

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

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 at 10.00am**

**via MS Teams & in person – Athlone Campus.**

**Members:**

- Ms. Josephine Feehily – Chair (in person)
- Prof. Vincent Cunnane (in person)
- Ms. Catherine Collins (in person)
- Ms. Anne Cusack (in person)
- Mr. Cormac Dillon (in person)
- Ms. Brigid Delamere (in person)
- Mr. John Doyle (in person)
- Ms. Marguerite Doyle (in person)
- Mr. Noel Gavin (in person)
- Mr. John Griffin (in person)
- Ms. Shelley Ann McCarthy Buckingham (in person)
- Ms. Anne Meagher (in person)
- Mr. George O’Callaghan (in person)
- Mr. James Ring (in person)
- Ms. Colete Ryan (in person)
- Prof. Han Brezet (Teams)
- Mr. Kevin McLoughlin (Teams)
- Mr. Tony Mahon (Teams)

**In Attendance:**

- Mr. Bill Delaney, Governing Body Secretary (in person)
- Ms. Martina Moran, Recording Secretary (in person)

**3. Apologies:**

- Ms. Áine Daly
- Mr. Martin Quinn

**1. Chairperson’s opening and introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members took the opportunity to introduce themselves.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**4. President’s welcome and Presentation on TUS: Midlands Midwest**

The President welcomed all members to the full governing body of the Technological University of the Shannon Midlands Midwest (TUS) meeting convened for the first time today.

This historic meeting follows TUS's designation as Ireland's first cross-regional university and third technological university on October, 1, 2021. The President called on the governing body to "guide, shape and define" the university's "bright and ambitious" future. The President gave a power point presentation to members on the journey to date for the sector, for TUS, its campuses, regions and European credentials as well as the future direction of the TU. This presentation will be uploaded to the Decision Time Portal (Resource section).

#### **4. Overview of TUS Governance and Committees**

The Chair made a short presentation which will be uploaded to the Decision Time Portal (Resource section).

The Chair referred to correspondence from Minister Harris of 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 and formally advised all governing body members of its content in which the Minister states "government requires the highest standards of probity and integrity in public office from all who are nominated to serve on boards". This culminates in a lot of emphasis on governance and subsequently the TUS Code of Conduct, therefore members were requested to return the signed TUS Code of Conduct to Martina Moran if they have not already done so.

The five original appointed members of Governing Body were charged with establishing the following committees:

##### **Audit and Risk Committee – ARC:**

Colette Ryan – Chair, and John Griffin with external members Tom Kennedy and Tina Dolan.

##### **Finance Committee:**

George O'Callaghan – Chair, Vincent Cunnane, and external members Brian Feeney and Paul Tierney.

##### **Nominations Committee:**

Josephine Feehily – Chair, George O'Callaghan and Colette Ryan. This committee is now adjourned as it has completed the process.

The chairs of Governing Body, ARC and Finance also meet on an ad hoc basis as required. The three chairs will reflect on refreshing membership on both the Finance and ARC committee.

Members were encouraged to contact the Chair if they had any views on agendas, functions of meetings, documentation, etc.

Evaluation of Governing Body is an annual requirement and is due by September 2022 – the Chair will discuss this further with the President and the Governing Body secretary with a view to confining this process to the original five members as they have been in situ since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.

The President has committed that Governing Body members will be engaged in the Strategic Plan process and a draft Strategic Plan will be presented to Governing Body in January 2023.

TU Act 2018 has led to a lot of discussions at Governing Body meetings and will continue to be an agenda item at future Governing Body meetings. Consequently the Governing Body has only adopted the Code of Governance proposed by the executive on an interim basis. It

is being revised at present and is likely to be impacted by the HEA Bill which is due to be passed by the Oireachtas by the summer.

It was also noted that the HEA Bill as initiated proposes to limit the size of membership of Governing Body to seventeen whereas TUS currently have a membership of twenty appointed for a two year period from the time of appointment viz. 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022 respectively. This proposed change is being monitored.

Action	By whom	By when
Arrangements for GB Evaluation	Chairperson	16-5-22
Review/Refresh Committees	Chairperson	20-6-22

#### 5. Overview of (Interim) Academic Council

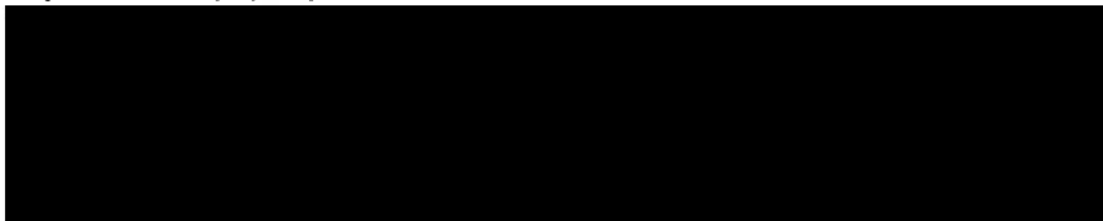
Academic Council is a statutory body under the TU Act 2018 and TUS are currently operating with an Interim Academic Council. The matter of a full AC and its interactions with GB will be a substantive item for discussion and approval at the next Governing Body meeting.

