

## Farewell Speech, Professor Roy Green Dean of UTS Business School 2008-2017

4 August 2017

**Let me begin**, for the last time as Dean of UTS Business School, by paying my respects to the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and to their elders past and present. We acknowledge them as the custodians of knowledge in this place, and also send our good wishes to the Garma festival in Arnhem Land today, where our Vice Chancellor is representing UTS.

Thank you so much for your kind words Catherine, Andrew, Glen, Tracy, Craig, Leonie, and thank you all for coming, colleagues, friends, family. In some places it feels like you've been there for years, even when you haven't. And in others where you've been for a great number of years, you have the strongest sense you've only just arrived. And on a day like this it doesn't really seem like you're leaving at all. That's my feeling about UTS.

What's new about this feeling is that we can now measure the stages of our careers by waves of technological disruption, more specifically by what kind of phones we have. Starting with a stranded asset known as landline, I moved on to the early generation of Nokia mobile phones – here it is – so stylish, then this ancient Blackberry with its brilliantly functional physical keypad. I still love it. And now smartphones like this iPhone, that thanks to Steve Jobs and Jony Ive, we didn't even know we needed.

That said, I did know my busy life as Dean was up a few weeks ago when I got a call on the train about a conference someone wanted me to speak at. As usual I was trying to do too many things at once with computer on my knee, iPhone buzzing in my pocket. Was I available on a particular date? I went to pull out the phone to check my calendar. It was gone. I felt the rising existential panic of loss. 'Let me call you back later,' I said, 'when I find my phone.' Only then did it occur to me it was in my hand and I was talking into it.

Yes definitely time to move on. It doesn't seem nine years ago when I looked very closely at UTS and thought, 'There's a place to do something really interesting. It's not complacent or settled. It's open to new ideas and ready to make a difference.' And we did. We are now well recognised globally in all the rankings for the ever increasing quality of our research and teaching, and the employability of our graduates.

But the thing about UTS is that we also know these rankings are not and have never been our defining purpose. We have identified a clear mission around innovation, impact and engagement with our community, which we achieve through a more integrative approach to business education.



The foundations were laid by previous deans, some of whom are here today. Ken Miller, our first dean, Serge Mukhi, Bob Robertson, Peter Booth and my immediate predecessor Rob Lynch, who gained AACSB accreditation for the business school. This gave us the platform to move forward with a distinctive approach.

When I took over in late 2008, we had a long hard look at our capability and future direction, to visualise where we wanted to be as a leading Australian business school and how we wanted to be positioned in 5 years' and in 10 years' time. One major challenge that became apparent was that more integrative thinking and the deep collaboration it required met a constraint in our building with its labyrinth of corridors and disconnected spaces.

Our strategy then took another step with university approval for construction of a new building on the old Dairy Farmers warehouse site, right here, which provided the opportunity to gauge Frank Gehry's interest in designing it for us. He wrote back saying 'I'm up for it', but was our University Council? We had found an architect who works with squiggles and block models, who designs from the inside out, so you don't know what you're getting until it's done, until as Frank says, 'the idea turns from liquid to crystal'.

University councils are inherently risk averse but ours decided that if they were ever to take a chance this would be the one, and we are forever grateful for their foresight and that of our university senior team. Look around and you will see this is characteristic of our entire \$1 billion-plus campus development. And we can now be proud that we have a building that reflects and reinforces our vision of the future in its architecture. Not to mention our past, going back to the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts in 1833 which adopted the tag line 'Manu et Mente' – Hand and Mind. You find it in the entrance halls of many well-known universities of technology around the world, from MIT to Birkbeck College, after George Birkbeck who founded the mechanics institute movement.

Importantly for UTS, this is not just a tag line but an ethos, a philosophy that continues to guide us in our contribution to the ongoing national interest in how Australia faces up to its big economic, social and environmental challenges. A former UTS Vice-Chancellor once said: 'We may have a tower but it's certainly not an ivory one'. This is a university without walls. It's embedded in the community. It's the university that business says they want to do business with, where government wants to talk policy with an evidence base, and where students want to hang out, study, get a job – or increasingly create one for themselves in our vibrant entrepreneurial precinct.

I've worked in several universities here and elsewhere around the world, but rarely if ever does one find such a cohesive sense of purpose among a university leadership from the Vice-Chancellor to heads of faculties, schools, disciplines, course directors, or such a collegiate environment among fellow academics and professional staff. Of course there are bumps in the road that we all have to negotiate and sometimes trip over. But generally we pick ourselves up here, regroup and carry on. This is the hallmark of a healthy, open and participative learning organisation that values its community.




So here's the really hard part, which I've left to last – whom to thank for working with me, putting up with my occasionally misplaced enthusiasm, and collaborating to achieve incredibly ambitious goals. As former Yale School of Management Dean and Bill Clinton adviser Jeffrey Garten once said: 'Vision without execution is hallucination' – and a university in a hurry like UTS, with a fierce determination to succeed, can't afford that.

Let me start with our senior executive, especially our dream team of Catherine and Attila. I'm sure everyone here will agree that no other university comes close to the calibre of this combo. Thanks goes as well to our former Vice-Chancellor Ross Milbourne and Provost Peter Booth, with whom I had an enjoyable and productive partnership for almost a decade, and new Provost Andrew Parfitt, who has made such a great start with all of us. I look forward to providing support from time to time in my post-retirement – let's call it 'repositioning' phase – in continuing to build our capability and performance in the innovation space. And I hope also to maintain relationships with my fellow deans and others across the campus in this context.

May I next thank our senior team in the business school – Deputy Dean Tracy Taylor, to whom I am immensely grateful for her support during my entire tenure. Some might say we are the 'yin and yang' of the business school with our complementary skills. And our fabulous Associate Deans and Discipline Group Heads – no faculty can function without strong leadership in these areas, and this has been delivered in spades.

Moreover, we have been guided in our strategic appraisals and activities by the most imaginative, diverse and formidable Advisory Board of any business school in the country, chaired by Glen Boreham. I can't thank you enough for all you have done. Our next Dean Chris Earley will be well served by your expertise and candour.

That brings me to my wonderful faculty colleagues, including our valued community of Adjuncts and industry fellows, most of whom have known no other dean in their time here – an unnerving thought but one which has hopefully worked in my favour. Thanks to you all. I might even end up as a research assistant for some of you. And last but certainly not least is our dedicated professional staff, both in the business school and centrally, who keep this complex operation of over 10,000 students running on a daily basis. A big thanks to you. And may I single out for special mention our Dean's Unit, especially our excellent Faculty Managers Craig Lord and previously Bill Paterson, who now has more elevated responsibilities in the Tower, my Executive Assistant Leonie Bringolf and Tracy's EA Janet Page who steps in when needed. What can I say about Leonie, except it's been such a pleasure to work with her. I didn't think anyone would have as weird a sense of humour as mine until I met Leonie. But we get the job done, right?

As we constantly say to ourselves, UTS works on the basis of collaboration, and generally that's the case, but the most important collaboration is the one I have at home with my wife Deidre, also with an academic background. This includes our shared delight in seeing our sons Otto and Claude grow up to be fine young men, with valuable digital expertise to enable their parents to operate home devices, including said smartphone.



I'm only sorry my 97-year-old mother and sister could not make it here today but the journey was not possible for them. To Deidre I owe everything as life partner, best friend and severest critic. Yes she tells it like it is and I mostly listen – or not, to my cost. It will be wonderful at last to have more time to devote to our future together.

Thank you once again to everyone for joining us today, including a number of very old and dear friends. I know I can't thank you all individually but each and every one of you has been part of my life at UTS and I hope that this will continue to be the case as I move to the next stage, whatever it may bring. I will end with these words from one of Deidre's favourite poets Robert Frost:

*Suppose I live till 90? That will give me 1600 weeks to put in at anything I like...  
All in all it has been such a lucky and original life that I can't understand my  
ever being for a moment cross or difficult or dissatisfied or cast down... And  
over and above everything I have had the fun of writing a few poems.*

Well not exactly poems in my case. Just substitute 'innovation reports' and you get the gist of it.

Thank you.