. Throughout the program or course, they offer guidance to the students and the institution as to the students’ development, alongside an assurance as to the levels of competence attained. Ultimately, the assessment vouchsafes a student’s graduation readiness, as it does the quality of the education provided by the Faculty and the effectiveness of the pedagogies it used in providing that education. Assessments performed under the Faculty’s umbrella should meet certain ‘non-negotiable’ standards, notwithstanding the diversity of subject matters examined and their particular technical demands.

Supporting Strategy/Project 15: Quality of Assessments

The Faculty will adjust and modernise its present-day assessment practices across all programs and courses so that consistent, effective, technology-based (electronic) assessments are introduced as soon as possible. 14

Immediacy Rating: ●

Personalisation of Education

Insofar as it reflects care for the individual, a personalised approach contributes significantly to the quality of a student’s experience. It also makes eminent pedagogic sense, in terms of the Faculty’s ability to support students’ learning and see them through their study program. Advances in data and technology make that level of attention a real possibility. Besides the advantages personalisation offers the student, the Faculty sees three key types of benefits arising from this enhancement:

- An improved ability to match student aspirations, ability, circumstances and learning preferences to particular programs, both at the start of the students’ journey and progressively, at important articulation points in their development

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14 Former Resolution 14. This project also references the ‘Reliable Assessment’ item featured in Diagram 1, Paper 3, p44
• An improved ability to provide course materials, knowledge and information across the full range of learning modes, so that students can personalise that aspect of their learning experience
• An improved ability to track a student’s progress and journey, and thus provide guidance and advice based on that tracking.

Supporting Strategy/Project 16:
Personalisation of the Education Process

In addition to the provision of more flexible degree pathways (see Project 4), the Faculty will systematise its ability to recognise individual students, their aspirations, preferences and circumstances. It will use the information that systematisation enables:

• To obtain as close a match as possible between student aspiration and capability
• To track student performance as a means of guiding and advising them as individuals across the stages of their UQ and Faculty journey
• To tailor their learning to the range of available modes – be they traditional or digital, as a further means of personalising their experience.  

Immediacy Rating: 

Meshing Education with Research

The University is determined ‘...to embed [its] research excellence within the core of [its] teaching to gain cutting-edge knowledge with a highly-valued and distinctive skill set’. 16 The ambition aims to ‘...create inquiry-based learning opportunities that incorporate UQ’s cutting edge research to build student’s advanced knowledge base and skills critical to employability’. 17,18

Like the University, the Faculty recognises the breadth and depth of the benefits that would accrue to all participants, were its education effort to be better meshed with its research effort. A closer integration of the two activities would likely give students a sharper sense of purpose. It would add impetus to their learning, excite a taste for discovery and establish their sense of participation in a

15 Former Resolution 16. This project should dovetail with work already underway to integrate student data.
16 Our Students’ Challenges are Our Challenges, Student Strategy, University of Queensland
17 Ibid., Initiative 2, Goal 1: Game-Changing Graduates
18 Using a vehicle such as the University’s Undergraduate Research Program, for instance
community of science-based endeavour – and, as a result, inject further capability, creativity and intellectual horsepower into the research endeavour itself. Through its network of clinical care providers, research institutes and research centres, the Faculty of Medicine is particularly well-positioned to bridge the education-research divide and make engagement in research an integral part of its education process.

Supporting Strategy/Project 17:
Meshing Education with Research

As part of the review of curricula discussed earlier in this document and of the pedagogies used to pass on the knowledge and skills involved, the Faculty will devise the means by which its students can be exposed to, and participate in, purposeful research. In doing so, it will draw on the opportunities provided by research centres. 19

Immediacy Rating: ●

Community and Well-Being

The Faculty acknowledges the importance of a sense of community as a fundamental element in the quality of student experience; as a material contributor to later professional life through the networks and connections established; and as a critical component of general student well-being and success. With that in mind, the Faculty will provide, as best it can, conditions that enable students to derive maximum benefit from their membership in the Faculty. It will look to:

- Encourage learning in team and project environments, with particular attention to the multi-disciplinarity of both teams and projects
- Introduce a mentor or ‘buddy’ system in which senior peers provide students with guidance and support; and
- Put to good and productive use the information it gathers on student performance as a means of better targeting the individual support it can offer them.

