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UTS Student Representatives’ Submission on the Academic Change Proposal

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All authors and supporters of this submission share serious concerns about the effects of the Academic Change Proposal on the quality, diversity and integrity of education at UTS.

The proposal represents one of the most significant restructures in UTS’ 37-year history, yet the process has been marked by a lack of transparency, consultation and respect for the student body as active participants and members of UTS’ community – as opposed to consumers of an educational product.

Management has stated that consultation with students is not required under the enterprise agreement and in providing mechanisms for student feedback has limited it to a single generic email address. The subsequently introduced feedback form lacks anonymity and is difficult to find via any student facing UTS websites or within the email communications. Furthermore, students have received minimal information regarding the change proposals – often only through media statements or vague summaries – leaving them unable to make informed submissions about the proposal or understand how their studies will be affected. Even elected student members of Academic Board have not been afforded access to key documents, despite being required to vote on matters directly impacting the academic future of their peers.

This submission highlights the serious risks posed to students’ learning experiences, wellbeing, and academic futures under the proposed changes. The proposal’s framing around “simplification” and “efficiency” conceals a reality of reduced student choice and diminished educational quality. Feedback from students over the past few years calling for greater standardisation of support across faculties, particularly from those enrolled in double degrees

seeking consistency, appears to have been misconstrued as support for full centralisation and the ‘simplification’ that results in a lack of choices and strips away disciplinary identity and autonomy. The over-simplified claims from management that “this has no impact on current students’ study plans at this time” and “students will not be affected at this time” lack transparency and are misleading. Many students have already reported uncertainty and distress about degree progression, disrupted study plans, and fears for future opportunities such as Honours or postgraduate pathways.

Further, as admitted in risk assessments of the change proposal, the reduction in full-time equivalent teaching staff will inevitably lead to larger class sizes, directly compromising the quality of teaching and learning. As classes grow, staff capacity for meaningful engagement, feedback and individual support diminishes, while students receive a more transactional and less interactive learning experience. Larger classes also discourage participation and help-seeking, undermining the value of attendance to students. This is especially true for students who have language difficulties or are neurodivergent, further undermining inclusive and equitable learning environments. These are not minor or indirect consequences – they represent a tangible decline in educational quality.

A 31% reduction in the total number of subjects offered constitutes a significant and far-reaching change. This is a fundamental contraction of the UTS academic landscape that will narrow student opportunity, reduce academic diversity, and weaken the University’s reputation for innovation and social purpose. Furthermore, the rationale for discontinuing subjects due to “low student enrolment” reveals a failure of management to recognise the educational value of specialised subjects. Several of these subjects are inherently small by design because they are practical, specialised or require lab-based or workshop-style teaching. Such subjects play a vital role in allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts and should be protected. Many students choose to study at UTS precisely because of its emphasis on practical education, industry engagement, and work-integrated learning — all of which are at risk of being diminished under the current proposal. Additionally, low enrolment numbers in some elective subjects do not indicate a lack of student demand. Many electives are designed to run as a single class regardless of popularity, meaning that even with healthy interest, total enrolment may remain below arbitrary thresholds. Using these figures to justify cuts, therefore, misrepresents both student choice and the structure of elective offerings at UTS.

Also concerning is the proposed merger of the UTS Business School, the Faculty of Law and the Transdisciplinary School. This move undermines the independence and social justice focus of UTS Law and risks homogenising distinct disciplines under a managerial, profit-driven logic. In addition, it erodes the distinct identity of the Transdisciplinary School - and UTS global leadership in this field - reducing its role to delivering transdisciplinary learning rather than enabling it. This change stifles its research pathways and compresses its broader research mission into a narrow teaching function. Notably, in earlier documents, management admitted that the merger offered no financial benefit - raising the question of what benefits actually arise

from this proposal. To date, the university community has not been provided with a clear rationale for why the UTS Business School, Faculty of Law and the TD School would be combined into the Faculty of Business and Law. The absence of transparent reasoning only amplifies concern about the long-term strategic implications of this decision.

The feasibility of rolling out the entire substantial suite of changes contained in the Academic Change Proposals concurrently has also raised significant concerns around consideration of stakeholders, ability for the organisation to maintain core standards and post-implementation analysis of the effect of individual changes. Students across several university faculties have highlighted concerns with 'not having someone to talk to' or 'guide them' or 'support them' with planning for their degree moving forward. This was highlighted as a general issue - intensified by the change proposal period where there is heightened uncertainty and a need for student support around course progression, amongst other areas.

Ultimately, students must be seen as deeply valued members of the university community rather than passive consumers of education. They pay for, contribute to and uphold UTS's public mission. They therefore deserve genuine consultation, transparency, and respect, not tokenistic engagement after decisions have already been made. This is essential to ensure that any changes align with their expectations and the academic opportunities they were led to believe would be available upon commencing their studies. This submission calls on UTS management to halt the current Academic Change Proposal, undertake comprehensive consultation with students and staff, and ensure that any future changes are codesigned to protect the breadth, accessibility, and integrity of education at UTS. The University's stated commitments to social justice, the advancement of knowledge and the provision of courses and research to meet the needs of the community must be reflected in its decisions.

