

Minutes of the 25th Governing Body meeting

Date: Tuesday, 21st May 2024
Time: 4pm – 7.00pm, Tourism & Leisure building boardroom, Waterford Campus

Chairperson: Professor Patrick Prendergast

Attendees: Professor Veronica Campbell
Ms Ruth Beadle (via MS Teams)
Ms Sarah Clarke (via MS Teams)
Ms Eileen Curtis (via MS Teams)
Dr David Dempsey
Mr Mark Dunne
Professor Marie-Christine Ho Ba Tho (via MS Teams)
Mr Richard Lacey
Mr Kevin Lewis
Ms Adele Mahon
Dr Kathleen Moore Walsh
Ms Pauline Oakes (via MS Teams)
Mr Ray Ryan

Apologies: Mr Jim Bergin
Mr Claus Derenda
Ms Louise Grubb
Ms Cynthia Ní Mhurchú

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

In attendance for Agenda Item 4.1:
Mr David Denieffe, VP Student Experience
Dr Laura Keane, Head of Student Life and Learning

In attendance for Agenda Item 7:
Dr Derek O’Byrne, VP Academic Affairs Teaching & Learning
Dr Colette Moloney, Assistant Registrar

In attendance for Agenda Item 8:
Dr Derek O’Byrne, VP Academic Affairs Teaching & Learning

Secretariat: Ms Annette Byrne

Item Title	
1.	<u>Chairperson's Opening:</u> 1.1 <u>Welcome & approval of Agenda</u> The Chairperson welcomed all to the meeting. Confirming the meeting was quorate and with approval of the agenda he 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 associated with items on the meeting agenda. No members present declared a conflict for this meeting. 1.3 <u>Approval of minutes: 9th April 2024</u> AGREED To approve the minutes of 9th April and to publish on the website. 1.4 <u>Nominations to Commercialisation Committee</u> AGREED To approve Ms A O'Neill, Mr B Oglivie, Ms A Graham and Ms F Hardiman as members of the Commercialisation Committee. 1.5 <u>Terms of Reference Audit & Risk Committee</u> NOTED The Chairperson proposed that approval of this matter is deferred to the next meeting in order to afford him time to consult further with the Audit & Risk Committee Chairperson. This was accepted by all. 1.6 <u>Matters arising (Action Log)</u> NOTED The Chairperson indicated that matters, as noted on the Action Log, are in hand. The President provided an update regarding Engineers Ireland accreditation informing the Governing Body that the matter is progressing and being carefully monitored. 1.7 <u>Correspondence</u> NOTED The Chairperson informed the Governing Body that he had received three items of correspondence and proposed dealing with the third item under AOB. The first matter was received from a member of the Governing Body regarding the relationship between SETU and Carlow College. The President updated the Governing Body by advising that a legal review and due diligence process in relation to the property had commenced. ACTION A report on this matter will be brought to a future meeting of Governing Body in advance of matters being further progressed. NOTED The second matter related to HR and IR, including response times and delays regarding a specific funded post. Ms Sheridan advised that there had been some queries in relation to shortlisting which have now been resolved and the recruitment is progressing. A further communication related to general HR/IR effectiveness and efficiency. The President advised that the new Vice President for People, Culture and EDI would provide a report on HR to Governing Body in Q3 2024. NOTED Ms Sheridan informed the Governing Body that additional correspondence had been received from DFHERIS regarding membership of the CAO for which she is currently preparing a response to be brought to the next meeting of Governing Body.
2.	<u>President's report to the Governing Body:</u> NOTED The President provided updates to the Governing Body as follows; Strategic & Capital matters:

- Technological Sector Strategic Projects Fund (TSSPF) applications are in progress and were considered by the Finance & Capital Investments Committee at their recent meeting;
- The President and Chairperson had recently presented to a meeting of Wexford County Council in relation to the SETU development in Wexford;
- The Corporate Services Building on the Carlow Campus has been handed over and staff members have started to occupy the building. Plans are being developed for a formal opening in September;

Staffing:

