Minutes of the 34th Governing Body meeting

Date:	Tuesday, 17th June 2025
Time:	3.00pm – 6.30pm, Boardroom, Tourism & Leisure Building, Cork Road campus, Waterford
Chairperson:	Professor Patrick Prendergast
Attendees:	Professor Veronica Campbell Ms Eileen Curtis Dr David Dempsey Dr Zeta Dooly Dr Greg Doyle Mr Mark Dunne Ms Trish Finegan Ms Louise Grubb (via MS Teams) Mr Richard Lacey Mr Kevin Lewis (via MS Teams) Mr Derek Sheridan Ms Louise Walsh
Apologies:	Mr Jim Bergin Ms Pauline Oakes Ms Ruth Beadle Professor Marie-Christine Ho Ba Tho

In attendance under the Code of Governance:
Ms Elaine Sheridan, VP Governance /University Secretary

In attendance for Agenda Item 3:
Mr Tony Minogue, Independent Advisor to Governing Body

In attendance for Agenda Item 4:
Dr Richard Hayes, VP Strategy

In attendance for Agenda Item 6.1:
Dr David Ryan, Associate VP Sustainability

In attendance for Agenda Item 6.2:
Dr Richard Hayes, VP Strategy
Dr Derek O'Byrne, VP Academic Affairs, Teaching & Learning

In attendance for Agenda Item 8:
Dr Derek O'Byrne, VP Academic Affairs, Teaching & Learning
Dr Colette Moloney, Assistant Registrar

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 confirming the meeting was quorate and with approval of the agenda he commenced the normal business. Apologies submitted for this meeting were noted.
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. The Chairperson indicated that he would step out of the meeting during the discussion on Honorary Degrees (Item 8) and that Ms Curtis had agreed to chair the meeting on his behalf for this item. No other members present declared a conflict for this meeting.
1.3	Approval of minutes AGREED To approve the minutes of 6th and 29th May 2025 and to publish on the website.
1.4	Matters arising (Action Log) NOTED The Chairperson indicated that matters as noted on the Action Log are in hand and that details regarding the five year financial plan as presented to the Finance & Capital Investment Committee at their recent meeting would be provided to the Governing Body in September. There were no other matters arising.
1.5	Arrangements for reduced quorum NOTED The VP Governance/University Secretary presented proposed arrangements for the purpose of attending to urgent business if required during the summer months noting that these are in line with the provisions included in the Governing Body Standing Orders (S4.2 & S4.8). It was therefore agreed to implement the following; ➢ Reduced quorum effective from 18th June 2025 to 31st August 2025; ➢ Reduced quorum required is 6 members which will include the Chairperson, the President, at least one external member and at least one internal member; ➢ Depending on the nature of the business to be attended to, the Chairperson will decide if full Governing Body quorum is required; ➢ Communication on meetings required over the summer months will be sent to all Governing Body members.
1.6	Other Correspondence NOTED The Chairperson made reference to correspondence he had received from a Gather for Palestine Group in the University. He indicated that the matter has been referred to the President and Executive Management Team for any appropriate action.
2.	**Report from President:** NOTED The President commenced by informing the Governing Body that the MPharm programme has been recommended following a panel review, subject to conditions and approval by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland Council. The President acknowledged and thanked all involved for their efforts and work in this matter. The President continued by providing updates in relation to her annual Workplan for 2024/25 as follows;