Proposed merger of the Faculty of Law, UTS Business School and Transdisciplinary School

The proposed merger of the Faculty of Law, the UTS Business School, and the Transdisciplinary School represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the distinct purposes, cultures and academic traditions that define each faculty. It is not supported by students, nor is it consistent with the evidence from comparable institutions.

Students are unanimous in their opposition to the merger. In numerous consultations, no student has expressed support for the proposal. The absence of a student constituency for such a significant structural change speaks to a broader concern: that the decision appears to be driven by administrative expediency rather than educational merit or student interest. The overwhelming opposition from staff to the merger in conjunction with this only serves to further reiterate its detriment. The consequences for current students, future cohorts and the reputation of UTS alumni would be profound.

The proposed creation of a single consolidated faculty risks dismantling the distinct missions and reputations that each of these schools has carefully built. Independent law faculties exist to preserve professional standards and ensure that legal education remains anchored in principles of justice, ethics, and public responsibility. Embedding a law school within a business-led structure would fundamentally alter its identity, shifting emphasis from community and social justice to commercial priorities. Such a shift would erode the independence that underpins the credibility of both the faculty and its graduates.

This concern is well-founded. Comparable mergers at other institutions have failed, often reversed after causing demonstrable harm. The University of Western Australia abandoned its combined Law and Business faculty in 2020 following serious governance and operational challenges. The University of Canterbury dissolved a similar arrangement in 2023 after it proved unworkable, with academic morale and rankings improving once independence was restored. The universities of Auckland and Waikato both rejected comparable proposals outright, recognising that autonomous law faculties are indispensable to academic integrity and professional accreditation. Retired judge and University of Auckland alumnus John Priestley summarised: “There’s not one law faculty of any reputable university that I can think of which doesn’t have independence” (McManus, 2024). The international consensus is clear: independent law faculties are the norm at reputable, respected universities for sound academic, professional, and ethical reasons.

The implications for the Transdisciplinary School are no less concerning. Transdisciplinary education was established precisely to operate beyond traditional disciplinary structures. Its effectiveness depends on its autonomy, flexibility, and commitment to collaboration across faculties and with community partners. Absorbing it into a conventional faculty, particularly one defined by rigid structure and business imperatives, would compromise the very innovation it was created to advance. Evidence from international case studies, including Finnish

universities, demonstrates that when interdisciplinary programs are absorbed into traditional faculty hierarchies, they lose agility, external engagement, and intellectual breadth.

Each of the three affected faculties occupies a distinct and irreplaceable position within the university's academic ecosystem. Their governance, accreditation pathways and pedagogical goals are not interchangeable. Consolidating them into a single administrative unit would inevitably dilute their individual strengths, narrow academic focus and weaken the university's overall standing.

No clear pedagogical, financial, or strategic justification has been presented for the proposed merger. What has emerged instead is overwhelming opposition from students, staff, alumni and professional stakeholders, as well as substantial international evidence demonstrating that similar restructures fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Pursuing this merger would jeopardise the considerable progress UTS has made towards becoming a nationally competitive, socially engaged and academically distinguished institution.

Faculty of Law

Aside from the merger, the specific academic proposal for the Faculty of Law has generated comparatively fewer concerns from students than those affecting other faculties, likely due to the lower percentage of subjects and courses being discontinued. Many of the discontinued courses relate to double degree combinations, which can be more appropriately addressed within their respective faculties.

Where the proposal to discontinue electives is due to duplication of material such as in Advanced Contracts, or Advanced Commercial Transactions, students are not opposed to the changes. However, the proposal to discontinue several electives in line with the Faculty's long-standing social justice and public interest focus has prompted significant concern. While some electives have been flagged for discontinuation on the basis of “low student enrolment,” this reasoning fails to reflect the structure of elective delivery within the Faculty. Many of these subjects are capped at approximately 40 students and offered only once per year – meaning that even when fully enrolled, they would be classified as “low enrolment” under the metrics applied. This approach, in effect, penalises subjects that are intentionally specialised, discussion-based, and pedagogically distinct.

The electives proposed for discontinuation include a number that are central to the Faculty's intellectual and ethical identity, including:

- 76005 - Islamic Law (currently stated to be discontinued in part due to “Strategic alignment – non-alignment with strategic priorities”)
- 76010 - Disability and the Law

- 76111 - Limits on Government Power (strategically more important than ever in the current socio-political climate; was not taught in 2025)
- 76077 - Environmental Planning and Development Law
- 76089 - Reading the Law: Language, Power and Ideology
- 76089 - Australian Civil Liberties Law
- 76106 - International Humanitarian Law, and
- 76127 - Environmental Ethics.

Students have consistently expressed concern that removing these subjects represents not merely a loss of choice, but a substantive narrowing of the Faculty's capacity to engage critically with pressing issues of law, ethics, and justice. Collectively, these electives provide vital opportunities for students to explore intersections between law, social systems, and public good – areas that are central to UTS Law's reputation and graduate identity. The Faculty of Law's commitment to empowering students to embody principles of social justice, ethical leadership, and service to community is further reflected through the Brennan Justice and Leadership Program. Their removal risks signalling a shift away from the Faculty's stated commitment to social justice and the development of lawyers equipped to serve the public interest.

UTS Business School

The proposed changes in the UTS Business School Academic Change Proposal cite a substantial number of degrees that are no longer financially viable, and/or proposed for discontinuation. It is hoped that consultation with the students enrolled in these courses is prioritised, to ensure their needs are met.

