

Creating a sense of community at UTAS not

Tensions surrounding UTAS Council's operations flow from alleged commercial priorities overtaking academic ones, generating a tidal wave response stating such priorities should never justify selling the valued Sandy Bay campus, and that it is time to reclaim this site, but how does this happen?

An initial strategy is to enable demands for a students-first academically and socially supportive campus with a sense of community and recognisable identity.

Internationally, many universities are making significant investments

Uni life as much about study as it is lifestyle, writes Dallas Williams

on campus facilities to draw in prospective students. Current students indicate that many of (their) friends are leaving to complete university elsewhere because UTAS has no university community. These students are indicating it is not just about studying, it is also about experiencing the whole university lifestyle. It may include

accommodating part-time work and online study, but, if a campus is supportive and engaging, students will negotiate schedules to engage with campus life, resulting in a vibrant community. Therefore, we start with retaining the Sandy Bay.

Next facilitate a student-supportive campus by re-establishing or reinvigorating on-site services

such as a student union; student, financial and international students' advisers; and disability and healthcare services. With a cafe, PO, chapel, childcare, ATM, bar, gym, University Club, book shop and activities centre promoting events and clubs, you have ways to help students be involved in university life, explore interests, make friends, share a sense of belonging, and build support networks which aid retention and achieving academic goals.

Another community-building strategy is to encourage UTAS' CBD students, only 15 minutes away, to access the above events and services,

therefore, creating a genuine heartland campus.

Another priority is to ensure first-year students are a focus when establishing a support service-rich campus because they have come from colleges with this, and it will aid their engagement and retention. The previous strategy will enable this.

Many students currently identify timetables as "fractured ... with many not in cohorts they don't feel part of a group". A strategy here is to restructure timetables to maximise numbers onsite at one time, this will help create the university community sought.

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only crucial, but achievable and affordable

This plan recognises the importance of a campus' visual appeal. It is acknowledged that one of UTAS' biggest drawcards is the picturesque Sandy Bay site. It captivates international students, amazes locals, and other universities envy it. It must be retained.

You next go with the valued and proven. UTAS has a proven teaching style based on face-to-face lectures. The need for this was recently reinforced by one student reflecting, "Being ... alone ... watching a small screen with a recorded lecture is such a hard way to learn". This strategy would also focus on enabling

challenging and inspiring lectures with contemporary pedagogical techniques; thus, keeping students engaged and facilitating the joys of academic discovery. This would easily be enabled by the Bay's existing lecture theatres and IT capacities.

This plan includes reinvigorating the Sandy Bay buildings. UTAS claims some are "not fit for purpose", but many are, or could be, and updating them is cheaper than buying and refurbishing CBD ones. It also needs to be remembered large, expensive, and highly sensitive equipment and facilities at Sandy Bay

cannot be easily moved or duplicated, including the geology's department's mass spectrometry, rock collections, chemical labs, engineering and central science equipment, and the plant science and agriculture greenhouses. It is logical and cost effective to not move them.

Implementing an academically supportive campus can be met through six precincts, noting that none of these areas have formally moved to the CBD yet. There could be for instance an arts precinct; a business and an economics precinct as well as a STEM precinct and a research precinct inclusive of the

centre for UTAS Studies, U3A, graduate research office, national Tertiary Education Union, and office of research.

An administration precinct featuring administration, accommodation, student support, and sport services and a student support precinct with services previously listed.

Wrapped around the precincts would be the Bay's valued cultural artefacts; the 'special' floors, murals, glass curtain walls, herbarium, plaques, outdoor artworks and cultural stories including Vietnam, Lake Pedder rallies, Prince Charles'

visit; and valued flora and fauna.

This proposal, wanted by so many, prioritises students and academics, respects valued traditions, puts education first and is cost effective. Its offerings cannot be replicated elsewhere. It will reinstate Sandy Bay as a vibrant multi-faculty learning community supported by state-of-the-art technologies and methodologies, focused on quality teaching, learning, and research with onsite student facilities encouraging active campus engagement.

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