19 Former Resolution 18.
Supporting Strategy/Project 18: Community and Well-Being

The Faculty will:

- Make teamwork and group projects an integral part of its pedagogy in order to build stronger connections between students.
- Introduce support mechanisms such as assigned mentors or academic advisors as part of its broader care for students’ well-being.
- Consult student performance information as a means of predicting support needs and offering targeted assistance.20

Immediacy Rating: ⬤

Broadening Experiential Horizons

The University’s Student Strategy calls for ‘global extension experiences’ that involve studying, working or volunteering in cross-cultural and multi-cultural environments.21

The Faculty sees such experiences not only as an important means of personal enrichment, but also as an important element in the education and formation of health professionals. Exposure to different environments, circumstances, conditions and systems complements the formal learning that takes place within the confines of University and Faculty facilities.

Extension experiences offered by the Faculty can take the form of local practicums, placements and internships in partner organisations, from research centres to commercial, private-sector enterprises operating in a kindred field. They can be local (i.e. occurring in Australia) or international. The Faculty should draw on its extensive network of participating organisations and ‘install’ itself at the centre of a web of diverse extension opportunities that it will encourage students to take up. In some instances, it may even choose to integrate such experiences into the curriculum, and recognise their value as credits towards the completion of a specific course of studies.

Supporting Strategy/Project 19: Broadening Experiential Horizons

20 Former Resolution 20
21 See Initiative 5, Goal 1: Game-Changing Graduates, Student Strategy 2016-2020
The Faculty will broaden its program of meaningful extension experiences for its students, given the importance of these experiences in the development of job-ready, ‘game-changing’ professionals. Where appropriate, it will investigate the possibility of offering credits for these extension experiences.\textsuperscript{22}

**Immediacy Rating:**

Enhancement of administrative support mechanisms

The Faculty recognises the critical part that outcome-oriented, efficient and effective operations play in the quality of the day-to-day experience of students and staff. It also recognises that present-day arrangements are unfit for the future that the Faculty is designing for its students and staff.

**Supporting Strategy/Project 20:**
Enhancement of Administrative Support Mechanisms

The Faculty will continue to pursue with all necessary vigour its current comprehensive and integrated change program for administrative, professional, ICT and infrastructure functions, with the aim of delivering highly-responsive and technology-savvy operational support for all.\textsuperscript{23}

**Immediacy Rating:**

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\textsuperscript{22} Former Resolution 21.

\textsuperscript{23} Former Resolution 17. In so doing, the Faculty will capitalise on work already put in train in a range of support environments over the last twelve months.
Research in the Future Tense:

Five Active Principles,
Two Areas of Concentration,
Fifteen Strategies
in search of
Excellence in Research
Congruence with the University’s Strategic Plan

The University has stated its intention of delivering ‘...globally significant solutions to challenges by generating new knowledge and partnered innovation’ through the institution’s research endeavour. In support of that broad ambition, it is committing to greater interdisciplinary collaborations, locally and internationally; better partnering with industry, government and the community; the better utilisation of HDR capability; and the further development of its research infrastructure – to name only the more salient aspects of its commitment to research stated in its plan.

These and other related aspects of the University’s research endeavour have strong anchors in the Faculty’s own intentions, as evidenced in the foundation principles, concentrations and strategies it has formulated.

“There will be a continued expectation that research will be undertaken at the highest academic standard with the highest ethical principles... UQ remains committed to both fundamental and translational research... UQ will become a hub that brings the best expertise together to creatively solve complex problems through research and innovation.’