The proposed suspension of intake into the Bachelor of Business (Honours) C09004 for 2026 to undergo a significant redesign, with the aim of improving efficiency and viability whilst (hopefully) maintaining the student experience, is generally not opposed by students. However, students who are near completion of their Bachelor of Business or equivalent Bachelor's degree, and were set to enrol into the Honours program for 2026, should be able to do so. It is a course and a pathway that students have been told about and promised - and therefore should be allowed to access.

In the same light, suspension to the Master of Business (Research) C03069 for the purpose of improving the course, with intake reopening for 2027, is also broadly not opposed, provided efficiency does not come at the cost of student experience and student-centred design.

Academic staff are extremely concerned about the discontinuations, for two main reasons. Firstly, the efficient manner in which Honours programmes are delivered in conjunction with HDR coursework embeds students in a research community, allowing them to consider the part of an academic career. Secondly, certain employers such as the Reserve Bank and the large

consultancies generally draw from the pool of Honours students – because of this, UTS is effectively abandoning the intellectual elite part of the marketplace, with flow-on effects for alumni engagement.

Economics

UTS’s acknowledgement of the strategic value of the Economics discipline seems superficial when accompanied by substantial changes that do not preserve its integrity. The Bachelor of Economics is one of the few programs within the university that directly engages with contemporary policy challenges. It occupies a strategic role in producing graduates equipped to analyse economic systems, evaluate policy outcomes and contribute to evidence-based decision-making in government and industry. In this context, the proposed removal of key subjects is not a neutral administrative adjustment, but a change that would materially alter the academic integrity, professional relevance, and graduate outcomes of the degree.

Recognition of the program's “strategic importance” sits in clear contradiction with the proposal to discontinue the subjects that serve as its primary vehicles for applied learning and research-based skill development. The discontinuation of these core subjects would significantly narrow the program’s scope and erode its capacity to deliver the analytical and empirical competencies expected of an economics qualification.

Within the Bachelor of Economics, the proposal to discontinue two core subjects that serve as the primary point of transition from theoretical study to practical application is especially troubling, namely;

- 23509 - Empirical Methods for Policy Evaluation: a subject where students are taught how to use R – a software program used extensively in the honours course and across industry – to conduct empirical data analysis, and includes a self-selected policy evaluation through data analysis project. This is imperative to the course and value of the degree to students; although assessment redesign is needed to ensure the value is maintained with reasonable workloads for students.
- 23600 - Economic Policy and Analysis (Capstone): a subject where students develop competencies in applied research and policy evaluation, culminating in presentations and a policy report to refine their policy analysis skills. This subject also serves as a pathway to the honours stream.

These subjects are foundational to the identity of the Bachelor of Economics. Their removal would fundamentally change the nature of the degree and undermine its ability to produce graduates equipped for contemporary economic and policy work.

The proposed removal of electives on the basis of “strategic alignment” further narrows the program’s intellectual and professional scope:

- 23002 - Market Design

- 23022 - Public Economics
- 23600 - Economic Growth, Development and Sustainability
- 23004 - Experimental Economics
- 23507 - Time Series Econometrics

Market Design, Public Economics, and Economic Growth, Development and Sustainability cover substantive contemporary economic questions. Experimental Economics introduces students to lab experiments, which are used extensively in economics research, while Time Series Econometrics covers skills vital to economic modelling. Their removal reduces the degree’s ability to prepare graduates for work in public policy, industry analysis, and research environments.

Notably, issues in 23571 - Introductory Econometrics, which affect progression into Time Series Econometrics, reflect failures in subject delivery and curriculum maintenance, not a lack of student interest or academic value. Eliminating advanced study opportunities rather than addressing shortcomings in foundational delivery compounds the problem rather than resolving it.

If these changes proceed, students in the Bachelor of Economics would be left with no effective elective choice, with the 26600 – Business Internship and remaining subjects functioning as compulsory selections. This directly contradicts Deputy Vice-Chancellor Kylie Readman’s assurances that the degree would retain breadth and flexibility. The restructure does not preserve the program’s strategic value; it diminishes it.

Business Subjects Proposed for Discontinuation

In addition to the Economics subjects, there are another twenty-four Business subjects proposed for discontinuation which are not associated with the discontinuation of an entire degree or major. At present, the discontinuation of these subjects is justified by their lack of ‘strategic alignment.’ However, given the lack of any additional reasoning, it is difficult to see how these subjects do not align strategically. At a cursory examination, many of these subjects appear to be applicable and highly relevant to current societal contexts.

For example, in the wake of well-documented instances of corporate misconduct in Australia within the last ten years, the subject of 22016 - Ethics and Governance has never been more relevant. This subject covers the professional responsibilities of an accountant, ethics from the perspective of an accountant, corporate governance, stakeholder relations, and accountability in the context of social, environmental and sustainability performance. Similarly, in the context of recent corporate events such as the disruption caused by COVID-19, the multiple governance crises that have been experienced by major Australian corporations and current international political instability, the subject of 21894 - How to Measure and Manage your Organisation’s Capabilities During Turbulent Time is ever-relevant.

