

Minutes of the 15th Governing Body meeting

Date: Tuesday, 7th March 2023
Time: 4pm – 6.45pm, Haughton Building boardroom, Carlow campus

Chair: Professor Patrick Prendergast

Attendees: Professor Veronica Campbell
 Mr Jim Bergin
 Mr Kevin Lewis
 Mr Mark Dunne
 Mr Patrick Curtin
 Dr David Dempsey
 Ms Sarah Clarke
 Ms Cynthia Ní Mhurchú
 Dr Kathleen Moore Walsh
 Mr Richard Lacey
 Mr Ray Ryan

Apologies: Ms Pauline Oakes
 Ms Ruth Beadle
 Professor Marie-Christine Ho Ba Tho
 Ms Quynh Nugyen
 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 4 (via MS Teams):

Dr Derek O'Byrne, Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar
 Dr David Denieffe, Vice President Academic Affairs

In attendance for Agenda Item 5 (via MS Teams):

Mr Pat McNerney, Holmes O'Malley

Secretariat: Ms Annette Byrne

Item Title	
1.	<u>Chairperson's Opening:</u>
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: 7th February 2023</u> AGREED To approve the minutes of 7th February 2023 and to publish on the website.
1.4	<u>Membership of Audit & Risk Committee</u> NOTED The Chairperson outlined details of proposed membership of the above committee and recommended the following; • Mr Sean Quigley – External member • Mr Kevin Lewis – Governing Body member AGREED To approve membership of the Audit & Risk committee as presented. Membership of the committee is now complete in line with the terms of reference.
1.5	<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. The President indicated that there has been further updates regarding the Accommodation task force as presented to the Finance & Capital Investments Committee and will be provided to the Governing Body at the April meeting. The President also provided an update regarding the status of those who were awarded fellowship of the legacy institutions. Following on from a discussion with the Chairperson it is proposed that all previous awardees are acknowledged and recorded on the SETU website. The Governing Body accepted and approved the proposal as suggested. ACTION: Update to Governing Body regarding Accommodation taskforce. ACTION: Listing of previous fellowships to be recorded on SETU website. 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: Education: • Positive feedback from the HEA in relation to additional nursing places; • Recent bid for Pharmacy and Veterinary medicine programmes progressing and will know the outcome of same in the coming weeks; • Discussions ongoing with Department of Education and Skills regarding Teacher Education; • CORU programmes – approval has been granted for programmes run in Waterford, confirmed all in this discipline are now fully approved. The President acknowledged the work and efforts of staff in bringing this matter to a successful conclusion; • RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) – SETU has been well represented at recent national event; • Capital projects – progressing to the next stage of the process (DPER) for the acquisition of the former Waterford Crystal site. Further updates will be available for the next meeting of the Finance & Capital Investments Committee and then on to the Governing Body. Engagement: • An Taoiseach visit to SETU – the Chairperson, President and Ms Sheridan met with An Taoiseach and discussed student accommodation, scale of funding required and professorship grades. Support in principle for all SETU activities and Strategic Plan; • Recent meeting between the President and Secretary General, Mr Jim Breslin. Also SETU has hosted a meeting with South East Oireachtas members where the strategic plan was discussed and the support required by them to enable the vision of the university; • International engagement – recent meetings and visits from the Canadian ambassador, South-African ambassador; Ukrainian ambassador – building student mobility and strategic relationships; delegation from Georgia Southern and discussion on a joint symposium on costal