University of Queensland, Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Research:
Five Active Principles

The Faculty’s research effort will answer to five active principles. They are:

Purpose The Faculty’s research effort will be explicitly and demonstrably focused upon the betterment of individual and community health. It will do so with an eye to social equity in a world characterised by an increasing polarisation of wealth and resources between populations.
**Scope**

The Faculty’s effort will embrace the full continuum of the research **endeavour**, from basic discovery to applications. It will preference outcomes that enhance health and well-being in demonstrable ways.

**Longevity**

The Faculty will manage its research **endeavour prudently**, in order to **ensure its longevity**. Particular attention will be paid to the management of research investments, using a model that recognises established, emerging and new fields of **endeavour**.

**Standard**

The achievement of excellence will be the standard and hallmark of **Faculty research**. Faculty resources, internal organisation, infrastructure, culture and operations will be designed and managed with that fundamental criterion in mind.

**Reputation**

The quality of the Faculty's research effort will see it play a dominant and recognised role in the advancement of science, clinical practice and **health system delivery**. A dominant and recognised presence in research can be exercised in different ways: as a leader; as a credible and sought-after participant or partner; or as a facilitator, coordinator or catalyst.  

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**Research-Specific Challenges in the Wider Environment**

The Faculty’s research **endeavour builds on a suite of strengths**: its powerful collection of research intellects; an enviable reputation; a resilient and collaborative research ethos; a valued ‘freedom to roam’ in search of answers; an embrace of the full research continuum; and an enviable research infrastructure. These advantages are precious and will be exploited to the fullest.

On the other side of the ledger, the Faculty’s research effort will have to contend with the same external forces confronting its educational **endeavour**. It will also be subject to forces and influences particular to its environment. Recognition of these, summarised in the table overleaf, has informed the nomination of the Faculty’s areas of concentration and the development of the associated strategies.

**Knowledge Expansion**

The Faculty expects to see a marked increase in the knowledge base that underpins all aspects of its research **endeavour**, from discovery to translational applications. Advances will follow hard on the heels of each

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24 The five foundation principles are a distillation of material set out in former Resolution 24 and its lead-in text. See Record of Proceedings, Workshop 3, p83
other, especially in those fields served by powerful platforms such as genomics, biostatistics and nanotechnologies.

The power of data analytics, digitisation and cognitive computing is transforming science and its practice. In the process, it is opening up new realms of research endeavour, from the microbiome to synthetic biology, genomics IT, microfluidics and epigenetics. That power will exercise a transformative influence, the boundaries of which are difficult to predict. Two things are certain however: research opportunities will multiply and, with them, the criticality of an organisation’s ability and competence in recognising and seizing them.

The impact of the accelerating expansion of knowledge will be significant. It will not only push back boundaries within fields of expertise, but is also likely to lead to a comingling of disciplines under the influence of expanding partnerships. Further, it is probable that these fresh associations will, within the decadal timeframe of this plan, open up new fields of research endeavour.

The interaction of these forces is likely to accelerate research project life-cycles and change the organisational models that support them. An institution’s ability to establish teams and projects rapidly and efficiently will matter more than ever, as will the institution’s ability to disband these same teams and projects, and re-deploy the resources and assets involved with minimum disruption and loss of capability.

The task of managing teams and projects will prove more challenging as parties to a project are likely to come not only from within the Faculty or the ranks of its present-day research partners, but also from other institutions and industry participants with whom the Faculty has only limited (or no) ties. Fresh, ‘unprecedented’ partnerships will see the light of day.

Historical funding models and arrangements are expected to come under further pressure and morph over time. In the years ahead, it is unlikely that funding will keep pace with the explosion in research needs and opportunities. While it is expected that government will continue to play a significant role (and change funding rules along the way), the share of the total research effort supported by established funding bodies is likely to remain static or even contract. Industry, as well as the community at large, will be called upon to bridge this funding gap.