Events in the United States notwithstanding, subjects such as 25627 - Responsible Finance, 25898 - Sustainability and ESG Investing and 25899 - Sustainable Finance remain relevant in a landscape where various governments have imposed climate goals. In a similar vein of a greater awareness of corporate social responsibility, the decision to remove 21899 - Supply Chain Ethics for Decision Makers is similarly puzzling in an era where supply chains are extremely globalised.

The lack of ‘strategic alignment’ is also questionable in the case of several subjects which involve the use of data, such as 25729 - Applied Equity Portfolio Management, 25891 - FinTech in Banking and 21964 - Data and Managerial Decision Making. The ability to use data effectively is of increasing relevance given the advances in information technology that have been seen in recent times.

Whilst this does not speak to every subject proposed for discontinuation, many of them seem highly relevant both in terms of social context and as the practical application of theoretical foundations built in previous subjects. Whilst we understand some may have low demand or viability, more detailed reasoning is needed and requested beyond ‘strategic alignment.’

Faculty of Design and Society

The proposed changes to the Faculty of Design and Society, formed through the merger of the former Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) and the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building (DAB), have been overwhelmingly opposed by students across the portfolio. Rather than reflecting a strategic strengthening of disciplines, the discontinuations represent the dismantling of areas of study that have defined the university's cultural, civic and intellectual identity. Students have been clear that these changes would reduce the quality of the education, narrow subject choice, and erode the specialised expertise that gives this faculty its distinct place within the university.

The proposed discontinuation of all International Studies courses, including the combined degrees, represents a particularly concerning loss. Australia is already one of the few developed nations where students do not graduate secondary school with bilingual proficiency. International Studies degrees play a critical role in addressing this gap, equipping students with language skills, global awareness, and intercultural competence that are vital in diplomacy, international business, and global development. The support expressed by the Spanish Education Office of the Embassy of Spain in Australia and Minister Marta Peña, Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of Mexico amongst several others; underscores the course’s broader diplomatic and cultural importance. Removing this program would therefore diminish Australia’s ability to cultivate globally minded graduates at a time when cross-cultural communication and global cooperation are increasingly essential.

The proposed discontinuation of all Education degrees is equally concerning. The cited decline in EFTSL between 2017 and 2025 occurred during a period of ongoing program restructuring. Discontinuing these degrees before the effects of those changes have been realised is premature and academically unwarranted. This proposal is also at odds with national and state priorities. Australia is facing an escalating teacher shortage; withdrawing from teacher education now would represent a retreat from the university's responsibility to support public education, educational equity and community development. Education degrees are not only training pathways; they are a core component of the university's civic contribution.

The suggestion from management that not every university can offer every program does not apply meaningfully here. That rationale is generally used for niche or highly specialised offerings that sit at the margins of an institution's academic profile. International Studies and Education are neither peripheral nor incidental. They are core areas of teaching and research that support the university's contribution to global engagement, social equity, and public workforce development. The loss of these programs would narrow the university's academic breadth, reduce its public value and weaken its standing within the higher education sector.

Faculty of Engineering & Information Technology

The Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (FEIT) proposal contains some of the most extensive proposed changes across the university. The discontinuation of courses, majors, and subjects on this scale has generated profound concern among students and staff, who fear that the proposal compromises academic breadth, student choice, and the university's contribution to areas of clear national importance such as sustainability, infrastructure, and technology capability.

According to the proposal, 20 degrees are set to be phased out, including 11 courses recommended for removal on the grounds that they are “underperforming and unviable due to low annual demand”. Of these, nine are already in the process of being phased out — three due to “strategic alignment” (primarily duplication with other programs) and six due to “low demand” or limited “performance and viability”. The remaining four active degrees identified as unviable include:

- C04272: Master of Environmental Engineering Management
- C10408: Bachelor of Technology
- C20056: Diploma in Information Technology Professional Practice
- C41005: Engineering Undergraduate Cross-Institution

Of particular concern is the Master of Environmental Engineering Management, a course that directly aligns with Australia's national priorities in renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure and climate adaptation. The decision to discontinue such a program under the rationale of “low annual demand” appears short-sighted and inconsistent with the growing global need for specialists capable of leading the transition to low-emissions technologies.

A further 12 combined degrees with other faculties are also proposed for discontinuation, again citing “low annual demand”. However, the proposal itself acknowledges that “these discontinuations will not result in subject or FTE savings for FEIT”, raising questions about the underlying rationale. If there are no measurable efficiencies or cost reductions, the loss of these programs serves only to reduce cross-disciplinary flexibility – one of the unique selling points at UTS. UTS has historically offered one of the most diverse ranges of double degrees in Australia, giving students the ability to design pathways that match their unique ambitions. Students have expressed frustration that this flexibility is being quietly eroded, despite its value to the student experience and employability outcomes.

At the postgraduate level, the proposed discontinuation of eight engineering majors on the basis of ‘low demand’ is equally troubling. The affected majors include:

- Biomedical Engineering
- Computer Control Engineering
- Robotics Engineering
- Environmental Engineering
- Geotechnical Engineering
- Structural Engineering
- Tunnelling and Underground Engineering
- Water Engineering

While smaller enrolment numbers are a feature of many postgraduate disciplines, these areas are not marginal – they are essential to addressing the real-world challenges that UTS claims to prioritise. Environmental and Water Engineering are central to climate adaptation and sustainable design; Geotechnical, Structural, and Tunnelling Engineering are vital to safe, resilient urban infrastructure; and Biomedical Engineering continues to play a critical role in developing technologies that improve health outcomes and accessibility. These are socially beneficial, forward-looking disciplines — the kinds of programs that should be strengthened, not cut.

