

## Minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> Governing Body meeting

- Date:** Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024
- Time:** 3.30pm – 7.00pm, Tourism & Leisure building boardroom,  
Waterford Campus
- Chairperson:** Professor Patrick Prendergast
- Attendees:** Professor Veronica Campbell  
Mr Jim Bergin  
Ms Sarah Clarke  
Ms Eileen Curtis  
Dr David Dempsey  
Mr Claus Derenda  
Mr Mark Dunne  
Ms Louise Grubb  
Mr Richard Lacey  
Mr Kevin Lewis  
Ms Adele Mahon  
Dr Kathleen Moore Walsh  
Ms Pauline Oakes
- Apologies:** Ms Ruth Beadle  
Professor Marie-Christine Ho Ba Tho  
Mr Ray Ryan
- In attendance under the Code of Governance:**  
Ms Elaine Sheridan, VP Governance /University Secretary
- In attendance for Agenda Item 3:**  
Dr Richard Hayes, VP Strategy
- In attendance for Agenda Item 4.1:**  
Dr Derek O’Byrne, VP Academic Teaching & Learning  
Dr Paul O’Leary, Quality Assurance Manager
- In attendance for Agenda Item 4.2:**  
Dr Patricia Mulcahy, VP Global Partnerships (via MS Teams)
- In attendance for Agenda Item 4.3:**  
Prof Marie Claire Van Hout, VP Research, Innovation & Impact  
Dr Tom O’Toole, HOS Business
- In attendance for Agenda Item 6:**  
Mr Cormac O’Toole, VP Finance/Financial Controller
- Secretariat:** Ms Annette Byrne

Item Title	
1.	<p><b><u>Chairperson's Opening:</u></b></p> <p>Prior to commencing normal business of the meeting, the Chairperson convened a meeting of external members of the Governing Body at 3.30pm. University management, administrative staff, Governing Body staff and student members were not present during this time.</p> <p>1.1 <u>Welcome &amp; approval of Agenda</u> The Chairperson concluded the private meeting at 4.15pm and welcomed all to the meeting. Confirming the meeting was quorate and with approval of the agenda he commenced the normal business.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>1.3 <u>Approval of minutes: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024</u> AGREED To approve the minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> May and to publish on the website.</p> <p>1.4 <u>Nominations to Commercialisation Committee</u> AGREED To approve Mr Rich Ferrie as an external member of the Commercialisation Committee.</p> <p>1.5 <u>Matters arising (Action Log)</u> NOTED The Chairperson indicated that matters, as noted on the Action Log, are in hand. He indicated that the matter pertaining to Carlow College is in progress and an update will be provided in September. The President informed all that the matter regarding Engineers Ireland accreditation is being closely monitored. It was also suggested that as part of ongoing improvements to board effectiveness, brief bio information for all Governing Body members should be listed on the SETU Governing Body webpage.</p> <p>ACTION Ms Byrne to contact Governing Body members regarding the provision of bio information.</p> <p>There were no other matters arising.</p>
3.	<p><b><u>Strategic Plan (2023-2028):</u></b></p> <p>3.1 <u>Update on progress of Strategic Plan and Strategic Risk Register</u> NOTED Dr Hayes was welcomed to the meeting. He provided the Governing Body with an update on progress of the implementation of targets and actions of the Strategic Plan. He also provided detail on the development of KPIs and highlighted the top risks on the Strategic Risk Register.</p> <p><u>HEA Performance Agreement</u> NOTED Dr Hayes continued by providing context around the HEA Performance Agreement including the approach SETU has taken in this regard, alignment with the Strategic Plan in terms of objectives and targets, noting that not all actions of the Strategic Plan are included in the Performance Agreement. Dr. Hayes highlighted that the version now presented to Governing Body for feedback reflects suggestions following meetings with the HEA on the previously reviewed version. Prior to submission to the HEA on 28 June the final draft will be reviewed by the Executive Management Team.</p> <p>AGREED To approve the Performance Agreement for submission to the HEA as presented, noting minor amendments may be required at a later stage following formal feedback from the HEA.</p>