This broad evolution of funding sources is likely to influence the types of research that attract support. In this scenario, the research endeavour in general could – unless it is carefully managed – inflect towards the translational and the applied at the expense of discovery-led initiatives. In such a context, the strategic management of the Faculty’s allocation of funds across the spectrum of the research endeavour will be important.
Two Areas of Concentration

To give effect to its five active principles in the environment circumstances described above, the Faculty has designated two areas of concentration for its research effort over the coming decade. The areas of concentration are:

1. The systematic pursuit of excellence [6 supporting strategies]
2. The scaling-up of capability and capacity [9 supporting strategies]

Pursuing Excellence

Research excellence is likely to prove the critical success factor in the Faculty's endeavour, and the key to both viability and sustainability of its research enterprise. Sub-standard effort can no longer form part of the research 'menu'. A purposeful and professional approach will be brought to the management and governance of the Faculty's total research effort.

Scaling up Capability and Capacity

Faced with a scenario in which knowledge expands at an accelerated rate and research opportunities increase apace, two conclusions stand out: first, approaches to the conduct of research used in the past will become less viable as the research engine labours under a multiplying load. Second, unless changes are made to the machinery of research (i.e. its organisation models, its processes, its tools and platforms), there is a real risk that the Faculty’s efforts will lose currency and relevance over time. A significant program of capability enhancement will be required, along with appropriate organisational, operational and technological adjustments.

Concentration 1: Pursuing Excellence in Research

The pursuit of excellence has animated much of the Faculty's past research effort. The strategic difference articulated here gravitates around two notions: first, the introduction of a systematic approach to the pursuit of excellence; and second, the application of that approach Faculty-wide. Six strategies speak to this. They are concerned with:

- Measuring research performance (two aspects)
- Determining areas of research strength and concentration
- Determining areas of priority research investment
- Protecting research investment across the research continuum
- Focusing the grant application.
Measuring Research Performance

Numerous external metrics exist by which to assess the quality of research outputs against those of peers. The Faculty will continue to reference these as essential markers of its research.

Supporting Strategy/Project 21: Measurement of Research Performance: External Metrics

The Faculty will develop and agree the dashboard of external metrics by which it will assess its research performance year-on-year.

Immediacy Rating:

Supporting Strategy/Project 22: Measurement of Research Performance: Internal Metrics

The Faculty will introduce an internal system by which to monitor and lift the quality of its research effort. The internal system will assess the degree to which the Faculty’s research endeavours deliver against the organisation’s research values and ambitions. The system will operate without prejudice to accepted external research quality metrics.

Immediacy Rating:

Determining Areas of Research Strength and Concentration

A number of concepts and factors go to support the development of areas of research concentration. They include the pursuit of excellence, which demands depth rather than breadth and thus requires choices between available options; resource limitations, which also necessitate the weighing up of investment options; the attractive power of critical mass, and so on.

Over time, the Faculty has demonstrated considerable research capability in areas that range from antimicrobial resistance and infectious diseases to immunology, gerontology, pathology and diagnostics, brain and mental health – to name only a few. In an environment in which critical mass and the pursuit of excellence will

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25 Among the more common being (a) total grant income and (b) citations, influence of the shaping of guidelines and, increasingly, societal impact or benefit.

26 The metrics will include, inter alia, total grant income (goal: The Faculty’s research is consistently ranked in the top four institutions in the country); and citations (goal: Consistently rising trend year-on-year)

27 Former Resolution 25
demand a degree of concentration, the Faculty should determine where it will *predominantly* (but not exclusively) direct its research effort and resources over time.

Answering that question requires that key cross-Faculty research strengths be agreed upon.