Equally alarming is the discontinuation of the Undergraduate Renewable Energy Engineering major, which had not yet received full accreditation. Students are understandably anxious that UTS will not go through with the final accreditation process for a course that is being discontinued, leaving them with limited career options. Given the precedent of other universities failing to secure accreditation for similar degrees, UTS must immediately provide public assurance that this process will be completed. Compounding these concerns, tutors have been informed that access to computer labs and modelling software will be restricted, which severely undermines teaching quality and practical learning outcomes. Students and staff alike have raised concerns that reduced resourcing could risk the accreditation and recognition of degrees, particularly given that the first cohort of graduates from some of these streams is completing their studies this year.

In essence, these postgraduate majors encompass fields that are vital to areas of national priority including; environmental sustainability, and critical infrastructure development — areas where the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (FEIT) has historically made meaningful contributions including in research. Given their importance, the university carries a responsibility to preserve and strengthen these programs rather than discontinue them to whatever extent possible.

The proposal also lists 83 subjects for discontinuation including 19 professional experience and project-based subjects described as having “low demand,” yet students have consistently reported otherwise, with waiting lists for several subjects, including *Advanced Geotechnical Design* (49124), *Catchment Management* (48250), and *Environmental Planning and Law* (42860). These units are foundational to environmental and civil engineering pathways. In many cases, limited enrolment numbers reflect timetable conflicts or poor scheduling, not a lack of student interest. It is unclear, however, which of these are genuinely redundant and which are being consolidated under new codes. Many of these subjects underpin the practical, hands-on learning that FEIT, and more broadly UTS is known for — a concern raised repeatedly by both students.

The removal of the School of Professional Practice and Leadership further compounds these issues. Employment preparation and professional engagement are critical to FEIT students and to UTS’s broader graduate outcomes. Reducing the university’s focus on employability, even indirectly through structural consolidation, undermines student success and one of UTS’s core measures of institutional performance.

The proposed disestablishment of the Schools of Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering, Electrical and Data Engineering, and Biomedical Engineering has generated additional uncertainty. Students are unclear how to navigate the new structure or where to seek academic support. With fewer staff and little communication about how programs will transition, the risk of confusion, reduced student support, and lower teaching quality is high. Students have repeatedly reported that communication about course changes has been minimal or non-existent, leaving them to rely on speculation and informal networks for information.

Overall, the scale and direction of these cuts reflect a troubling shift away from UTS’s founding mission as a university of technology focused on applied, socially responsible, and future-oriented education. Assessing the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology purely through a lens of financial viability is short-sighted, particularly given the national importance of many of the courses proposed for suspension. The breadth of these discontinuations suggests the proposal extends well beyond the removal of low-enrolment or duplicated programs, posing a genuine risk to UTS’s standing as a leader in technical and professional education. Safeguarding FEIT’s capacity to deliver future-facing, high-quality education in critical disciplines such as environmental, renewable, and systems engineering is

essential if UTS is to uphold its reputation for innovation and continue to embody its own name – the University of Technology Sydney.

Faculty of Health

The Faculty of Health faces numerous proposed changes and course discontinuations, but the most consequential is the suspension of the School of Public Health and the termination of all degrees within it at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This is the most widely opposed and potentially damaging element of the Faculty's proposal.

The School of Public Health represents a deliberate and strategic expansion of the Faculty beyond nursing and midwifery, reflecting both societal needs and the university's commitment to social justice. Public Health education equips students to understand health beyond clinical care – encompassing prevention, community wellbeing, systems-level thinking and equity — all essential to improving outcomes across populations. Eliminating this school ignores the urgent national and global shortages in public health professionals, including epidemiologists, health data analysts, policy experts, and community health specialists, which the COVID-19 pandemic made abundantly clear. At a time when governments, researchers, and communities are calling for stronger health systems and preventive capacity, reducing investment in Public Health education fails to uphold the social responsibility of universities.

External bodies have voiced strong opposition to the proposal. The Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australia (CAPHIA) has urged the university to reverse its decision, warning that dismantling the School of Public Health “would undermine the future of public health education and workforce development in Australia” ([CAPHIA, 2025](#)). The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) similarly emphasised that public health “is not just an optional extra,” but foundational to the prevention, preparedness, and equity goals central to any modern health system ([PHAA, 2025](#)). It is deeply ironic that UTS is hosting CAPHIA's 2025 *Teaching and Learning Forum and Hackathon*, a national event celebrating innovation in public health education — even as it moves to dismantle its own School of Public Health.

Students and staff have raised questions and concerns regarding the accuracy of EFTSL data used to justify the proposed changes. Enrolment figures may not fully account for students from other disciplines who take Public Health subjects as electives, underestimating the program's actual reach and contribution. Using these figures to justify program closure understates the value and demand of Public Health education.