	sustainability; memorandum of intent with a third level institution in Normandy in the Engineering space. • International Women’s Day – participation on a panel event on female leadership in Irish universities; a number of other events taking place to mark the day; launch of PhD bursary in STEM to celebrate Wexford’s Maggie Gough, part funded by her family; • €2.8m funding received with SETU leading in GRASS Ceiling, an EU project that aims to empower rural women in innovation. In summarising, the President highlighted the levels of activity and ongoing connections that SETU has progressed, raising awareness of what the university is doing and what needs to be done now and into the future. The Governing Body endorsed and commended the accomplishments and performance of SETU; however it expressed some reservations regarding the effective communication of these positive headlines. Following a brief discussion on the matter it was suggested that it would be beneficial to collate the information and distribute to the Governing Body in order for them to remain informed and up to date. It was also suggested that a dedicated person/function in a Strategic Communication/Public Relations role would further enhance the communication process. ACTION: Scope out / allocate a resource for Public Relations purposes. ACTION: Collate and distribute SETU events and achievements to the Governing Body.
3.	<u>Strategic Plan:</u> NOTED The President firstly drew attention to draft Strategic Plan documents included for information purposes. Mr O’Toole continued by providing an overview of potential financial supports required to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan. He outlined areas for targeting potential additional income and options for addressing a possible funding gap through international student fees, commercial income, industry co-funding initiatives and philanthropy. Further details regarding risks, mitigation strategies and resourcing conclusions were outlined. A discussion ensued particularly regarding challenges related to funding shortfalls. It was suggested that capabilities for additional commercial and research activities would further drive income streams. The President indicated the potential around research we well as constraints around time allocation for research. Ms Sheridan advised of recent Research Funding Allocation Model provisions which assists in supporting research development; however ongoing investment in this area is required to enable constant growth. In summarising the President indicated that Government support is required and will be sought through developing strategies and business plans for appropriate funding.
4.	<u>Central Applications Office (CAO) data on Admissions 2022/23</u> NOTED Dr O’Byrne and Dr Denieffe joined the meeting. Dr O’Byrne commenced by providing an overview and context of the operations of the Central Applications Office (CAO). He also outlined data relating to and including the following; • CAO 1st Preferences for SETU by Level, indicating a strong market presence and the importance of maintaining and leading the market in this regard; • SETU Overall Applications at Level 8 and 7/6; • SETU Market Share at Level 8; • CAO 1st Preferences by HEI (Level 8); • SETU Total Offers by Round for 2021 v 2022. In welcoming the significant data supplied to the Governing Body, it was suggested that this information is distilled further and presented as KPI’s indicating where preferences translate into acceptances and registrations and also an understanding of the market share of applicants from the south east. A lengthy discussion took place where different opinions were expressed. Given the interest in this topic and its

	strategic nature it was suggested that this particular discussion is tabled for a future Governing Body meeting. The Chairperson thanked both for their attendance and presentation.
5.	<u>Corporate Administration:</u> <u>Overview of legislative framework of TU</u> NOTED The Chairperson welcomed Mr McNerney to the meeting and firstly apologised for the delay. Mr McNerney referred to his presentation distributed to all in advance which provides and outlines the Technological Universities Act 2018 (as amended by HEA Act, 2022) including the functions and governance of technological universities. He highlighted amendments set out in new legislation, Governing Body composition; the role of the Governing Body, the role of the President, reserved powers and functions; Academic Council; borrowing powers and other relevant legislation and considerations. In concluding the presentation the Chairperson invited questions from the Governing Body. There was a query relating to the position of external nominees of Governing Body committees. Mr McNerney indicated that he would investigate the matter further and provide clarification in due course. The Chairperson thanked Mr McNerney and he left the meeting. Ms Clarke indicated that it would be beneficial to provide an additional session outside the context of a Governing Body meeting on this particular topic. It was agreed to schedule same in the weeks following the Easter break. ACTION: Arrange and provide additional information session on Legislative framework as indicated above.
6.	<u>Discussion Topic:</u> <u>Students Union Referendum and other Activities</u> NOTED Mr Curtin commenced the presentation by outlining details of a recent Student Union Referenda, resulting in the adoption of a new Constitution (currently in trial run) and retention of membership of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI). Mr Dunne continued by providing details relating to student engagement strategies, implementation of the new Constitution and upcoming multi-campus election processes. An overview of the Students Union structure, events, campaigns and casework statistics regarding the cost of living and accommodation were presented. The Chairperson and members thanked Mr Curtin and Mr Dunne for their presentation commending the levels of activity and participation in the USI.
7.	<u>Academic Council:</u> NOTED Academic Council minutes for 31 January 2023.
8.	<u>AOB:</u> NOTED The President outlined a memorandum proposing the temporary appointment of Dr Tom O'Toole, Head of School of Business to the role of Acting Vice President for Research to remain in place until a Vice President for Research, Innovation and Impact is appointed. AGREED Approval of the proposal as outlined above. NOTED Referring to the recent cyber-attack at MTU, Ms Sheridan updated the Governing Body that the Audit & Risk committee have received a detailed presentation on the matter from the IT managers. The Executive management team has also prioritised the development of a Cyber Security Strategy, supports via HEAnet and engaging with the sector on all matters relating. The item continues to remain on the ARC agenda.

NOTED Mr Lacey sought clarification regarding the publication of results from recent staff elections. It was indicated that this matter would be firstly directed through the Nominations Committee at an upcoming meeting.

There being no other business to attend to, the Chairperson apologised for the overrun, thanked all and closed the meeting at 6.45pm.



Signed: _____

Date: 4th April 2023

Professor Patrick Prendergast