**Supporting Strategy/Project 23:**
**Determining Areas of Research Strength**

The Faculty will identify and agree upon its cross-Faculty research strengths. It will do so, in the first instance (subject to later external validation), by using a simple framework (such as the University's 'Discover-Impact-Engage/Key Themes' matrix) to sort nominated strengths into uncontested, possible or doubtful strength categories. The results of the exercise will provide a starting point for later, more structured forms of decision-making when it comes to investment in research opportunities. The exercise will also assist the marketing and promotion of the Faculty’s research priorities.

**Immediacy Rating:**

**Determining Areas of Priority Research Investment**

With the above in mind and considering the strategic objectives of the Faculty concerning (a) the pursuit of excellence and (b) the strengthening of its research reputation in a highly competitive environment, it is logical and prudent that the Faculty should provide definitive support to those research projects and proposals that lie at the intersection of its demonstrated research capability on the one hand, and health issues and matters of particular societal interest or importance, on the other.28

**Supporting Strategy/Project 24:**
**Determining Areas of Priority Research Investment**

The Faculty will exercise constructive *strategic* guidance over the direction of its research endeavours in order to (a) increase their likelihood of funding

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28 As these are more likely to attract funding than others.
success; (b) optimise the use of available resources; (c) build on and enhance the Faculty’s strengths; and (d) add to its reputation for excellence in outcomes. To that end, the Faculty will develop the methodology it will apply to the management of its research effort and related investment, in a proactive and deliberate manner.\textsuperscript{29}

Immediacy Rating:  

Protecting Research Investment across the Research Continuum

Strategic by design and with an eye to longevity, the Faculty’s research funding and management apparatus should encompass three horizons of effort concurrently:

- Research in \textit{established} fields in which the Faculty and its partners enjoy a solid reputation for achievement
- Research in \textit{emerging} fields, the results of which demonstrate substantial promise; and
- Experimental, i.e. \textit{new} research endeavours – i.e. the ‘longer-odd’ projects, the potential fruits of which remain unknown and uncertain. (See diagram overleaf)
### Supporting Strategy/Project 25: Protecting Research Investment across the Research Continuum

The Faculty will monitor and adjust the spread of its research investments to ensure that it nurtures efforts in established, emerging and new research areas. The quantum of investment in each of the three categories should follow a 60/30/10 rule of thumb. The portfolio of investments will be reviewed by the Faculty in active consultation with interested parties on an annual basis, to ensure that the relative proportions are broadly and generally kept.  

#### Immediacy Rating:

![Immediacy Rating](image_url)

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### Focusing the Grant Application Effort

The preparation and submission of grant applications is a fundamental part of the research business. A regular part of the academic calendar, the activity is time and energy-consuming.

In looking to raise the quality of the applications submitted in whole or in part under its name, the Faculty is keen to:

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Footnote:

30 Former Resolution 29
• Raise its strike rate (i.e. the ratio of successful applications to submitted applications), and thus limit the reputational impost of a poor success rate
• Reduce the efficiency burden and opportunity costs associated with the commitment of time and energy to proposals that are unlikely to find support.

Supporting Strategy/Project 26: Focusing the Grant Application Effort

As part of its resolve to make best use of available resources and target their utilisation to best effect, the Faculty will concentrate its energies on those grant applications with a higher likelihood of success. Conversely, it will discourage those applications that lack substance or whose proponents have met with a high level of rejection over time. 31

Immediacy Rating: •

Concentration 2: Scaling Up Capacity and Capability

The Faculty’s research achievements depend first and foremost on the calibre of the intellects it recruits to its cause. Successful research, moreover, is a long game. Established resources must be given the conditions in which to prosper and, in turn, replenished. None of these outcomes occur by accident – least of all where excellence is concerned. While the Faculty has had some notable successes in developing its research capability over recent decades, it is by no means certain that merely maintaining current ad-hoc approaches will produce the hoped-for results.