Opposition has been widespread. A petition with over 1,200 signatures has called for the preservation of Public Health, highlighting its importance to students, the broader community, and health equity ([Change.org, 2025](#)). Students remain uncertain whether they will be able to complete their degrees at UTS or be forced to transfer elsewhere, creating unnecessary distress and eroding trust in the university's responsibility to students. Until the consultation

period for the Academic Change Proposal concludes, no clear plan will be communicated, compounding this uncertainty. This, as with other policies in the change proposal, contradicts statements by university leadership that there will be minimal impact on students. The proposed removal also positions UTS as a notable outlier in Australian public health education. Nearly every major Australian university — including the University of Sydney, Western Sydney, Macquarie, Queensland, Monash, Melbourne, Charles Sturt, and Newcastle — continues to offer undergraduate and postgraduate Public Health degrees. Eliminating these programs risks reputational damage, signalling that UTS is retreating from its responsibility as a public university serving the broader public good, and creating the perception of UTS as a second-tier education provider in this field.

The overwhelming opposition from students, alumni, industry and professional bodies underscores the urgency of reversing this decision. Preserving the School of Public Health is not optional – it is essential for maintaining educational quality, workforce preparedness, and the University’s role in serving the public good.

Faculty of Science

The Academic Change Proposal for the Faculty of Science represents some of the most extensive and consequential changes across UTS, proposing the discontinuation of 39 courses, 11 majors, and 173 subjects. These changes threaten the depth, diversity and disciplinary identity of science education at UTS, generating widespread concern among students, staff, and alumni.

Students have raised particular concerns regarding the discontinuation of several undergraduate majors, including:

- Bachelor of Science – Physics Major
- Bachelor of Science – Mathematics Major
- Bachelor of Science – Environmental Science Major
- Bachelor of Mathematical Sciences – Pure and Applied Mathematics Major
- Bachelor of Molecular Biotechnology – Environmental Biotechnology Major

Each of these majors holds distinct academic and strategic importance. Physics remains foundational across multiple fields, from engineering and data science to medicine and materials research; its proposed discontinuation represents a direct retreat from one of the pillars of scientific education. Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences are essential not only as disciplines themselves but as enablers across virtually every STEM field, including technological innovation, computational research, finance and statistical modelling. The Environmental Sciences major is increasingly critical in addressing climate challenges and driving sustainability-focused innovation, supporting industries such as biofuels, waste reduction, and sustainable production systems. Discontinuing these programs diminishes

student choice, undermines the university’s contribution to pressing global issues, and signals a retreat from UTS’s commitment to education that serves the public good.

While students generally have been relatively neutral about the proposed transition to a single Bachelor of Science (Honours) with discipline-based streams, this support is conditional on several key assurances: the transition must be smooth, transparent, consulted on and fully supported; current students must be able to complete their courses or transition pathways without disadvantage; and the change must not compromise the quality, depth, or specialisation of their education.

Postgraduate programs, such as the Master of Sustainable Leadership/Sustainable Energy and the Master of Data Science in Quantitative Finance, have also raised concern. In particular, the consolidation of Quantitative Finance courses into a single degree to minimise costs restricts students’ choices and specialisations, with only a “minimum number of subjects” retained, as Appendix A indicates.

The rationales cited for these discontinuations – including low enrolment, strategic alignment, and consolidation – fail to consider the practical realities and value of these programs. Many small, specialised subjects are capped at low enrolment by design, yet are critical for maintaining research-informed, hands-on learning experiences. Singularly using metrics like enrolment numbers to justify cuts misrepresents student demand and the educational significance of these courses.

The proposed changes also carry substantial operational and wellbeing risks. Inadequate consultation at the Faculty level has already resulted in confusion, misinformation, and uncertainty for students and staff. Without practical and emotional support for Faculty leaders managing these changes, students will experience:

- Disrupted learning and diminished engagement;
- Mental health and wellbeing risks; and
- Reduced support for international students navigating teach-out periods.

These cascading impacts threaten not only student experience and engagement but also UTS’s reputation as a provider of high-quality science education. Consolidation and “simplification” cannot be used to justify the erosion of disciplinary integrity, loss of choice, or the undermining of student wellbeing. Science education at UTS is valued for its balance between theoretical understanding and practical, research-informed learning – all of which are jeopardised under the current proposal.

Transdisciplinary School (TD School)

In the Transdisciplinary School (TD School), seven courses are proposed for discontinuation. Of these the main concern students have is with the discontinuation of the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation (Honours). Rather than supporting the continued development of transdisciplinary research and scholarship, the removal of the Honours pathway risks reframing the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation (BCII) as a purely vocational qualification – one that students simply leverage for employment outcomes. While employability is undoubtedly a vital function of a university degree, the TD School’s mission has always gone beyond this: it has represented a commitment to research, intellectual exploration, and innovation across disciplinary boundaries. The removal of the Honours program undermines that vision.

Moreover, the rationale for discontinuing the Honours program appears inconsistent with the UTS 2030 strategy of building a “student-centred” university. The Honours program embodies precisely that principle - providing students with the opportunity to engage in one-on-one academic mentorship, independent research, and creative inquiry. To view such an opportunity as a liability rather than an asset runs contrary to the values that underpin both the TD School and the broader university strategy.

Low enrolments in Honours programs should not be viewed as justification for discontinuation, but rather as an indicator that better support and visibility are needed to encourage participation. The proposed removal of the BCII Honours program represents a short-sighted response that will have enduring negative consequences for the TD School.