3.2	The Chairperson thanked Dr Hayes and he left the meeting.
2.	<p><b><u>Report of President’s Workplan for the 2023/24 academic year</u></b></p> <p>NOTED The President provided a progress update in relation tasks outlined in her workplan 2023/24 including links to the Strategic Plan noting the completion status of all tasks which ranged in nature from; strategic projects, capital projects, funding &amp; staffing, Governance &amp; Chairing, Internal, regional and global communities. She also outlined other activities undertaken during the year including the establishment of a data center (CORDA) which supports the opportunity to interrogate and present data, Foundation Day activities, appointment of VP roles and media coverage. The President took the opportunity to thank members of the Executive Management Team who with their support have enabled delivery of the workplan, she extended her gratitude to the members of the Governing Body for their advice and participation in many SETU events and finally to the Chairperson for his assistance in multiple activities and involvement on Governing Body committees. The Governing Body conveyed gratitude to the President for the extensive engagement and successful delivery of her annual workplan.</p>
4.	<p><b><u>Strategic Discussion:</u></b></p> <p>4.1 <b><u>Institutional Quality Review (CINNTE)</u></b>  NOTED Dr O’Byrne and Dr O’Leary were welcomed to the meeting. Dr O’Byrne outlined the context and purpose of the review outlining quality assurance policies and procedures required as per TU legislation. He outlined key dates in the process and proposed timelines for submission of same noting the number of working groups, Executive Management Team, Academic Council and Student’s Union who have had input to and reviewed the document. Dr O’Byrne outlined core chapters and key challenges contained within and alignment to the Strategic Plan. He provided details of an expert review panel expected to visit the university in early October who will conduct a number of review sessions and will include a session for members of the Governing Body. In concluding, approval to progress to the next stage of the process was granted by the Governing Body. The Chairperson thanked Dr O’Byrne and Dr O’Leary and they left the meeting.</p> <p>4.2 <b><u>Global Engagement Strategy</u></b>  NOTED Dr Mulchay was welcomed to the meeting. She provided a presentation in relation to the development of a strategic plan pertaining to global partnerships and internalisation indicating that the context and vision of the plan is to provide a strong emphasis on preparing students for a globalised world. Dr Mulchay outlined the following detail;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erasmus agreements and student mobilities with European HE establishments;</li> <li>• Involvement of SETU Researchers in co-authored papers;</li> <li>• A large number of formal cooperation agreements with many global partners;</li> <li>• Benchmarking and the planning environment;</li> <li>• Key policies;</li> <li>• Statement of ambition including high level strategic objectives;</li> <li>• Makeup and workplans for the Steering and Working groups;</li> <li>• Indicative timelines for the publication of the plan.</li> </ul> <p>The Governing Body thanked Dr Mulcahy for her comprehensive presentation and sought clarification in relation to the current status of achieving targets noting the cost factors involved in achieving same. Dr Mulcahy left the meeting.</p> <p>4.3 <b><u>Research Strategy – outline</u></b>  NOTED Prof Van Hout and Dr O’Toole joined the meeting. Prof Van Hout provided a brief introduction to all as she has recently commenced in the post of VP Research, Innovation and Impact. She commenced the presentation by outlining the three main strategic objectives and research KPI’s, the current status of same and projected growth to 2028. Prof Van Hout provided further detail in relation to current performance in</p>

terms of research funding, entrepreneurship, rural engagement and regional engagement. She also outlined how research culture and performance is being enhanced and supported through the Graduate School. The Chairperson thanked both for their very informative presentation and they left the meeting.