	• Strategic matters that have been completed, in progress or not yet started. Emphasizing that while the Regional Engagement Strategy has been delayed to Q3 2025 that the University plays an active role in relation regional engagement. The delay in relation to student accommodation was also highlighted noting that the outcome of the submission to the HEA on the long list of options is awaited. • Update regarding the progress of capital projects and associated timelines (as known); • Completion of N-TUTORR project and progress being made in relation to an Advancement & Alumni Office; • Progress in relation to organisational structures, establishment of Faculties and recruitment process for Senior Vice President roles; • Completed and ongoing internal and external stakeholder engagement activities; • Other and additional activities that have been completed or in progress including developments towards unified systems, procedures and policies for the University. The President acknowledged the support and work of the Executive Management Team in delivering the above and also thanked the Governing Body for their oversight and support. The Chairperson thanked the President for her updates, commending the work and significant milestones that have been achieved during this academic year. He then opened to the floor to comments and advice. The Governing Body concurred with the sentiments expressed by the Chairperson; however the Governing Body expressed some concern in relation to the lack of response regarding TSSPF submissions and funding for capital projects. It was therefore suggested that this is relayed by the President to the appropriate parties.
3.	**<u>Update on Cyber Incident:</u>** NOTED The Chairperson welcomed Mr Minogue to the meeting. The President commenced by providing an overview of the status of core tasks required for recovery as at 12th June noting that good progress is being made and on target for completion of key recovery tasks by 31st July. The President also outlined that issues are being dealt with and resolved as they arise and weekly communications are issued to staff on the progress being made. In concluding, the President proposed that it would be beneficial to “Close Out” the IT Recovery Project on 31st July by way of an update to the Chairperson and Governing Body via email or convene a special meeting online, to be decided as appropriate. Mr Minogue presented an independent update report regarding the IT Recovery project and in doing so verified that the recovery project remains on schedule for completion by July 31st, noting the importance of drawing a line under the recovery project at this point. He commended the project team on their positive commitment, good engagement and progressive working environment. The Governing Body commended and thanked all for the work, effort and commitment that has been invested in the recovery phase. In concluding, the Chairperson suggested that it would be beneficial for a final report to be issued for sign off on July 31st. He thanked Mr Minogue for his report and Mr Minogue left the meeting at 3.45pm.
4.	**<u>Strategic Plan Implementation update including update on Organisational Design:</u>** NOTED Dr Hayes joined the meeting. The President firstly presented an update on the process of organisational restructuring that has taken place to date. She presented details of the activities undertaken including the development of a series of spotlight posters for integrated functional areas and bespoke SETU integration workshops across multiple units with significant staff engagement. The President also provided an update on ROaD (Realising Opportunities and Development) project which integrates a number of strategic activities, noting timelines for completion of same. Dr Hayes continued by providing an overview of Strategic Plan actions that have been completed, in progress or not yet started. He indicated that some actions not yet started have been modified slightly, however this does not have any impact on reaching the target set out and that KPI’s are primarily on track. Further updates will be provided in September as well as responses to the HEA regarding the Performance Agreement. The Chairperson thanked the President and Dr Hayes for their updates commending the work that has been achieved to date.

5. **Student Union update:**

NOTED The President of the SU, Mr Dunne, provided a presentation in relation to SETU Students' Union activities for the academic year 2024/25. These included activities and campaigns carried out each month including Class Rep Recruitment, Freshers' Week, Mental Health Week, Upskill Week, Raise & Give Week, Student Race Days and Refreshers Week. He also provided details of the SETUSU Elections informing all of the incoming SU President, Erin Foley, and her team for 2025/26. Mr Dunne noted that casework regarding accommodation issues has increased in the period and he stressed the negative impact of shortages in student accommodation on commuting times and the student experience. Mr Dunne emphasised the pivotal role the Students' Union plays in supporting students and contributing to a positive experience for all SETU students. Mr Dunne also recognised the support provided by the Executive Management Team.

The Chairperson and Governing Body commended Mr Dunne and SU team on the work and support provided to students during the year.

6. **Strategic Discussion:**

6.1 Sustainability Strategy

NOTED Dr Ryan was welcomed to the meeting for the purpose of presenting the draft Sustainability Strategy for preliminary review. He commenced his presentation by outlining the consultation and engagement processes that have been undertaken in preparing the draft strategy which has included a review of EU and national policies, review of Sustainability Strategies of other Universities and attendance at national conferences, workshops and events. Dr Ryan set out a proposed implementation plan and timeline noting that a long-term view is required to achieve the ambition set out in the plan. The proposed strategy sets out a number of key priorities across four thematic areas and guided by objectives, actions and targets. Dr Ryan also provided a high-level draft overview of financial projections to 2030, outlining potential investment requirements and external income sources. The floor was then opened to the Governing Body for comment and advice. Some concerns were expressed in relation to the extent of the proposed timeline of the strategy and also the financial projections and, in particular, investment costs. The Chairperson thanked Dr Ryan and he left the meeting. The Governing Body discussed the matter further and, whilst supportive of the establishment of a Sustainability Strategy, it was suggested that feedback is provided to Dr Ryan including the following;