The TD School is a globally recognised and strategically significant component of the university - a model of creative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary education where UTS is seen as a leader around the world. Preserving the integrity of its programs and the pathways they create is therefore essential. Given that the UTS 2030 strategy is partly committed to building a creative and innovative university, it makes logical sense to preserve the integrity of an academic school that is dedicated to it.

The potential consequences for UTS in disrupting global leadership through the TD School extend far beyond the inconvenience to the current student cohort. The proposed change risks rapidly eroding one of UTS’s most distinctive elements - a rare and internationally recognised feature of its brand that has taken years of strategic investment and development to establish. The considerations around materially subjugating the TD School are particularly significant because so few institutions globally offer a comparable program. The reputational impact, and the loss of differentiation for UTS, would therefore be acutely felt.

Conclusion

In summary, the Academic Change Proposal represents a fundamental shift in the character and purpose of the University of Technology Sydney. Beyond degrees and data points, universities exist to give people the freedom to pursue their interests, passions, and purpose - including in areas that fall outside the mainstream. The proposed discontinuation of over a thousand subjects and over a hundred courses would not only narrow the scope of learning and research at UTS, but dismantle the very foundations of its public and social mission. Students are deeply concerned by changes that appear to prioritise financial savings at the expense of educational integrity, social impact, and Australia’s global engagement.

Students have expressed deep disillusionment, confusion, and anger at the lack of transparency surrounding these decisions. Many chose UTS specifically because it offered unique degrees or subject options that other universities did not. Students are asking why their programs are disappearing without explanation, why consultation has been absent, and why the millions spent on consultants has contributed to programs that define UTS’s character are being dismantled.

Further, students have been misled by repeated assurances that they will not be affected – assurances that do not withstand scrutiny. Larger class sizes, fewer learning opportunities, the loss of specialised subjects, and the erosion of staff capacity all have direct and immediate consequences for current students. The refusal to engage in genuine consultation, coupled with opaque communication, has left students anxious, uninformed, and unsupported at a critical moment in their education. The university tells students that we are an integral part of the community and more than ‘paying customers’ but has failed to consider student consultation as a requirement for these core decisions. The proposal states ‘staff and relevant stakeholders’ will be consulted with, to which the university’s response by implication, has indicated to students they are not considered ‘relevant.’

This process has also ignored the long-term damage to UTS’s standing as a public university. Cutting programs in areas of national importance – such as Public Health, Education, Environmental Science, Economics and Law – sends a message that social impact and public good are expendable when measured against financial targets. It risks undermining the university’s academic credibility, its relationship with the community, and the trust of current and future students.

We urge the university to reconsider this approach – to explore genuine alternatives and stagger the implementation of any changes in a way that safeguards teaching quality, research excellence and student experience. This would allow time for an independent assessment of the risks and outcomes associated with each change, ensuring that decisions are based on evidence, and can account for changing circumstances rather than pre-determined financial targets.

Meaningful consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, including students and staff must form the foundation of any credible reform process. The future of UTS must not come at the cost of the values that have defined its distinctive identity: accessibility, social impact, and practical education connected to community needs.

Students and staff care deeply about this institution. We urge you to listen to the voices of the 50,000-plus key stakeholders we represent, and to commit to a process that reflects the principles of transparency, inclusion, and academic integrity that UTS was built upon.

In Unity,

Chloe Ferreira - Undergraduate Student Representative UTS Council

Sreekar Edulapalli - Postgraduate Student Representative UTS Council

Mia Campbell - President of the UTS Students' Association 2024-2025

Neeve Nagle - President of the UTS Students' Association 2026, Welfare Officer of the UTS Students' Association 2025

Rodger Liang - President of the ActivateUTS Board 2025

Sophia Quah - Vice-President of the ActivateUTS Board 2025

Professor Thalia Anthony - Academic Staff Representative UTS Council

Dr Robert Czernekowski - Academic Staff Representative UTS Council

William Chen - Business Student Representative to Academic Board 2025, Business Student Representative to Faculty Board 2024 - 2025

Januka Suraweera - General Secretary of the UTS Student's Association 2025, FEIT Student Representative to Academic Board 2025

Micheaal Heng - Health Student Representative to Academic Board 2025

Nikolai Shchekochikhin - Law Student Representative to Academic Board 2025

Serah Nwoke - Science Student Representative to Academic Board 2025

Francesca Harrison - TD Student Representative to Academic Board 2025-2026

**UTS Student Representatives'
Submission on the Academic
Change Proposal**



Melissa Dib - Business Student Representative to Academic Board 2026, Law Student Representative to Faculty Board, 2024

Amelia Grace Wilson-Williams - Law Student Representative to Academic Board 2026, Undergraduate Student Representative on the Teaching & Learning Committee 2025-2026, Student Representative on Faculty Board in Law 2025-2026, General Councillor of the UTS Students Association 2026, Student Activate Board Director 2026.

