

Minutes Special Governing Body meeting

Date: Monday, 24th August 2026

Time: via MS Teams

Chairperson: Professor Patrick Prendergast

Attendees: Professor Veronica Campbell
Ms Ruth Beadle
Mr Jim Bergin
Ms Eileen Curtis
Dr David Dempsey
Dr Greg Doyle
Mr Richard Lacey
Mr Kevin Lewis
Professor Hannah McGee
Ms Louise Walsh
Mr Derek Sheridan

In attendance under the Code of Governance:

Ms Elaine Sheridan, University Secretary

In attendance by invitation of the Governing Body:

Ms Aisling O'Beirne, Chief Financial Officer

In attendance for Agenda Item 2:

Dr Joe Collins (Director of Carlow College Strategic Initiative)

Secretariat: Ms Annette Byrne

Item Title - Section A

1. Chairperson's Opening:

1.1 Welcome & approval of Agenda

NOTED The Chairperson welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for making themselves available at short notice. At the Chairperson's request, the University Secretary confirmed the quorum arrangements previously agreed by the Governing Body and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Following approval of the agenda, the Chairperson commenced the formal business of the meeting.

1.2 Conflict of Interest

NOTED The Chairperson asked members if they had any conflicts of interest to declare associated with items on the meeting agenda. No members present declared a conflict for this meeting.

2. Carlow College Funding Agreement:

2.1 NOTED The President firstly thanked members for attending the meeting. She continued by outlining the recent process to develop and agree a legal framework for funding arrangements and property transfer, aligned with the Memorandum of Understanding between SETU and Carlow College, St Patrick's (CCSP). The President noted that SETU and CCSP had contributed to the agreement and had undertaken the necessary legal reviews. It was further noted that the funding arrangement had been agreed with DFHERIS. She also advised the Governing Body that the funding is required by Carlow College, St Patrick's (CCSP) in the coming days to enable it to meet its immediate financial commitments.

NOTED Dr Joe Collins joined the meeting and provided a brief overview of the Memorandum of Understanding between SETU and CCSP which was approved by Governing Body on May 12th 2026. He advised that the Property Transfer and Funding Agreement gives legal effect to the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding and that there are no deviations from the previously approved framework. Dr Collins outlined the alignment of the agreement with the Memorandum of Understanding, including provisions relating to learner protection, property transfer, the protection of SETU's interests, and arrangements for the release and transfer of funding. He noted that execution of the agreement is required to facilitate the release of funding to CCSP. Dr Collins advised that the approval sought from the Governing Body was to authorise the execution of the Property Transfer and Funding Agreement and to delegate authority to the President to execute the agreement on behalf of SETU. The Chairperson thanked Dr Collins for the overview provided and opened the floor to the Governing Body for questions and comments. The Governing Body commended the work undertaken in progressing the agreement to its current stage. In response to questions from Governing body members, further clarifications were provided regarding indemnification, funding responsibilities, restrictions on future use of the property for educational use, and measures to protect the University's reputation in relation to communications and announcements. The Chairperson thanked members for their consideration of the matter and recommended that Governing Body approval be granted for the execution of the Property Transfer and Funding Agreement, as presented, and that the President be authorised to execute the agreement on behalf of SETU. This was agreed.

AGREED To approve the Property Transfer and Funding Agreement as outlined above.

2.2 Dr Collins left the meeting at this point.

NOTED The President thanked the Governing Body for its approval and provided an update on the Joint Oireachtas Committee (Further & Higher Education Research, Innovation & Science) meeting held on 15 July 2026, which was attended by the President, Dr Collins, representatives of CCSP and DFHERIS. The President informed members that a formal request for the due diligence report commissioned by SETU had now been received from the Joint Oireachtas Committee. She advised that the matter had been discussed with the Chairperson and that it is recommended that the comprehensive version of the report, appropriately redacted where necessary, be provided. Following a discussion, the Governing Body expressed its support for the release of the report, and the Chairperson indicated that it demonstrates the extensive due diligence and consideration undertaken by SETU in relation to the matter.

NOTED The President informed the Governing Body that she had very recently received correspondence from Minister Lawless regarding his appointment of an independent Chairperson of a steering group established to examine the future use of the Carlow College site. The President advised that she has discussed the matter with the Chairperson and that a joint response has been issued to the Minister seeking an urgent meeting to obtain further clarification on the appointment, the remit of the steering group, and how its proposed work would align with the appropriate governance structures of the University. The Governing Body expressed a number of concerns regarding the appointment, in particular in relation to governance and the role of the Governing Body. It was discussed whether or not the earlier decision should be revisited on foot of this new information but, notwithstanding the serious reservations of some members, it was decided not to reopen the earlier discussion.

	The Chairperson and President noted the views expressed by the Governing Body and confirmed that these would be reflected in their forthcoming meeting with the Minister. They also advised that a detailed update would be provided at the next meeting.
B1.	<u>SECTION B:</u> <u>Staff Appointments</u> AGREED To approve Dr Laura Keane to the post of Director of Student Life and Experience on a permanent basis.
	<u>AOB:</u> There being no other matters to attend to the Chairperson thanked all and closed the meeting at 16.20pm.

Approved:



Date: **22nd September 2026**