



**TUS**

Technological University of the Shannon:  
Midlands Midwest  
Ollscoil TechnoEolaíochta na Sionainne:  
Lár Tír iarthair Láir

www.tus.ie

**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Technological University of the Shannon:  
Midlands Midwest**

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 10:00am**

**via MS Teams & in person – Midwest Campus**

**Members:** Ms. Josephine Feehily – Chair (in person)  
Prof. Vincent Cunnane (in person)  
Mr. John Doyle (in person)  
Ms. Anne Meagher (in person)  
Ms. Colette Ryan (Teams)  
Mr. Tony Mahon (in person)  
Mr. Martin Quinn (in person)  
Mr. John Griffin (in person)  
Ms. Marguerite Doyle (in person)  
Mr Shahboz Babaev (in person)  
Mr. Noel Gavin (in person)  
Ms. Anne Cusack (in person)  
Ms. Catherine Collins (Teams)  
Ms. Brigid Delamere (Teams)  
Mr. James Ring (in person)  
Mr James Hadnett (Teams)  
Mr George O’Callaghan (in person)  
Mr Niall Naughton (in person)  
Mr Kevin McLoughin (in person)

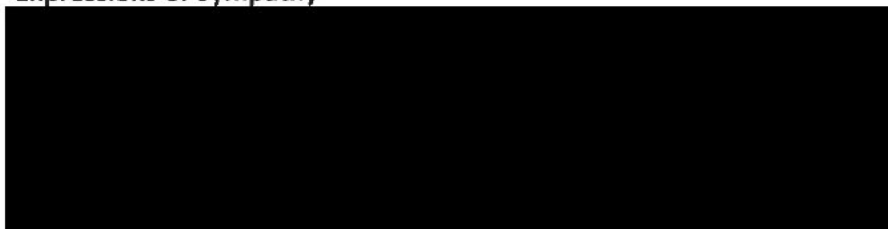
**In Attendance:** Mr. Bill Delaney, Governing Body Secretary (in person)  
Ms. Martina Moran, Recording Secretary (in person)

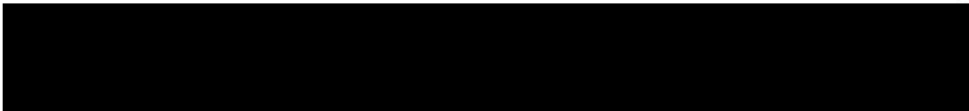
**4. Apologies:** There were no apologies.

**SECTION A: STANDING ITEMS**

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

**3. Expressions of Sympathy**





**5. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

There was no declaration of conflicts of interest.

**6. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

**7. Minutes of Governing Body meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

The minutes were approved.

**Proposed by J. Ring and seconded by N. Gavin.**

**8. Matters Arising.**

G. O'Callaghan apologised for not being available to attend the previous Governing Body meeting, he advised that the budgeted operating deficit which was discussed at the meeting will be monitored by the Finance and Physical Development Committee (FPDC) going forward.

The Financial Statements 21/22 will be an agenda item for review at the joint meeting of ARC and FPDC on 15<sup>th</sup> May in which C&AG will be present and will be recommended for approval to the subsequent Governing Body.

**9. Action Log**

Governing Body agreed that all items coded 'green' are now closed and can be removed from the Action Log. When there is capacity on a future Governing Body agenda, time will be set aside to discuss the Action Log in more detail with a view to closing off or firming up dates for further items.

**10. Risk Management**

Cyber security remains a continuing process for TUS. A cyber audit is ongoing with Deloitte and a report with actions and recommendations will be presented to ARC. TUS IT managers are in contact with MTU regarding their recent cyber issue.

**11. TUS Key Strategic Priorities Progress Report and President's Update**

The President gave an update on the Key Strategic Priorities and updates which were noted.

TUS were scheduled to meet with the HEA on the Compact on 26/4/23, however, the HEA have deferred this meeting until mid-June. The President from a sectoral level will endeavour to seek an earlier meeting with the HEA.

TUS in conjunction with Mazars are developing an Implementation Progress Tool which will be a reporting mechanism against set targets of the Strategic Plan to Governing body on a quarterly basis.

The Strategic Plan will be uploaded to Decision Time, hard copies will be circulated at the next meeting and the card with a QR code will be circulated to members after the meeting today.

OECD Report – the Minister’s support of the Professorial roles was noted at the recent TUI Congress and Minister Harris’ address to Teachers Union of Ireland Congress 2023 will be uploaded on Decision Time.

‘Through Our Eyes’ an exhibition of student creativity was on display in Athlone public library from March 18 to April 18.

Digitalisation & Automation Technology Day (EPLAN & TUS) took place in Moylish on Thursday 13th April. This event focused on the electrical panel and switchgear industry sector and was attended by a significant number of companies from local, regional and international sectors.

TUS Research Week (April 17<sup>th</sup> to April 21<sup>st</sup>) will be officially launched by the President today. This is a very important week for research in TUS with various presentations, lectures, poster presentations and competitions taking place.