- The proposed timeline for the strategy should be to the immediate 5 years in order to achieve what is practicable;
- Commence the collection of baseline data and information in order to clarify what is being measured;
- Detail of financial information needs to be further clarified in terms of recurrent costs and capital requirements;
- The plan should focus on being embedded in the university community with engagement from staff and students alike;
- The plan should focus on reasonable targets for the educational dimensions.

6.2 SRS (Student Records System) Returns March 2025 & Interim CAO data 2025/26

NOTED Dr O'Byrne and Dr Hayes were welcomed to the meeting. Dr O'Byrne commenced by outlining details of current year (2024/25) student enrolments, as per the March SRS which are subject to further validation. The figures indicate an increase in overall enrolments noting some movement in student profile and student type. Dr O'Byrne then provided some observations and comparisons to the previous year's figures demonstrating growth across many disciplines and an increase in overseas activity. Dr Hayes continued by providing analysis in relation to student retention and progression rates noting that there is a reduction in the demand for Level 6 & 7 programmes. Whilst acknowledging that there are signs of improvement in relation to progression levels, it was highlighted that the University is lagging behind national and sectoral levels in this regard. In order to establish the reasons for this, a taskforce has been formed to further examine the matter. A breakdown of CAO cycle trends and performance for 2025/26 was also provided to the Governing Body outlining the University's position and market share against all other HEI's.

	Dr O'Byrne presented details of student recruitment drives and campaigns and the use of general and social media platforms to promote the University. Further discussion ensued and the Governing Body offered additional comment and advice for enhancing the work that is ongoing in terms of increasing student recruitment, retention and progression. The Chairperson thanked Dr O'Byrne and Dr Hayes for their presentation. They both then left the meeting.
7.	**<u>Vision group for Wexford campus:</u>** NOTED The President referred to previous discussions regarding the University's presence in Wexford and proposed that it is now appropriate to proceed in establishing a group to elaborate further on the vision for the proposed new SETU Wexford campus noting that Wexford Council is now able to progress with the CPO and this therefore has made the work of this group an imperative. The President outlined a proposed membership structure and activities for this particular group and also suggested that a Governing Body liaison group would also be established. AGREED The Governing Body indicated their approval to proceed with the approach proposed in establishing a group to elaborate further on the vision for the Wexford campus. ACTION It was suggested by a Governing Body member that the September meeting of Governing Body be held at a suitable location in Wexford. This was agreed.
8.	**<u>Honorary Degrees</u>** NOTED Dr O'Byrne and Dr Moloney were welcomed to the meeting. Dr O'Byrne informed the Governing Body that the Advisory Committee on Honorary Degrees has completed an evaluation of nominations received following a recent call for same. Dr Moloney continued by providing names and biographical details of nominees as recommended by the Advisory Committee, duly recognised for the award of Doctor of The University (*Honoris Causa*). The Chairperson indicated his support for the proposed candidates, and as a member of the Advisory Committee excused himself from the meeting at 17.58pm. Ms Curtis took the chair for the remainder of this agenda item. Following discussion the Governing Body expressed their support and recognised the high-caliber and accomplishments of the proposed candidates. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to receive a breakdown of all nominees when considering future proposals. It was proposed to award honorary degrees to two of the nominees at the Conferring Ceremonies in 2025 and to carry forward the award to the remaining nominees to the following year. The Chairperson rejoined the meeting at 18.08pm. Ms Curtis outlined the comments expressed by Governing Body members, and on behalf of the Governing Body indicated their support for the proposed nominees. The Chairperson thanked all for their support. Dr O'Byrne and Dr Moloney left the meeting.
9. *9.1*	**<u>Governance Matters:</u>** <u>Policy Approvals</u> NOTED The Chairperson outlined the review and recommendation for approval as set out by the Policy Committee in relation to the policies below; • Extreme Weather Policy • Sponsorship Awards Policy • Dignity & Respect for Students Policy • Providing Academic References to Students Policy • Student Complaints Policy AGREED To approve all of the policies above and to upload these to the website.