Earlier in its strategic reflection on education, the Faculty resolved to attend more carefully and systematically to the building of quality both in its student cohort and in the academic body. Now, in the case of research, the intention is similar: to take a series of steps that should enable the purposeful attraction, development, retention and continuous replenishment of its research body. The steps in question take the form of seven initiatives, concerned with:

31 Former Resolution 27
Improving the Faculty’s collaborative capability

The proactive scouting and recruitment of bright minds

Strengthening the Faculty’s body of clinical academics

Increasing the participation of early-career researchers in clinical research

Attracting top domestic HDRs

Recruiting and retaining a greater proportion of Fellows

Acquiring key platforms for research.

Improving the Faculty’s Collaborative Capability

Collaborations are fundamental to the success of the Faculty’s research agenda for the years ahead. In the research environment we foresee, it is imperative that the Faculty approach the cultivation of collaborations in a more professional manner than it has in the past. Relying on a ‘business-as-usual’ approach will not suffice: a partnership ‘machine’ must be built and brought to life; it must be given a strategic frame of reference for its operation, and it must be made to generate systematically assessed, consistent decisions surrounding partnership opportunities. The task of achieving excellence in this area is a significant and ‘future-critical’ one. In practice, it will entail:

- **Developing** a deep and accurate understanding of the ambitions, interests and needs of the Faculty’s existing partners
- **Participating** actively in the process of exploring, identifying and shaping research opportunities with those partners, in a systematic and consistent manner
- **Exploring** interests of the Faculty that may coincide with those of new partners in fields such as data analytics, artificial intelligence, and virtual and augmented reality
- **Cultivating** the business acumen and capability essential for the translation of a research opportunity into a funded project
- **Building** the advocacy skills required to write, ‘package’ and present research propositions in a compelling manner to both scientific and non-scientific audiences, as well as mustering support for their recognition and funding
Articulating and implementing methodologies and frameworks for consistent risk assessment and management of multi-party ventures and projects

Using management processes and procedures that reflect a business orientation, commercial savvy, legal efficiency and administrative professionalism.

Supporting Strategy/Project 27: Improving the Faculty’s Collaborative Capability

The Faculty will raise its capability for collaboration to have it rank among the best among peer research-intensive institutions. The Faculty will develop, articulate, document and implement a structured and professional approach to the establishment and management of collaborations. Appropriate administrative and financial resourcing will be provided to ensure that the Faculty meets business development and commercial performance expectations. This is a significant undertaking.\textsuperscript{32}

Immediacy Rating: \textbullet

Pro-Active Scouting and Recruitment of ‘Bright Minds’

It is one thing to have bright research minds come to the Faculty on the basis of its reputation. The Faculty will continue to welcome such approaches. Importantly, it will supplement that stream with a proactive approach to the ‘spotting’ and attraction of promising candidates for admission into its higher-degree research cohorts. Adopting this approach will see the Faculty:

- Scout early for HDR talent from among its undergraduate and graduate cohorts as well as in those of other institutions, both locally and internationally\textsuperscript{33}
- Promote relevant University scholarships to selected target audiences and individuals, encouraging the worthiest candidates to apply for them

\textsuperscript{32} Former Resolution 35
\textsuperscript{33} With particular attention to countries such as India and China, in the latter case
Articulate (or rationalise) the education and training pathways that will assist the development of candidates’ research potential through the undergraduate and graduate degree journey.

Supporting Strategy/Project 28:  
Pro-Active Scouting and Recruitment of ‘Bright Minds’

The Faculty will actively and methodically prospect undergraduate and graduate cohorts for promising, research-inclined individuals. These scouting, attraction and recruitment efforts will explore opportunities locally and internationally in suitable institutions. The effort will be professionally structured and conducted.  

Immediacy Rating: ★

Attracting More Top Domestic PhD Students

The Faculty typically has some 750 PhD students enrolled. Many of them come from overseas. Few are domestic. The latter should be greater in numbers. A sustained and focused effort should be made to attract more of the gifted local students. Such a campaign would have a greater chance of success if Faculty-wide and inter-Faculty career pathways were on offer, along with mentoring and provisions for the recognition of contributions made by the PhDs.