A licence with Bord Iascaigh Mhara (Aquaculture Farm at Mountlucas) and TUS was signed today by the President and the Chair; the TUS seal will be applied to the licence. This is a major development for TUS. Lead partner Professor Neil Rowan, Director of Bioscience Research Institute, TUS, VP Research, Development & Innovation and VP Finance & Corporate Governance and the relevant teams were thanked for their involvement in bringing this project to fruition.

EDI - two half day sessions were arranged for senior staff (VPs, Deans, Heads of Department and Central Service Managers) in which various issues, goals and legislations were discussed. The Chair of EDI Governing Body sub-committee advised that a meeting will take place this afternoon for this committee.

## **SECTION B: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/APPROVAL**

### **12. GNC Report and proposed transitional arrangements for the Governing Body**

The minutes of the GNC meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> April were noted.

A discussion took place on the proposed Transitional Arrangement and Procedures, the proposals by GNC are subject to the Ministers approval: The overriding principle is to ensure stability and continuity of Governing Body in the context of the recent approval of the strategic plan 2023 – 2026. This was strongly supported by Governing Body members. In summary the procedures provide:

- The term for the three external members who were appointed by the Minister on 1/10/21 will cease on 30/9/23. GNC propose that the three members will be appointed for a second consecutive term of office not exceeding four years, subject to nomination by the minister.
- In relation to the external member nominated by the ETB and appointed under Section 55 (2) of the Act. The GNC propose that this member would be appointed by the Governing Body as an ordinary member for a second consecutive term not exceeding four years.  
Governing Body agreed that a seat would be reserved on Governing Body for the Chief Executive of an ETB going forward.
- GNC propose that six external members be re-appointed for the term of office of their unexpired term i.e. to 31/03/24

- GNC propose: Five internal members be re-appointed for their unexpired term i.e.to 31/03/24.
- The external members have expressed a willingness to be reappointed if the Minister approves the arrangements. The VP Financial & Corporate Governance will confirm internal staff member availability.
- Three Student Union representatives will be appointed by the Governing Body on receipt of their nominations commencing 1/7/23 for a period not exceeding one year. To support the achievement of the objective of section 12 (8) (a) of the Act, the Student Union will ensure that at least one of the nominees shall be a male and a female. A discussion took place on the need to recognise non-binary persons in the Governing Body appointment process. This was supported by Governing Body members, while recognising section 12 (8) (a) requires not less than 40 per cent of either gender within the overall membership.
- Governing Body are confident that the overall composition of Governing Body will ensure broad compliance with the provisions of section 12 as amended.

Governing Body adopted the arrangement and procedure as proposed by the GNC, subject to minor amendments as required. The secretary will draft a cover letter on behalf of the chairperson to the Minister for his approval of the transitional arrangements for Governing Body. Pending a response from the Minister, the approval of appointments will be an agenda item for the Governing Body meeting of 19/6/23.

### 13. **Governing Body responsibilities arising from the amendment of TU Act 2018 by the HEA Act 2022**

The Chair gave a presentation to Governing Body: 'Amended Governing Body Responsibilities – Higher Education Act 2022', which was followed by a discussion. The Chair explained that the discussion was not designed to deal with the detail of the GB obligations, but rather to raise awareness of the specifics of the new provisions and discuss how members are satisfied and assured that systems and procedures are in place.

- **(1A)**  
***A governing body of a technological university shall -***  
***(b) satisfy itself that appropriate systems, procedures and practices are in place -***  
***(i) to perform the functions of the technological university,***  
It was noted the functions are those set out in section 9 and appended by amendments to section 11 by the insertion of section (1B). The functions are very broad and are performed by the development and delivery of education and research within the context of the strategic plan, with a strong regional focus. The various functions within TUS are invited to present to Governing Body periodically with certain functions presenting annually.
- ***(ii) for the internal performance management and accountability of the technological university in respect of"***
- **(l) the performance of its functions, and**

- **(II) the achievement of the objectives in the strategic development plan**  
The President advised that the internal performance management is the responsibility of the President in accordance with the provisions of schedule 2 of the Act., The new organisation structure will ensure appropriate responsibility and accountability for the delivery of the Strategic Plan;
- It was noted TUS operates a system of internal control (SIC) including, internal audit (via Deloitte) and external audits (via the C&AG). Audit reports are presented to ARC & FPDC for review and approval. The development of the Implementation Reporting Tool for the strategic plan will ensure regular updates are provided to the Governing Body. This reporting tool will be presented to Governing body when the it has been fully developed.

Governing Body would like to see the tool before it is fully finalised to consider whether it meets its requirements under this section.

- **(1A)**  
***(iii) in order to implement, and report on compliance with, the policies of the Government to the extent that those policies may affect or relate to the functions of the technological university,***  
This was noted. The strategic plan, as approved has taken account of existing Government policy. The development of the strategic compact with the HEA, aligned to TUS strategic plan will ensure the alignment of strategy and performance with Government Policy and for reporting on same.

and

**(c) establish and implement arrangements for the management of the performance of the president.**

It was noted the process for the performance management of the president was agreed at the private session of the Governing Body on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and is being progressed by the GNC with the President.

- ***(1B) (a) The governing body of a technological university shall ..***  
***(a) approve expenditure of major capital and investment projects;***  
GB expressed satisfaction that a review, recommendation and approval process for same exists for and satisfaction was expressed for this item, however, if the Chairs of the various sub-committees wish to revisit the TOR of the committees arising from this or any other provisions, they were requested to contact the secretary.
- ***(1B) (d) Provide for and maintain a system of risk management***  
It was noted TUS has an approved Risk Management Policy and a strategic risk register and executive risk summary which is regularly reviewed. It was agreed that further work is required including the development of a risk appetite which will be progressed via the ARC in the context of the strategic plan.
- ***(1B) (e) – provide for and maintain a system of quality assurance in accordance with the Act of 012' (i.e. the QQA Act 2012)***  
The President advised that TUS operates to the highest levels of quality assurance in line with the TUS Policy on Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) and the

requirements and procedures of QQI. TUS engage with a QQI Cinnte Review every seven years; An Institutional review is conducted on a five year basis. This is conducted by an external Academic panel. Internally, the Academic Council and Examination Boards monitor academic quality and all activity is reported to QQI through the Annual Quality Review (AQR). The next AQR will be presented and reviewed at Governing Body meeting in May 2023.

An action from this discussion is that the President will provide a 'Quality Assurance System Life Cycle' to Governing Body.

The Registrar with representatives from Academic Council will attend Governing Body in May as part of an Academic Council review.

- The Chair noted that this new provision is in addition to existing TU Act provisions, specifically Section 17.
- A query was raised regarding funding for RUN EU PhD's – funding is provided for three years, the President is unable to give a definitive answer if funding can be provided for a further full 12 months beyond the three years.
- The question of Governing Body receiving a regular report from Academic Council was also raised and it was noted that for external members at least, the May Governing Body meeting will be its first engagement with the work of Academic Council as a whole.
- Accordingly, it was agreed that this matter will be discussed further after the Governing Body discusses the draft AQR report from Academic Council at the May meeting.
- ***(1B) (f) review and oversee the implementation of major plans of action and provide strategic direction;***  
This will be discussed further when Governing Body receive the proposals on the Strategic Plan implementation and reporting.
- ***(1B) (g) delegate such functions as may be appropriate to the president;***  
As the current full Governing Body have never had a conversation regarding this, the Chair suggested that GNC will look at this further with a view to bringing proposals back to Governing Body.
- ***(1B) (h) – manage the financial affairs of the technological university to ensure value for money and its financial viability;***  
It was noted the TUS Procurement Office actively engage the public procurement system to ensure 'value for money'. The President's role is to assure Governing Body that systems and procedures are in place to ensure value for money and financial viability. The annual budget is approved and actual performance against budget is reported to Governing Body through the FPDC.  
In relation to each individual campus, the President advised that TUS are committed to providing relevant education across all campuses and that each individual campus is part of the wider TUS family and not an individual entity.
- ***(1B) (i) account to An tÚdarás for funding provided to the TU by to An tÚdarás***  
It was noted there are various reporting mechanisms in place to report to the HEA on an annual basis.

After the review and discussion of the functions the Chair and Governing Body felt they had a better sense of their obligations under the HEA Act 2022. Related matters will be kept under review going forward.

Action	By whom	By when
Amended Governing Body Responsibilities HEA Act 2022:		
Risk Management - review and develop Risk Appetite	President, VP Finance and Governance and ARC	ARC to review timeline and advise future Governing Body
Quality Assurance Lifecycle	President	Future GB
AQR & Academic Council Review	Registrar & Academic Council Representatives	May Governing Body meeting
GB to revisit these provisions in conjunction with relevant agenda items as they arise	GB Secretary	Future GBs
Review arrangements for delegating GB functions to the President	GNC	Autumn 2023

#### SECTION C: ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING

##### 14. International Office Presentation

Mr. D. McNamara, VP International, Ms. Mary Simpson, Director of International Affairs and Ms. Cliona Campbell, Director of International Relations joined the meeting to give a presentation on the TUS International Office. The presentation was supported by data which included information on Applications by Programme, Agents, Applications by Markets and Masters student numbers by Country. The presentation was followed by Q&A.

It was noted that the International Office integrate with all faculties and departments Regular presentations are made to the Joint VP and Deans meetings, and staff in the International Office are members of the various TUS Academic Council sub-committees. It was also noted that becoming a 'University' has been a huge advantage in the international market.

The Chair thanked Donnacha, Mary and Cliona and the team.

##### 15. Staff Appointments

Noted.

## SECTION D

### 16. AOB

A national initiative Roadshow is currently being rolled out. The aim of which is to encourage, support and drive the ambition of female entrepreneurs across the country. It is hoped that the Roadshow will be scheduled to take place in Limerick/Athlone during the year.

Update on external evaluation – [REDACTED] has prepared draft questionnaires and once reviewed will then be forwarded to Governing Body members.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May at 10:00am on the Midlands Campus.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 13:10pm.

Signed:

  
Chair of TUS Governing Body

Date:

8/5/23