- Senior Vice President roles currently being considered by DFHERIS;
- SETU has been formally designated as a University of Sanctuary. The President extended her gratitude to all those involved in this regard;
- An update in relation to the recruitment of executive roles and expected start dates to be those as approved by the Governing Body;

Governance/Chairing:

- Governing Body webinar hosted by the Chairperson in recent weeks with good attendance and engagement by staff;
- Ongoing regional, international, and global engagement with Government, Industry, and external agencies;
- Upcoming Foundation Day planned celebrations and events;

Other:

- A meeting had been held with the HEA in relation to Budget 2024;
- SETU has been awarded two gold awards for its branding. It was suggested that an update on the next steps associated with Branding is presented to the Governing Body at a future meeting;
- An update was provided on new research funding awards secured by SETU staff;
- SETU has become a member of the European University Association (EUA);
- Veterinary and Pharmacy programme development continues to move forward.

NOTED The Governing Body commended all those involved in recent awards and achievements. It was suggested that the Governing Body should formally write to the relevant recipients to extend their appreciation of these successes.

ACTION The Chairperson, on behalf of the Governing Body, to write to acknowledge recent achievements to the Branding team and to Dr Patricia Mulcahy regarding EUA membership. It was also suggested that a press release acknowledging EUA membership should be issued.

The Chairperson thanked the President for her report.

3. HR Report:

NOTED The President presented a report outlining the recommendation of Ms Shauna Whyte to the role of Vice President for People, Culture & EDI on a contract basis.

AGREED To accept and approve the recommendation outlined above.

4. Strategic Discussion:

4.1 Mental Health & Student Engagement Activities

NOTED Mr Denieffe and Dr Keane were welcomed to the meeting. Dr Keane commenced by providing a brief overview of her role and duties. She continued with a presentation outlining the importance of student engagement including social and academic integration, providing details on the diverse supports and services provided to students. Dr Keane also provided details and categories of students registered with the Disability Service and the supports in place assisted through specific Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) funding. Mr Denieffe continued by presenting statistics and information on student deferrals and withdrawals for the October '23 to March '24 period. He also outlined the various supports and initiatives in place such as Peer Mentoring, the Student Assistance Fund and cross campus transfers. Dr

	Denieffe continued by providing the Governing Body with data relating to student module pass rates. He indicated that a body of work to support student success is in progress and that processes must be mainstreamed to benefit all students. A discussion ensued and Governing Body members sought clarification on several matters. The Chairperson thanked Mr Denieffe and Dr Keane for their very comprehensive and insightful presentation. They both then left the meeting.
4.2	<u>Students Union Activities</u> NOTED The President of the SU, Mr Dunne, provided a presentation in relation to SETU Students' Union activities for the academic year 2023/24 noting the introduction of the newly merged union spanning all campuses since July 1st 2023. He provided detail of the restructured team as well as events, activities and campaigns carried out each month including Class Rep Recruitment, Freshers' Week, Mental Health Week, Upskill Week, Raise & Give Week, and the Constitutional Review Referendum & USI Affiliation Referendum which took place during March. Mr Dunne also provided a breakdown of casework statistics across a wide variety of issues. He emphasised the pivotal role the Students' Union plays in supporting students and contributing to a positive experience for all SETU students. The Chairperson thanked Mr Dunne for his presentation and congratulated him on his re-election as Students' Union President for a second year running. The meeting took a ten-minute recess at this stage. Ms Beadle and Prof Ho Ba Tho left the meeting however the meeting remained quorate.
5.	<u>Capital Matters:</u> NOTED Ms Sheridan outlined details of a proposed Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme at the Carlow Campus, which is currently at tender award stage. The matter has been reviewed in full by the Finance & Capital Investments Committee at their recent meeting who have put forward a recommendation for approval by Governing Body to progress the award of the contract as outlined in the meeting documentation. AGREED To accept and approve the recommendation as outlined.
6.	<u>Corporate Administration:</u> 6.1 <u>Governing Body Staff Elections/Regulations</u> NOTED Ms Sheridan provided an update on concerns expressed by some Governing Body members at the last meeting regarding the process for the election of staff members. Contact has been made with the Minister's office and it is now proposed that the regulations are amended with the election process segregated in a separate document. A discussion ensued in relation to gender parameters in the election process. In an effort to bring the matter to a conclusion, Ms Sheridan suggested that the revised regulations are submitted to the Minister for approval and that the Nominations Committee consider the election processes being discussed. The Chairperson suggested that it would be appropriate for the Nominations Committee to meet to discuss the gender parameter concern and bring back a recommendation to the Governing Body for consideration. This was agreed by all. 6.2 <u>Subsidiary Directors</u> AGREED As recommended by the Finance & Capital Investment Committee, it was agreed to appoint Ms Anne-Marie O' Leary as Director to the board of Insurtech Network Center DAC and also to appoint Ms Elaine Sheridan, VP Governance/University Secretary as Company Secretary and Mr Cormac O'Toole, VP Finance/Financial Controller as a Director of the same board. 6.3 <u>AGM resolution</u> AGREED As recommended by the Finance & Capital Investment Committee, it was agreed that written resolutions to dispense with an AGM for each SETU subsidiary is approved.

	Ms. Oakes left the meeting at this stage however the meeting remained quorate.
7.	<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 nominations to all SETU staff and students. He noted the high number and quality of proposed nominees. 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 and Dr O’Byrne as members of the Advisory Committee left the meeting at 6.15pm and Dr Dempsey 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. The Chairperson and Dr O’Byrne rejoined the meeting at 6.23pm. Dr Dempsey outlined the comments and queries expressed by Governing Body members, and on behalf of the Governing Body indicated their full support for the proposed nominees. The Chairperson thanked all for their support. Dr Moloney left the meeting.
8.	<u>Academic Council:</u> 8.1 NOTED Academic Council Minutes of 16th April 2024. 8.2 NOTED Dr O’Byrne provided the Governing Body with a presentation outlining the Academic Council membership per category. He also noted that Terms of Reference for Academic Council committees are under review and due for discussion at the June meeting and also that some committee restructuring and renaming has taken place. He indicated that committees may have nominations from all Schools and Faculties, with 18 nominations received to date and a further 12 anticipated. The Chairperson thanked Dr O’Byrne and he left the meeting.
9.	<u>Minutes of GB Committees:</u> 9.1 NOTED Finance & Capital Investments Committee draft minutes of 14th May 2024. 9.2 NOTED Audit & Risk Committee draft minutes of 24th April 2024. 9.3 NOTED Joint Quality Committee draft minutes of 9th April 2024.
10.	<u>SECTION B:</u> B1. NOTED Joint Quality Committee Workplan 2024/25 B2. NOTED Proposed training plan for Governing Body and its committees. Ms Sheridan encouraged members to indicate their preference for training depending on committee involvement. B3. NOTED Student Accommodation Preliminary Business Case documents. B4. NOTED Research Annual Report. B5. NOTED Minutes of all SETU Subsidiary & DAC companies.
	<u>AOB:</u> The President extended an invitation to all Governing Member to join her and the Chairperson at dinner on Tuesday 18th June at 7pm in Hobsons’s Restaurant at The Tower Hotel, Waterford.

NOTED In returning to correspondence referred to at the start of the meeting, the Chairperson drew members attention to a letter concerning the Palestine-Israel conflict addressed to the President and Members of the Governing Body which both he and the President received the previous day. He had acknowledged receipt indicating that, given the urgency of the matter, he would bring it to the attention of the Governing Body. The letter was circulated to the Governing Body.

The President indicated that she has also received similar correspondence and a discussion regarding such matters is scheduled for the Executive Management meeting. The matter and requests contained therein were discussed at some length. The Chairperson proposed to the Governing Body that he and the President would formulate a response taking on board the views expressed by the Governing Body members, and this was agreed.

There being no other business to attend to the Chairperson thanked all, he apologised for the overrun and closed the meeting at 6.57pm.

Approved: _____



Date: 18th June 2024