**5. Review of GB Chairperson performance:**

NOTED The Chairperson, Professor Prendergast handed over the chair to Mr Bergin, Deputy Chair and then excused himself from the meeting. Mr Bergin indicated the purpose of the upcoming discussion was to evaluate the performance of Professor Prendergast in the role of Chairperson and sought opinion and comment from the Governing Body. There was a unanimous expression of credibility, experience and commitment as provided by Professor Prendergast and duly noted that his passion for the development of SETU is evident. It was also noted that his willingness to host staff webinars and communication demonstrates inclusiveness and openness, which has been much welcomed by the SETU community. During the discussion the Governing Body indicated a preference for shorter agendas to enable additional time for discussion and earlier distribution of meeting papers. Mr Bergin thanked all for their sentiments and indicated that all feedback would be communicated to the Chairperson.

The meeting took a ten-minute recess at this stage. Mr Lewis left the meeting at 6pm however the meeting remained quorate.

**6. Capital Projects:**

**6.1 Technological Sector Strategic Projects Fund (TSSPF)**

NOTED On returning, Professor Prendergast resumed the role of Chairperson and Mr O’Toole joined the meeting. The President commenced by presenting details of a TSSPF application for Phase One of the proposed Wexford Campus development recapping on the strategic direction of the project as approved by the Governing Body. The President also outlined investment rationale around future phases of the project, addressing gaps in innovation and industries in the region, student projections and targets and other considerations as included in the preliminary business case. Ms Sheridan outlined detail of preliminary cost estimates which feed into the financial analysis of the possible options. She also explained that the Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) has been assisted and supported independently by Indecon who have developed both a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) and a Cost Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) as per HEA processes. Ms Sheridan continued by detailing a recent meeting with the HEA, the review process carried out by the Finance & Capital Investment committee (FCIC) and the Executive Management Team. In line with the recommendation from the FCIC, a request for approval to submit the application to the HEA for initial appraisal was put forward.

AGREED Approval from the Governing Body to proceed in submitting to the HEA, a TSSPF application regarding the Wexford Campus development noting that the HEA may seek additional information or clarification before proceeding to final approval.

**6.2** NOTED The President continued by recapping on SETU’s proposed development of the former Waterford Crystal site outlining student projections and targets, new programme development and the demand for “One Health” related programmes. She also outlined investment rationale and various objectives that have been considered in developing a preliminary business case to address space shortage and enhancement to existing facilities leading to growth in research and innovation. Ms Sheridan outlined detail of preliminary cost estimates associated with Phase One of the proposed development, noting that cost estimated have been independently calculated by an external QS provider. A list of options has also been analysed and a full MCA and CBA provided. Further analysis by Indecon has concluded the most viable option. Meetings and review processes similar to the Wexford development proposals have also been carried out. In line with the recommendation from the FCIC, a request for approval to submit the application to the HEA for initial appraisal was put forward.

AGREED Approval from the Governing Body to proceed in submitting to the HEA, a TSSPF application regarding the Waterford Campus development noting that the HEA may seek additional information or clarification before proceeding to final approval.

In concluding the discussion, the President extended her gratitude to Ms Sheridan, Mr O'Toole and the Capital Projects managers who have given this matter their full priority in order to bring it to its current state.

Mr Bergin left the meeting at 6.30pm, however the meeting remained quorate.

### 6.3 Planning Permission Approvals for PPP projects

NOTED Ms Sheridan outlined details of previous planning permissions granted, however a revision of same is now required as planning is nearing an expiry date prior to projects being substantially progressed. As there are no substantive changes to the original design, approval in principle is now sought in order to;

- to lodge planning applications for PPP projects on the Carlow and Waterford campuses;
- to execute Licence Agreements for both sites;
- to execute the Declaration of Burdens for both sites.

In ensuring good governance, the matter has also been reviewed and considered by the Finance & Capital Investments committee who in turn have recommended that all requests listed above are approved by the Governing Body in order to proceed to the next stage in the process.

AGREED To accept the recommendation of the Finance & Capital Investments committee and grant approval as requested.

