

Minutes of the 14th Governing Body meeting

Date: Tuesday, 7th February 2023
Time: 4 – 6pm, Council Chambers, Wexford County Council

Chairperson: Professor Patrick Prendergast

Attendees: Professor Veronica Campbell
 Mr Jim Bergin
 Ms Ruth Beadle (via MS Teams)
 Mr Kevin Lewis (via MS Teams)
 Mr Mark Dunne
 Mr Patrick Curtin (via MS Teams)
 Dr David Dempsey
 Ms Sarah Clarke
 Mr Claus Derenda
 Dr Kathleen Moore Walsh
 Mr Richard Lacey
 Ms Pauline Oakes
 Mr Ray Ryan
 Ms Quynh Nguyen (via MS Teams)
 Professor Marie-Christine Ho Ba Tho (via MS Teams)

Apologies: Ms Cynthia Ní Mhurchú
 Ms Louise Grubb

In attendance under the Code of Governance:
 Ms Elaine Sheridan, Vice President for Corporate Affairs and Finance
 Mr Cormac O'Toole, Vice President for Corporate Affairs

In attendance for Agenda Item 3 & 4:
 Dr Derek O'Byrne, VP Academic Affairs & Registrar
 Dr David Denieffe, VP Academic Affairs
 Dr Chris O'Riordan, Academic Quality Integration Lead

In attendance for Agenda Item 5:
 Dr Richard Hayes

Secretariat: Ms Annette Byrne

Item Title	
1.	Prior to opening the Governing Body meeting the Chairperson conducted a private meeting with the external members of the Governing Body as per Section 4.10 of the SETU Code of Governance (Interim). <u>Chairperson's Opening:</u> NOTED The Governing Body meeting commenced at 4.25pm. The Chairperson opened the meeting by introducing and welcoming Mr Tom Enright, CEO of Wexford County Council. He extended his gratitude

	to Mr Enright for providing the Council chamber to the Governing Body meeting. Mr Enright addressed the Governing Body indicating that he looks forward to working in partnership with the university to assist in the delivery of the vision of SETU that will bring benefits to the region and its people. On behalf of the Governing Body, the Chairperson thanked Mr Enright for this strong support for SETU, and for promoting its development in County Wexford. Mr Enright then left the meeting.
1.1	<u>Welcome & approval of Agenda</u> Prof Prendergast confirmed the meeting was quorate, he confirmed approval of the agenda and commenced the normal business.
1.2	<u>Conflict of Interest</u> NOTED The Chairperson asked members if they had any conflicts of interest to declare particularly associated with items on the meeting agenda. No member present declared a conflict for this meeting.
1.3	<u>Approval of minutes: 10th January 2023</u> AGREED To approve the minutes of 10th January 2023 and to upload to the website.
1.4	<u>Matters arising (Action Log)</u> NOTED The Chairperson provided further updates regarding the Action Log highlighting items that are in progress or have been completed and therefore closed out. There were no other matters arising.
2.	<u>President's Section:</u> NOTED The President reported on a number of matters to the Governing Body as follows: • Positive conversations with the Department of Education and Skills regarding post primary education provision, follow up due in the coming weeks; • Recent meeting with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) – intention to undertake an institutional review of SETU in 2024 which will include an international review panel and self-assessment exercises; • Working with Mazars in relation to an Executive structure for SETU and expects to present same to the Governing Body in April; • Recent Conferring ceremonies – approximately 2000 students conferred bringing the total to 4700 graduates in the first year of SETU; • Academic Council have proposed that the title bestowed on conferral of an honorary degree will be “Doctor of the University”, post-nominal letters D.Univ. The Chairperson thanked the President for her update. Mr Ryan enquired when the call for honorary degrees is expected and also the status of previous fellowships/honorary degree awards by the legacy institutes. The President indicated that the call is imminent and indicated that she would examine previous awards to provide a status update. ACTION President to further advise status of previous fellowships recipients.
3.	<u>President's Workplan:</u> <u>Academic Council design working group (interim report)</u> NOTED Dr O’Byrne, Dr Denieffe and Dr O’Riordan joined the meeting remotely. Dr O’Riordan led the presentation by outlining membership of the design group, the legislative context, comparisons against Academic Council models from other universities and other work carried out by the design working group. He indicated that the work carried out to date has now created a conceptual framework and proposed structures for academic council governance and its committees. A proposed membership model was also outlined. In summarising the presentation the importance of selecting a suitable approach that can evolve over time was emphasised. The Chairperson welcomed comments and advice