Supporting Strategy/Project 29:  
Attraction of Domestic PhDs

The Faculty will make an active effort to recruit a greater number of domestic PhD students into its ranks. The effort will centre on a considered and well-structured offer that includes, inter alia, the explanation of intra- and inter-Faculty career pathways and other professional development benefits.

Immediacy Rating: ★

Strengthening the Faculty’s Body of Clinical Academics

34 Former Resolution 27
Clinical academics have a fundamental role to play in the Faculty’s research agenda; they are essential contributors to its success, as they are to productive research relationships with entities such as Queensland Health. Yet the number of clinical academics remains stubbornly low.

One of the chief reasons for this situation is the material discrepancy in earning power evident between academics and clinicians. This marked remuneration gap acts as a significant disincentive when it comes to clinicians turning their minds to research as academics. Whatever their nature and composition, compensatory approaches (not necessarily of a purely monetary nature) must be shaped and offered to the clinician community. This will preferably be done in concert with clinician employers.

**Supporting Strategy/Project 30: Strengthening the Faculty’s Body of Clinical Academics**

The Faculty will grow its body of clinical academics in a considered and determined way over the coming years. As part of that effort, it will develop a strategy and measures that address the present-day remuneration differentials between clinicians and academics.  

**Immediacy Rating:** ★

**Increasing the Participation of Early-Career Researchers in Clinical Research**

The Faculty can do more than it does to promote clinical research, particularly where early-career researchers are concerned. Among the many enhancements that could be brought to existing process and practice, the following would constitute priorities:

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Former Resolution 31
• The clarification of pathways into clinical research fields
• The advocacy, promotion and explanation of those pathways to promising individuals
• A framework for the evaluation of early-career researchers as they develop their knowledge and skills
• Supportive mentoring, particularly in the early stages of their research career
• Action to ensure that acquisition of a PhD is seen (and used) as a productive training ground for a longer-term career, rather than as a mere ‘ticket’ to clinical practice.

Supporting Strategy/Project 31:
Increasing the Participation of Early-Career Researchers in Clinical Research

As part of its effort to increase the numbers of clinical academics involved in research, the Faculty will clarify and articulate available career pathways for clinical academics and promote research pathways to suitable clinical candidates. 36

Immediacy Rating:

Promoting the Research Potential of Teaching and Research Academics

In its teaching and research academics, the Faculty has a further pool of research talent available to it – a pool that could be tapped more productively and successfully than it is at present. This is at a time when the balance between the ‘T’ and the ‘R’ of the ‘T&R’ equation is coming under increasing pressure.37 Capturing the research potential resident in the Faculty’s T&R body entails the introduction of a more active and purposeful approach to the development of individuals’ research potential. The principal elements of such a concerted strategy would include:

• The definition of research pathways as part of a planned career progression, so that interested parties can see a way forward that has research as one of its essential elements

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36 Former Resolution 32
37 A re-balancing of the ‘T’ and ‘R’ components of the present T&R package could well constitute an opportunity in its own right, if the movement between the two elements were to occur in favour of research. If that opportunity were to be taken, it would only add to the importance of the elements discussed in these paragraphs. It should be borne in mind that the rebalancing in question could reinforce the integration of teaching with research and vice-versa.
- The articulation of the Faculty’s expectations in regard to research; of the rules that apply to its conduct (from the pursuit of research itself to the necessity of business development skills in securing funding for it); and of the standards that it must meet (including the discouragement of mediocre and generally uncompetitive research projects).

- The continuing education of early- and mid-career T&R researchers in the conduct of productive research – particularly with respect to projects involving collaboration.

- The mentoring of these same academics by leaders in their fields, who can be taken as role models, and the ongoing evaluation of the emerging researchers as to their performance and work quality.