Rand Margahi - Design and Society Student Representative to Academic Board 2026

Amandhi Tihara Marasinghe - UTS Housing Student Representative

Anushka Koppuravuri - Student Representative on Course Accreditation Committee, Faculty Board of Science 2026

Emma McGlinn - Student Representative on Faculty Board in Law/ Student Representative on Teaching & Learning Committee 2025

George Tulloch - Postgraduate Officer of the UTS Students' Association 2026

Natasha Abdulghani - General Councillor of the UTS Students' Association 2025, Vice President (Activities) UTS Law Student's Society 2025

Amelia Raptis - General Councillor of the UTS Students' Association 2025

Amelia Ireland - Disabilities Officer of the UTS Students' Association 2025

Daewah Thein - Queer Officer of the UTS Students' Association 2024 - 2025

Olivia Lee - Women's Officer of the UTS Students' Association 2025

Sina Afsharmehr - Environment and Technology Officer 2025, Welfare Officer 2026 - UTS Students' Association

Grace Cole - General Councillor of UTS Students' Association 2026

Salma Elmubasher - Ethnocultural Officer of the UTS Students' Association 2025, Palestinian Youth Society President 2025

Alessio Maiese - General Councillor of UTS Students' Association 2025, Ciao UTS Secretary 2026

Jonnie Jock - Vertigo General Editor 2025

Kimia Nojournian - Vertigo Managing Editor 2026, Vertigo Social Media Director 2025

Varshani Gousihan - President of the ActivateUTS Board 2026

Madhavaram Sriranganathaiyer - Vice-President of the ActivateUTS Board 2026

Mahir Munot - Student Board Director of the ActivateUTS Board 2025, 2026

Taya Higgins Tugaga - Student Board Director of the ActivateUTS Board 2026

Manuja Jayakodi - Student Board Director of the ActivateUTS Board 2026

Ivey Chedid - FEIT Student Representative to Faculty Board 2026 and President of UTS Motorcycle Society 2026

Hong Yi Voo - Business Student Representative to Faculty Board 2026

Parth Aggarwal - Business Student Representative to Faculty Board 2026

Robert Nersisyan - Health Student Representative to Faculty Board 2026

Grace Berry - Business Student Representative to Faculty Board 2025

Saket Patki - FEIT Student Representative to Faculty board 2026

Naveera Khan - Law Student Representative to Faculty Board 2026, President of Women in Business Society 2026

Bilvika Abburi- Law Student Representative to Faculty Board of Law 2025, President of UTS Debating Society 2024-2025

Atyant Jain - TD Student Representative to Faculty Board 2025 - 2026

Alec Ramsbottom - UTS Law Student Society President 2024

Wafa Rahman - UTS Law Students' Society Treasurer 2025

William Wright - UTS Biomedical Society Vice President 2025, UTS Calisthenics Secretary 2025, UTS Equity Ambassador

Andriana Tsatsimas - UTS Finance Society President 2026, UTS Finance Society Vice President 2025, UTS Hellenic Society Secretary 2025

Vanessa Lee - UTS Women in Business President 2025

Alison Chung- UTS Women in Business Treasurer 2025

Anika Deshpande - UTS Women in Business Sponsorship Director 2025

Lauren Walford - UTS Women in Business Vice President 2025

Parsa Mousavi - UTS AI Society Vice-President 2026, and UTS YOUTH Society Vice-President 2025.

Alister King - UTS Public Speaking Society President 2025

Emily Pich - UTS Women in Business Engagements Director 2025

Joshua Quispe - UTS Biomedical Engineering Society President 2025

Hritu Saha - UTS Women in Engineering and IT Ambassador 2024-2025, SPROUT, UTS Personal Growth Society Marketing Director 2025 + 2026

Aamin Ojha - Personal Growth Society VP of Operation 2024-2025

Katie Muré - Ciao UTS President 2025

Maryam Hassan - UTS Knits n Knots President 2025, Karaoke Society Vice President (2026)

Eva Ossowski - UTS Law Students Society, Vice President (Social Justice) 2024 - 2025

Eddy Ouyang - UTS Drawing Circle President 2026, UTS Drawing Circle Lead Event Manager 2025, SPROUT

MD Akib Jawad Hossain - UTS Karaoke Society President and Founder 2025, UTS Journalism Society Secretary, Treasurer of UTS Knits n Knots Society, Vice President of Personal Growth Society 2024

Avieral Singh - President of Personal Growth Society 2025

Christopher Ibrahim - UTS Finsoc Founder and President 2023-2025, UTS FOCUS Treasurer 2022

Aleksei Kelava - UTS Slavic Society President 2025-2026

Clairessa Ng - UTS Law Student Society Vice-President (Careers) 2025

Siya Khatri - UTS Law Students' Society President 2026

Harrison O'Brien - UTS Law Students' Society Secretary 2025

Joan-Paula Conducto - UTS K-Pop Society Treasurer 2025-2026

Charlize Tahimic - UTS K-Pop Society President 2025

Froy Bibon - UTS Society of Communications Vice President of Operations 2025, UTS Matcha Society President 2026

Mackenzie O'Connor - UTS Matcha Society Founder and President 2025

Nina Jayengrani - UTS K-Pop Society Secretary 2025

Edmund (Jian) Baker - UTS Alternative Fashion Society Treasurer 2025

Evelyn Ritchie - UTS Society of Communications President 2025, UTS Society of Communications Treasurer 2026

Jacob Bakhos - UTS Robotics Society President 2026

Sria Gurie - UTS Public Speaking Society President 2026, Vice President 2025

Ria Singh - UTS Public Speaking Society Vice President 2026

Michael Farah - UTS Public Speaking Society Treasurer 2026

Louis Nguyen - MBA Nexus Brand Ambassador 2026

Christine (Rosemira) Tran - UTS Alternative Fashion Society Vice President 2026