	from the Governing body and further discussion ensued. Clarity was provided in terms of competency-based election requirements and consideration for PMSS representation per constituencies indicating that additional work is required in relation to this. In concluding the discussion, the Chairperson indicated the Governing Body's satisfaction regarding the trajectory of this particular matter and looked forward to the next iteration of the document. The Chairperson thanked all for the presentation.
4.	<u>SETU Quality Framework</u> NOTED Dr O'Riordan provided a presentation in relation to the draft framework as presented and discussed at Executive Management and Academic Council meetings. He acknowledged the Quality Assurance working group and the work carried out by them during the TU application process. In continuing the presentation, Dr O'Riordan outlined the purpose of the quality framework and what underpins the quality ethos of the university, how SETU must continuously strive for improvement across the activities of its areas and functions, responsibilities to graduates, learners and stakeholders and how SETU must deliver on these statements. A discussion on the matter ensued and an emphasis on external engagement and regional links was expressed as this will assist in fulfilling expectations and define the quality of the university. During the discussion it was also indicated that the outcome of reviews would be made available to the Governing body and suggested that a Quality committee is included in Academic Council structures. It was also confirmed that the Quality Framework as presented has been approved by the Academic Council and recommended that it is also adopted by the Governing Body. AGREED To approve the Quality Framework as presented subject to minor recommendations as discussed. The Chairperson thanked all for their presentation. The meeting took a short recess at this point. On returning the Chairperson indicated that due to an unavoidable time constraint he wished to defer the Students Union Referendum and other Activities discussion item to the next meeting and also that the quarterly update on Transition process should be noted.
5.	<u>Strategic Plan:</u> NOTED Dr Hayes joined the meeting. The President commenced by providing a summary of items that have been updated following feedback and recommendations from the Governing Body at the previous meeting and indicated that further refinement is required in terms of targets & KPI's, financial costings and projections and an implementation roadmap. She assured all that timelines for the completion of the Strategic plan are on target and extended her gratitude to Dr Hayes for the work and input he has given to it. Ms Beadle suggested that introductory comments and language used could be more forthright and affirm how SETU will impact the region. Mr Bergin indicated improvements in the revised tone of the document and it was implied that this would be revisited for further enhancement. Prof Ho Ba Tho sought clarification around goals for sustainability and the position of research in this regard. The President highlighted where these considerations are included and addressed. In concluding the discussion the Chairperson indicated satisfaction with the revised version of the Strategic Plan document, albeit verbose in places it remains commendable and worthwhile as the first Strategic Plan for SETU. The President suggested that further refinement will include infographics and data sets. It was therefore agreed to move forward on that basis and look forward to the final version expected for approval at the April meeting. The Chairperson thanked Dr Hayes for his presentation and input.
6.	<u>Corporate Administration:</u>
6.1	<u>Staff Approval</u> NOTED In line with requirements of the Recruitment and Selection policy, the President outlined a recommendation for the appointment of a candidate to the role of Head of Faculty of Business and Humanities for a period of 12 months. AGREED Approval of appointment as outlined above.

6.2	<u>Membership of EDI committee</u> NOTED The President recommended the following persons to fulfil vacant positions of the above committee; • Mr Paul Bennett & Mr Jeremie Sandot - following an Expression of Interest process; • Dr Vivian Rath - Independent External Member. AGREED To approve membership as outlined above, subject to satisfaction regarding gender requirements as per the EDI committee terms of reference.
6.3	<u>Use of University Seal</u> NOTED Mr O'Toole requested approval for use of the university Seal on collateral warranties with sub-contractors on the Corporate Services building project at the Carlow campus. AGREED Approval granted for the seal to be used and signed by the President & Mr O'Toole.
6.4	<u>Finance Brief re Annual Financial Statements</u> NOTED Ms Sheridan outlined options for the preparation and approval of a final set of accounts for Waterford Institute of Technology. It was confirmed that these options have been deliberated at length by the Finance & Capital Investments committee at their meeting earlier in the day and have recommended that Option 2; <i>"One set of Financial Statements require approval by Governing Body of SETU - Final Set of Accounts for Waterford Institute of Technology for period 1st September 2020 to 30th April 2022 (20 months)"</i> is the most appropriate approach. AGREED To accept the recommendation as outlined above.
7.	<u>Discussion Topic:</u> NOTED Students Union Referendum and other Activities. Item deferred.
8.	<u>Transition Process:</u> NOTED Quarterly update on Transition process. Item taken as read.
9.	<u>AOB:</u> NOTED Referring to the recent cyber-attack at MTU (Munster Technological University) Mr Bergin sought confirmation regarding the likelihood of a similar incident at SETU. The Governing body was informed that contact has been made with MTU to ascertain details regarding the cyber-attack. There being no other business to attend to, the Chairperson thanked all and closed the meeting at 6.33pm.



Signed: _____

Date: **7 March 2023**

Professor Patrick Prendergast