Supporting Strategy/Project 32: Promoting the Research Potential of Teaching and Research Academics

The Faculty will develop and introduce a systematic approach to encourage T&R staff to pursue research. As part of that effort, it will articulate available pathways; define and communicate its expectations and standards where research is concerned; provide means by which the research-focused education of T&R researchers is well supported and the research effort of early and mid-career researchers mentored.38

Immediacy Rating:

Retaining and Recruiting Fellows

While the question of Fellows – and, in particular, of their retention at the close of their Fellowship – is a subset of the issues discussed above, it is a matter deserving of special mention. University data suggests a substantial exodus of Fellows at the moment of their receiving their fellowship award. The University – and the Faculty in particular – cannot be a preparation ground for Fellowship applicants. The situation demands attention: at the very least, retentions should come to balance losses and ideally, come to grow at a higher rate than the departures. Attending to the situation involves similar remedies to those set out in preceding paragraphs, among them:

- The quality of mentoring and support afforded to Fellows

38 Former Resolution 33
The attention paid to the articulation of career pathways and opportunities open to Fellows within the Faculty and its research partners

The attractiveness of the opportunity ‘package’ on offer to Fellows once they have completed their fellowships – a package in which stability and continuity of earnings should be feature prominently.

Supporting Strategy/Project 33:
Retaining and Recruiting Fellows

The Faculty will take steps to staunch an unacceptable level of net loss from among its Fellows. The package of measures will address mentoring and support; the clarification and promotion of research career pathways; the provision of financial support by way of ensuring an adequate measure of stability in earnings; and the establishment of the Faculty as a destination of choice for Fellows in search of fresh challenges.

Immediacy Rating:  

Acquiring Key Platforms for Research

Biosciences – in manifestations such as the microbiome, synthetic biology, genomics and other omics, IT, bioinformatics and nanotechnology – find themselves at the leading edge of human health exploration. Erstwhile biological questions have substantially become data and information questions. Mathematics (and statistical mathematics in particular) coupled with big data, raw computing power and artificial intelligence have initiated a deep transformation of what it means to conduct research in the foreseeable future.

The Faculty recognises the importance of ‘platform’ sciences and their adjunct database frameworks. It also acknowledges that it lags the field in terms of its capability in those areas, insofar as (a) the expertise exists in nodes rather than a network; (b) the expertise is spread across University Faculties; and (c) the distribution of these nodes and their low visibility mean that the capability can be difficult to find and thus to access.

The Faculty also recognises that the disciplines and supporting facilities involved are of equal and contemporaneous interest to other branches of science.

39 Former Resolution 33
represented in the University, a circumstance that makes deliberations as to the form, organisational resting place and operating arrangements of the disciplines involved a matter of University, rather than Faculty, interest.

Finally, the Faculty also acknowledges that, as part of the deliberations surrounding the University and its own bioinformatics and statistical mathematics needs, consideration must also be given to the capacity of other institutions and/or the private sector to meet those needs under either partnership or commercial (rather than in-house) arrangements.

Supporting Strategy/Project 34:  
Full Use of the University’s RDM System

The Faculty will use the recently-released research data management system (‘RDMS’) to its fullest extent as a secure and integrated repository for research data, and as a key tool in facilitating internal and external collaborations.

Immediacy Rating:   ⬤
Supporting Strategy/Project 35:  
Acquiring Key Platforms for Research

The Faculty will:

- Take an active interest and role in University and cross-Faculty deliberations surrounding the preferred approach to the acquisition, operation and use of key platforms
- Assess closely and as precisely as possible the nature and extent of the needs of Faculty’s researchers in regard to these platforms
- Ensure those needs are recognised and met as part of any University-sponsored solution
- Assess the feasibility of using collaborations with other institutions as a means of accessing necessary platform-based capacity and capability, in the short or long term
- Assess the cost-benefit advantages or disadvantages of using third-party providers to the same end
- Consolidate the outcomes of the above into a substantive Faculty platform strategy for the coming 5 to 10 years.  

Immediacy Rating: