

Minutes of the 12th Governing Body meeting

Date: Tuesday, 10th January 2023

Time: 4 – 6pm, via Zoom

Chairperson: Professor Patrick Prendergast

Attendees: Professor Veronica Campbell
 Mr Jim Bergin
 Mr Mark Dunne
 Mr Patrick Curtin
 Dr David Dempsey
 Ms Sarah Clarke
 Mr Claus Derenda
 Dr Kathleen Moore Walsh
 Mr Richard Lacey
 Ms Pauline Oakes
 Mr Ray Ryan
 Ms Cynthia Ní Mhurchú
 Ms Quynh Nguyen
 Professor Marie-Christine Ho Ba Tho

Apologies: Ms Ruth Beadle
 Mr Kevin Lewis
 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 2:

Dr Richard Hayes, Vice President for Strategy
 Dr Graham Love, Mazars
 Ms Laura O’Neill, Mazars

In attendance for Agenda Item 3:

Dr Peter McLoughlin, Head of School of Science
 Dr Helen Murphy, Head of School of Education

Secretariat: Ms Annette Byrne

Item Title	
1.	<u>Chairperson’s Opening:</u>
1.1	<u>Welcome & approval of agenda</u> Prof Prendergast welcomed all to the 12 th SETU Governing Body meeting in particular Prof Ho Ba Tho

who provided a brief self-introduction to the board. Confirming the meeting was quorate he confirmed approval of the agenda and commenced the normal business.

1.2 Conflict of Interest

NOTED The Chairman 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 Approval of minutes: 8th December 2022

AGREED To approve the minutes of 8th December 2022 and to upload to the website.

1.4 Matters arising (Action Log)

NOTED The Chairperson provided further updates regarding the Action Log highlighting items have been progressed and therefore closed out.

NOTED The President informed the Governing Body that she continues to engage with Ms Beadle to identify a suitable external candidate for membership of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Also an expression of interest has been issued to staff to join this committee. It was suggested that whilst awaiting confirmation of full membership that an informal meeting of the EDI committee might be scheduled in the coming weeks.

NOTED The Chairperson informed the Governing Body that the process for Honorary Degree nominations is expected to commence in February with a view to being in a position to award such degrees at conferring ceremonies later this year.

There were no other matters arising.

2. Strategic Plan:

NOTED Dr Hayes, VP for Strategy joined the meeting. The President commenced by providing a summary of the status of the Strategic Plan development process, the purpose of today's discussion and then welcomed Dr Graham Love and Ms Laura O'Neill from Mazars Consulting who are providing external support and assistance on this matter.

Dr Love provided detail on considerations of external and internal challenges that SETU may encounter and also the significant resources and effort that will be required to execute the merger whilst becoming one TU. Ms O'Neill continued by providing an overview of the process and key activities that have been undertaken to date including a broad level of internal and external stakeholder engagements. The process has also enabled the development of data evidence-based tools that will support decision making processes and move towards prioritisation in order to achieve a realistic balance.

Following on from the consultants presentation, the President outlined details of the Vision, Mission and framework being pursued setting out priority objectives in four key areas namely "Our Learners, Our Innovation & Research, Our Engagement and Our People" which will be supported by the "Enablers" that will be identified in the plan. She continued by defining the planned strategic outcomes and objectives for each area. The President then sought advice/comment from the Governing Body regarding the direction, structure and appropriateness of the draft document as presented. Governing body suggested and advised as follows;

- Clarification regarding the categorisation of research areas of excellence was provided by Dr Hayes and he indicated that further refining on this matter is required in the draft of the plan;
- Request to amend to legal definitions used in particular around the use of learners & citizens (noting that a more inclusive word than citizens should be used);
- Clarity was provided regarding the modelling used in formulating student projections and learner data, emphasising these are full-time projections with additional analysis to follow which

- will include data on part-time learners also. The Chairperson requested that the next iteration would include detailed models and scenarios outlining corresponding financial impacts;
- Request to provide targets and KPI's around research funding that can be tracked;
 - Request that the language and values contained within the strategic plan document are more absolute in attitude and include a statement on the speed of the pace of change associated with the merger;
 - Realise the benefits from the distinctive feature of SETU being the only university in the south east of Ireland;
 - Student accommodation matters repositioned to give more prominence, and strategy for solution addressed;
 - Stronger emphasis on the importance of Alumni and a strategy on alumni engagement;
 - More on the development of the creative arts and attracting students from Cultural/Arts organisations;
 - Strengthening of the chapter on sustainable development and include potential targets, including timeline to Zero Carbon.

The Chairperson summarized that advice offered by the Governing Body would suggest that the next iteration of the strategic plan needs to be bolder and more ambitious in its aims, and that should be reflected in the language used and targets set.

In concluding the discussion Dr Love implied satisfaction with the standard of progress and stressed the importance of focusing on the business of the merger, managing expectation levels of both staff and students, and the external community. This will require significant effort and resources. The Chairperson thanked all for their input and discussion on the matter. Dr Hayes, Dr Love and Ms O'Neill left the meeting at this stage.

The meeting paused for a five-minute recess.

ACTION Next iteration of the Strategic Plan to incorporate points raised by the Governing Body.

3. President's Workplan:

NOTED Dr McLoughlin and Dr Murphy joined the meeting to provide an update in relation to EU-CONEXUS (European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability). Dr McLoughlin commenced by outlining the background and progression of the partnership initiative. SETU has been successful in attaining leadership positions for two of the work packages as well as having input into all packages. Dr Murphy summarized SETU's involvement in developing programmes and micro credentials that will address the international curriculum and also provided details of the organisational structure of EU-CONEXUS SETU and SETU's committee membership. The Governing Body expressed their support and commended all involved in delivering this initiative, in particular the efforts of Dr Mike Kinsella.

ACTION Further report to GB in 6 months. President to report if serious issues about SETU participation arise.

4. Corporate Administration:

NOTED Ms Sheridan drew attention to details as required by the Charities Regulatory Authority, members position as trustees and obligation to abide by the charities code. She informed all of the requirement for individual information to be registered on the CRA portal, however not published and requested that members (excluding staff members) would provide this information in due course.

NOTED Ms Sheridan informed all of the requirement to submit and return declarations regarding Ethics in Public Office as per information provided in this regard.

ACTION Ms Sheridan to email request to GB members.

5.	<p><u>Academic Affairs:</u></p> <p>NOTED Draft minutes of Academic Council of 6 December 2022. The President highlighted the Quality Framework matter and proposed that this would come to the Governing Body for discussion in due course.</p>
6.	<p><u>President's Section:</u></p> <p>NOTED The President reported on a number of matters to the Governing Body as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Funding – secured €3m from SFI; acknowledging the efforts of all involved in the funding bids; • SETU Walton Institute - secured a grant of €10m within the EU-wide Quantum Communications Infrastructure programme, acknowledging Dr Deirdre Kilbane for her work in this regard. • Changes in the Executive team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ acknowledged the contribution of Dr Maebh Maher, Head of Faculty of Business & Humanities on her recent retirement; ▪ informed the Governing body that the VP Research, Innovation & Graduate Studies is also leaving the organisation. The President proposed that a recruitment process requiring Governing Body approval is initiated in order fulfil the vacancy without delay suggesting the appropriate approval of an interim arrangement to avoid a gap in the leadership structure at this crucial time. • Update re. proposed acquisition of Waterford site – technical elements and analysis of site underway with continued correspondence with the HEA Capital team; • Approval re. CPO process re Wexford site underway; • CORU matter continues with discussions focusing on a cross campus approach.
7.	<p><u>AOB:</u></p> <p>ACTION To provide a schedule of further meetings and schedule of committee meetings, once agreed, in the coming weeks.</p> <p>NOTED The Chairperson requested Mr Bergin to absent himself from the meeting for this item. He then proposed to appoint Mr Bergin as Pro Chancellor so he may confer degrees. The immediate need is for the upcoming graduation ceremonies on January 13 as the Chairperson himself is unable to act on this particular day.</p> <p>AGREED To accept the recommendation as outlined above.</p> <p>NOTED The Chairperson noted a document provided to the Governing Body regarding a response to the HEA in relation to a pay scale issue.</p> <p>NOTED Next meeting will take place in person in at the council chambers in Wexford County Hall on 7 February. Further details will be provided in due course.</p> <p>There being no other business to attend to, the Chairperson thanked all and closed the meeting at 6 pm.</p>

Signed: 

Date: 7 February 2023

Professor Patrick Prendergast