9.2	Charities Regulator – Annual Report NOTED The VP Governance /University Secretary outlined requirements under the Charities Act 2009, regarding the CRA Annual Return for 31 August 2024 which requires Governing Body approval prior to submitting via the CRA portal, noting that this has also been reviewed and recommended by the Audit & Risk Committee. She also made reference to the SETU Campus Services return provided for noting as approved by the Board of Directors and filed separately. AGREED To approve the CRA Annual Return for SETU 31 August 2024 for submission to the CRA portal.
9.3	University Annual Report 2023/24 AGREED Subject to minor corrections, to approve the University Annual Report 2023/24 prior to submission of same to the Minister by 30th June 2025 and noting that once translated, both versions will be uploaded to the website.
9.4	AGM Resolution (Novus & NDIH) NOTED The VP Governance /University Secretary outlined the requirement to provide written resolution to dispense with the requirement for SETU Subsidiary companies to hold an Annual General Meeting, noting the request for this resolution pertains to National Design Innovation Hub DAC and SETU Campus Services CLG, as approval for Lean Industry 4.0 DAC, ThreeD DAC and Insurtech DAC was granted at the Governing Body meeting on April 8th, 2025. AGREED On the recommendation of the Finance & Capital Investment Committee, to approve the written resolutions to dispense with an AGM for SETU subsidiaries outlined above.
10.	**Academic Council:** NOTED Academic Council Minutes 20th May 2025, noting approval of same at the Academic Council meeting earlier in the day.
11.	**Minutes of GB Committees:**
11.1	NOTED Audit & Risk Committee draft minutes of 28th May 2025.
11.2	NOTED Finance & Capital Investment Committee (draft) 3.6.2025 & 13.6.2025. The Chairperson referred to the special meeting convened on June 13th whereby the Committee was presented with an independent report regarding a review of the activities and the financial position of SETU Diverse Campus Services (Novus). He noted that the Executive Management have been tasked with the implementation of recommendations as outlined in this report.
11.3	NOTED Joint Quality Committee draft minutes of 13th May 2025.
11.4	NOTED Policy Committee draft minutes of 5th June 2025.
	SECTION B:
B1.	Staff Appointments AGREED To approve Mr David Denieffe to the post of Senior Vice President Operations. NOTED Providing an update on the other senior posts the President requested approval to rename the post titles to Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Academic Officer (CAO). It was also indicated that the Senior Vice President Operations post title would be amended to Chief Operations Officer (COO). AGREED To grant approval for the rename of senior post titles as outlined above.

B2.	AGREED To grant approval for Emeritus Applications as presented.
B3.	NOTED Research Annual Report 2024.
B4.	NOTED Race Equality Action Plan.
B5.	NOTED Annual Reports 24/25 for Audit & Risk Committee, Finance & Capital Investments Committee, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Joint Quality Committee and Policy Committee.
B6.	NOTED Conflict of Interest Annual Report
B7.	NOTED Draft minutes regarding SETU Subsidiaries/DAC's.
B8.	NOTED SETU Campus Services Charities Regulator Annual Report.
B9.	NOTED Foundation Day 2025. Recording highlighting SETU activities throughout the year was played for all at the end of the meeting.
10.	**AOB:** NOTED The Chairperson acknowledged contributions from Mr Dunne and Ms Finegan as this was their final meeting and thanked them for their support during their term on Governing Body. NOTED In the absence of Ms Beadle, the VP Governance/University Secretary sought approval to seek additional members from the university to join the EDI Committee. It was agreed to proceed as required. There being no other matters to attend to, the Chairperson thanked all and closed the meeting at 18.30pm.

Approved:

Date: 23rd September 2025