

Citation for Simone Whetton
Honorary Fellowship
Monday, 11 May 2026, 2.30pm

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Simone Whetton to you to be awarded an Honorary Fellowship, in recognition of her exceptional contribution to student life at the University of Sydney, particularly through her long-standing volunteerism, legal guidance, and support for Sydney University Sport and the University of Sydney Union.

Simone Whetton is a graduate of the University of Sydney, having completed her Bachelor of Economics in 1990 and Bachelor of Laws in 1993, followed by a Diploma of Finance in 1998. Since her time as a student and throughout her tenure as a partner at the esteemed law firm of Colins Biggers Paisley, Simone has maintained a deep and enduring connection to the University, and her contributions have left a lasting mark across student governance, sport, and the broader student experience.

From 2013 to 2016, Simone served as a Senate Appointed Director of the University of Sydney Union (USU), where she played a vital role in strengthening board governance. She provided expert legal advice and defence, and guided the implementation of new policies around confidentiality, in camera sessions and board reporting. In recognition of her impact in the role, she was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the University of Sydney Union in 2016 – a testament to the wisdom, mentorship and rigour she contributed to the University's community.

Beyond her board term, Simone has continued to support the USU in a variety of vital capacities. For nearly a decade, she has served as the Electoral Arbiter or the Returning Officer for USU elections, delivering briefings, overseeing processes, managing disputes and ensuring good governance throughout and continues to serve as the USU Returning Officer for the 2026 USU elections. Since 2021, she has also chaired the People and Culture Committee, offering her legal expertise, ethical compass and unyielding commitment to student welfare.

Simone is also a significant contributor to Sydney Uni Sport. In 2019, she was appointed Deputy Chair of the newly incorporated Sydney Uni Sport Board, helping to steer the organisation through a critical transition in its governance. Her work included the development of key documentation and policy frameworks and the facilitation of complex club negotiations. Simone has regularly supported legal matters for Sydney Uni Sport, championed infrastructure projects—most notably through her and her family's contribution to the TAG Family Grandstand campaign—and provided dedicated mentorship to student directors. Simone is the current Chair of the Nominations Committee for the Sydney Uni Sport Board.

Simone has recently been a guest lecturer for the Business School and has also served as a long-time judge for the Palladian Cup and most recently delivered the Occasional Address at the University of Sydney Law School graduation ceremony, alongside the Pro-Chancellor and Dean.

Simone's passion for equity and inclusion has been a throughline across her service. She has played a key role in creating more accessible opportunities for students in sport, student governance and campus life, advocating for systems that welcome and support all. She is admired for her integrity, availability, and ability to translate complex issues into principled outcomes.

Chancellor, I present Simone Whetton and invite you to confer the title of Honorary Fellow of the University upon her, in recognition of her tireless support of student engagement, her exceptional legal and governance service, and her unwavering advocacy for the student experience at the University of Sydney.