NOTED Ms Sheridan outlined details of a deep retrofit programme funded by the HEA and SEAI under the EEDPP (Pathfinder) programme and located on the Waterford campus which requires planning permission and approval from the HEA is pending in order to proceed to Stage 2B. She outlined the programme of tasks associated with the project as well as proposed timelines for completion noting those that have been completed. The matter has been reviewed by the Finance & Capital Investments committee who have recommended approval to submit the planning application as required.

AGREED To accept the recommendation of the Finance & Capital Investments committee and grant approval as requested.

## 7. Corporate Administration:

### 7.1 Policy approvals

NOTED Ms Sheridan outlined the review and recommendation for approval as set out by the Policy Review Committee in relation to the policies below;

- Authorship Policy
- Consultancy Policy
- Fitness to Continue in Study Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Treasury Management Policy

AGREED To approve the above policies as presented and to upload the updated policies to the website.

7.2	<p><u>Charities Regulator Annual Return</u>  NOTED Ms Sheridan outlined requirements under the Charities Act 2009, regarding the CRA Annual Return for SETU 31 August 2023 which requires Governing Body approval prior to uploading to the CRA portal.</p> <p>AGREED To approve the CRA Annual Return for SETU 31 August 2023 for submission to the CRA portal.</p> <p>NOTED It was also requested to appoint Ms Annette Byrne as an authorised filer to the CRA portal on behalf of SETU.</p> <p>AGREED To approve as outlined above.</p>
8.	<p><b><u>Academic Council:</u></b></p> <p>NOTED Academic Council Minutes for 7<sup>th</sup> May and draft minutes from 4<sup>th</sup> June noting reference to the CINNTE review in both sets of minutes.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Minutes of GB Committees:</u></b></p> <p>9.1 NOTED Commercialisation Committee draft minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024.</p> <p>9.2 NOTED Finance &amp; Capital Investment Committee draft minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024.</p> <p>9.3 NOTED Joint Quality Committee draft minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.</p> <p>9.4 NOTED Policy Committee draft minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.</p>
	<p><b><u>SECTION B:</u></b></p> <p>B1. AGREED To approve the Corporate Procurement Plan as recommended by the Finance &amp; Capital Investments committee.</p> <p>B2. AGREED To approve a new Spin out and Investment proposal as recommended by the Commercialisation and Finance &amp; Investment committees.</p> <p>B3. AGREED To approve Award of the title Emeritus Lecturer to Dr Michael Brennan.</p> <p>B4. NOTED Governing Body schedule of meetings dates for the academic year 2024/25.</p> <p>B5. NOTED Response to HEA regarding CAO membership.</p>
10.	<p><b><u>AOB:</u></b></p> <p>NOTED The following matters were noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chairperson, on behalf of the Governing Body, extended gratitude to Ms Adele Mahon, this being her last meeting, and wished her well in her future endeavours;</li> <li>• The statement issued by the University on the Israel-Palestine conflict has been well received, however it was suggested that this might be circulated in an “All Staff” email as well as having a presence on the website;</li> <li>• Mr Derenda informed the Governing Body that he would not be contesting the next staff elections process and wished all the very best for the future;</li> <li>• Dr Moore Walsh drew attention to correspondence regarding the resourcing of an academic programme. The President indicated that she would follow up with the relevant Head of School;</li> </ul>

- The Chairperson informed all that as required by legislation, Ms Ní Mhurchú is no longer eligible to remain an external member of the Governing Body due to her recent success in being elected to the European Parliament. He indicated that he would write on behalf of the Governing Body to wish her well and thank her for her service and support;
- The Chairperson thanked Ms Sheridan and team and Mr O'Toole for their work as Governing Body Secretary during the course of the year.

There being no other business to attend to the Chairperson thanked all, he apologised for the overrun and closed the meeting at 7.00pm.



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 17 September 2024