Minutes of Finance & Capital Investment Committee meeting

Date:	Wednesday, 02 April 2025
Time:	3.30pm
Location:	Microsoft Teams
Chairperson:	Mr Patrick McCormack
Attendees:	Professor Veronica Campbell Mr Mark Dunne Dr Frances Hardiman Ms Carol Lynch Dr Helen Murphy Ms Louise Walsh Ms Elaine Sheridan, VP Governance/University Secretary Mr Cormac O'Toole, VP Finance/Financial Controller
Apologies:	Professor Patrick Prendergast Mr Louise Grubb Mr Alan Quirke

In attendance for Agenda Item 2.2

Professor Peter McLoughlin, Head of Faculty of Science & Computing
Mr Keith Williams, Capital Projects Manager
Mr Paul Quirke, Capital Projects Manager

In attendance for Agenda Item 2.3

Dr Tony Murphy, Head of Lifelong Learning

Secretariat: Mary Clare Coogan

Item Title	
1.	**<u>Chairperson's Welcome</u>:**
1.1	<u>Chairpersons opening</u>: NOTED Mr Patrick McCormack agreed to chair the meeting in the absence of Professor Prendergast. He welcomed new committee member Ms Louise Walsh to her first meeting. Before commencing the meeting, he highlighted the large volume of documentation for review by the committee for today's meeting - noting that some were only circulated to the Board yesterday. He requested that going forward, all papers for committee meetings be circulated at least three working days in advance of meetings. He suggested this as good practice, pending agreement from FCIC.

	AGREED All documentation for meetings to be circulated to committee members at least three working days in advance of meetings. Confirming the meeting was quorate, Mr McCormack commenced the business of the meeting.
1.2	<u>Conflict of Interest Declaration</u>: NOTED The Chairperson asked members if they had any conflicts to declare particularly associated with items on the agenda. Dr Helen Murphy noted a potential conflict of interest with Item 2.3 of the agenda in relation to the Lifelong Learning Strategy, as she is the Executive responsible for that area. She advised she had invited Dr Tony Murphy, Head of Lifelong Learning to present this item, and offered to step out of the meeting if required.
1.3	<u>Approval of minutes: FCIC 13 February 2024 & Joint meeting 13 February 2025</u>: NOTED Ms Louise Walsh requested that her apologies be recorded in the minutes of the Joint meeting. AGREED To approve both sets of minutes - subject to the above amendment, and publish on the website.
1.4	<u>Matters arising (Action Log)</u>: NOTED Items 3, 4, 5 and 7 of the Action Log were in progress and Item 6 was on the agenda for today's meeting. Mr McCormack requested an update on Items 1 and 2. The VP Finance advised that Item 1 was still on-going and confirmed that the timeline for completion of this action would be Q3 2025. Item 2 will be presented to the next meeting.
Section 2A - for approval	
2.1	<u>Budget 2025</u> NOTED The VP Finance presented a summary of the draft 2025 HEA Budget Submission document which outlined the following: ➢ Overview of 2025 State Grant Allocation ➢ Context on which the document is based: *Income:* - Recurrent Grant – (based on Student Returns 1st March 2024) - Tuition Fees (8 months 24/25 Academic Year and 4 months 25/26 academic year) - HEA Budget (calendar year basis) - SETU financial year aligned to academic year - Academic year Budget spans two calendar years *Expenditure:* - Driven by academic year - Cost committed to in September for following 12 months ➢ Income and Expenditure by year ➢ Student Income by year ➢ Key Risks inherent in the Budget ➢ Strategic financial actions ➢ Mitigating actions ➢ Sensitivity Analysis Assumptions ➢ Sensitivity Analysis Impact The VP Finance outlined that the projected total income has increased by €13.5m, the projected total expenditure costs have increased by €27.4m, leaving the University with an overall surplus of €2.1m. A discussion followed where the committee raised several questions and sought clarifications. It was noted that the Non-Pay Budget had significantly increased from 2023/25 to 2024/25, with a projected reduction of €5.5 million for 2025/26. The VP Finance explained that one of the biggest challenges for the University this year was the cyber incident, including the costs incurred that are not expected to carry forward in 2025/26.

	Cyber incident costs included consultancy support to aid in the forensic analysis, recovery and rebuilding of IT systems, as well as creation of the cybersecurity unit and purchase of hardware . The committee was advised that the substantive work on cyber recovery is expected to be completed by August 2025. AGREED To recommend the Budget Submission 2025 to the Governing Body for approval and submission to the HEA.
2.2	<u>Veterinary Medicine & Pharmacy Preliminary Business Case</u> NOTED Mr McCormack welcomed Prof Peter McLoughlin, Mr Paul Quirke and Mr Keith Williams to the meeting to provide context to this agenda item. A slide-deck was presented and Prof McLoughlin advised that the University responded to an initiative to expand Pharmacy & Veterinary Medicine provision by way of an Expression of Interest (EOI), which he noted was very much aligned with several strategic objectives in the University's Strategic Plan. Once the EOI was successful, this was followed by the submission of a full application to the HEA which was also successful. The HEA have requested the University to complete a Preliminary Business Case (PBC) template. This document was very substantial and comprehensive, and the VP Governance provided a summary of its contents which included the following: ➢ Objectives ➢ Multi-criteria analysis ➢ Short list of options ➢ Preliminary cost estimate A multi-criteria analysis was undertaken which evaluated all options using a model that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative criteria. This process was reviewed internally, and the outcome identified Option 2 as the preferred option, which is to build a new building on the SETU at Glassworks Cork Road site and complete a new building on the Kildalton Campus. The VP Governance stated that the cost estimates and indicative programme has been validated by external consultants Duke McCaffrey, emphasising the importance of having undergone this validation. Mr Williams also noted that economic consultants Indecon had conducted a Cost Benefit Analysis of each of the options, and the outcome of that process also identified Option 2 as being the most economically advantageous option. The committee were advised that the University met with the HEA on 25th March to provide an update on the PBC application. The HEA highlighted that considering the recent results of the utilisation surveys, that SETU need to be confident that the delivery of the required veterinary and pharmacy space cannot be provided by the refurbishment of existing SETU owned accommodation rather than building new facilities. The committee was also appraised of the proposed next steps in the process. The details of the costs associated with the transition plans were also presented to the committee. Funding would be sought from the HEA but in the meantime, approval was being sought to invest €1.2 million from the devolved grant over the next two years. AGREED To approve the investment for the transitionary works and to recommend the Veterinary Medicine & Pharmacy Preliminary Business Case to the Governing Body. Mr McCormack thanked Prof McLoughlin, Mr Quirke and Mr Williams for their input and they left the meeting.
2.3	<u>Lifelong Learning Strategy</u> NOTED Mr McCormack welcomed Dr Tony Murphy to the meeting, and he provided a presentation to the committee on a Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2025 - 2029. The presentation outlined the strategic direction of Lifelong Learning and projections over the lifetime of the Strategy on enrolments, income and expenditure, contribution, and contribution less investment and Lifelong Learning Incentive Scheme.

	Dr T. Murphy advised that a total investment of €1.19m was being sought over three years to develop a sustainable business model for Lifelong Learning, to include: ➢ Faculty Lead for Lifelong Learning ➢ Programme integration costs ➢ Programme Lead costs for programmes migrated into Faculty structures ➢ Marketing costs ➢ Lifelong Learning Incentive Scheme for programmes migrated into Faculty structures Before discussion took place, Dr H. Murphy left the meeting. Dr T. Murphy noted that the strategy was informed by a strong evidence base examining the current and future skills needs of the South East region. This analysis, along with the CSO's predictions for population growth in the South East, has highlighted the need to develop specific industries and skills within the region. The President further noted that SETU had commissioned a skills report to identify the skills needed in the South East, which further supports this evidence base. AGREED To recommend the financial plan for the Lifelong Learning Strategy to Governing Body Dr H. Murphy re-joined the meeting. Mr McCormack thanked Dr T. Murphy and he left the meeting.
2.4	<u>AGM Resolution for subsidiary companies</u> NOTED The VP Governance advised the committee that SETU currently have five subsidiaries - all of which are single member companies. In accordance with the Companies Act 2014, single member companies can pass a written resolution which dispenses with the requirement for the company to hold an Annual General Meeting of its members, provided that the member (SETU) approves by way of a written resolution. The written resolutions set out the following: ➢ that financial statements for the relevant financial year have been presented to the member ➢ whether the company has availed of an audit exemption ➢ where the company has not availed of an audit exemption, that the auditor continues to stand appointed ➢ all matters are resolved that would otherwise be resolved at an AGM Approval from the Finance & Capital Investment Committee is required to approve the written resolutions to dispense with an AGM for each of the following SETU subsidiaries: 1. Insurtech DAC 2. ThreeD DAC 3. LI4 DAC A resolution to dispense with an AGM for the remaining two subsidiaries will be presented at the next committee meeting. AGREED To recommend to the Governing Body the written resolutions to dispense with an AGM for each of the above SETU subsidiaries.
2.5	<u>Glassworks Capital Plan & Branding</u> NOTED The VP Governance provided an update to the committee on the Glassworks Capital Plan and Branding, presenting a slide deck created by Turnberry Consulting UK that showcased various visual options for the site's appearance. The VP Governance stated that while there is no request for investment or expenditure at this point, she felt it would be important for the University to start sharing the vision publicly. Ms. Lynch noted that this was a significant development and suggested it would be beneficial for committee members - if it was deemed appropriate, to visit the site to gain a better understanding of the space. The committee were in agreement with this and the VP Finance suggested that this visit be organised to coincide

	with the next meeting of the Finance & Capital Investment Committee. ACTION To arrange a visit to the Glassworks site at SETU Waterford Campus for members of the Finance & Capital Investment Committee on the same day as the next meeting.
Section 2B - for discussion/noting	
2.6	Management Letter from C&AG re Financial Statements 2023 NOTED It was agreed at the 13 February meeting that this be placed on the agenda for noting/information.
2.7	TU-RISE Year 1 Annual Reports NOTED For noting/information.
2.8	Gateway Presentations: Walton Institute/PMBRC/Design+/SEAM NOTED The VP Finance acknowledged the time constraints due to the full agenda for today's meeting and advised that at this point, the Technology Gateway Financial Reports were for information. He suggested that if the committee wished, the relevant individuals could present these reports at a future meeting. This idea was well-received, and it was proposed that the presentations be spread out over the next couple of meetings. AGREED To arrange for the four Technology Gateways to present their Financial Reports to the Finance & Capital Investment Committee.
2.9	HEA TSAF Year 1 Annual Report NOTED For noting/information.
2.10	Regularisation of site title folios NOTED The VP Finance outlined it is proposed to update title registrations from Waterford Institute of Technology & Carlow Institute of Technology to South East Technological University. Holmes Law are the Solicitors acting on behalf of the University. AGREED To approve Holmes Law to act on behalf of the University to complete due diligence and complete all registration updates.
2.11	Repeat Fees for International Learners NOTED The VP Finance referred to the memo that was circulated to the committee regarding the proposed Alignment of Non-EU Repeat Learner Fees 2025-2026. AGREED To approve that the University applies the repeat fees for International learners for the 2025-2026 intake onwards, as per the memo.

Approved: ______________________ Date: 3rd June 2025