#### 6. Governing Body meeting schedule

The schedule was noted. An updated schedule will be uploaded to the Decision Time portal (resource section) which will include the graduation dates. If additional meetings are required they may be facilitated by the use of Teams.

#### Section A: Standing Items:

#### 7. Expressions of Sympathy



#### 8. Declaration of conflicts of Interest

There was no Conflicts of Interest.

#### 9. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

#### 10. Minutes of GB meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

The minutes of the Governing Body of 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were approved.

**Proposed by G. O'Callaghan and seconded by J. Griffin.**

#### 11. Matters arising

With regard to the President's delegation of powers, the President advised that legal advice is being sought and therefore the issue is not fully resolved. However, in the interim, the President will prepare a document for the next meeting with a list of assignments and responsibilities.

Action	By whom	By when
Prepare a list of assignments/responsibilities	President	16-5-22

## 12. Action Log

The Action Log is a work in progress, which was devised in order to capture items for action on a rolling basis. It is the intention at each meeting to agree and close off 'green items' and to discuss the other items which will be colour coded red/amber.

The Action Log will be amended as per today's discussion and 'green' items will be removed to a separate log i.e. Completed Action Log.

## 13. Risk Management

**Covid:** as TUS is moving into annual exam period the risk of Covid for the TUS community is decreasing.

### **Potential Risk due to the war in Ukraine;**

There are no links between TUS and Russian activities. The RUN (Regional University Network) Project – has no links with Russia.

Ukrainian Refugees – TUS have been asked if space can be provided on an interim basis for Ukrainian refugees – currently TUS are not in a position to offer any spaces as large areas i.e. Sports Halls, etc are being fully utilised for examination purposes. THEA and the Irish Universities Association have had initial discussions with the Department with regard to Ukrainian students completing their third level education in Ireland and this is being reviewed.

### **Construction Inflation:**

Rising Costs are being monitored constantly, with regard to Capital Projects underway these are Public Work Contracts which are 'fixed price'

### **Section B: Items for Approval**

## 14. Finance Committee:

### **Minutes of Finance Committee 29-3-22**

### **Capital Projects: Technological Sector Strategic Projects Fund (TSSPF) 2022**

The Finance Committee at their meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> March were joined by Mr. Jimmy Brown (VP Campus Services & Capital Development) and his team to review and recommend for approval to Governing Body the submission of Capital Projects on the Technological Sector Strategic projects fund (TSSPF) 2022. The Projects for submission include:

Project 1 – Moylish Thomond Plaza Building

Project 2 – Arrival Plaza Building – Athlone Campus

Project 3 – Thurles – The Connected Campus

The recommendation for approval presented here today is subsequent to recommendations from the Finance committee meeting due to the timeline of submission date of 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Governing Body formally approved the submission of the three projects as recommended by

the Finance Committee.

**Proposed by C. Ryan and seconded by J. Griffin.**

The President advised that a significant process will take place to determine the prioritisation of the three projects for submission. Whilst prioritisation is a HEA requirement there are several steps in the process prior to any formal agreement with the HEA. Governing Body will be appraised of all developments.

The Chair of the Finance Committee recorded his appreciation of Mr. Jimmy Brown and the team in putting the TSSPF application together within such a tight time frame.

The status of the Coonagh Project was raised in discussion. The Coonagh Project refers to a planned Centre of Excellence for Engineering on the outskirts of the Moylish campus. Funding was procured to purchase the premises, however, major construction work is required to complete the fit-out of the building, the Coonagh Project does not come under the remit of TSSPF funding. However, this project is being discussed as part of the Capital Process with the HEA.

### **Section C:**

#### **15. President's Key TUS Strategic Priorities 2022**

In the absence of a Strategic Plan, the President was requested to prepare a number of key priorities for TUS for 2022. The Key Strategic Priorities 2022 as presented were noted and is an interim oversight of key activities until the Strategic Plan is complete.

In order to give Governing Body oversight of the key activities and taking cognisance of Governing Body discussion the President will revise the document to include appropriate metrics as necessary - this item will be tabled as an agenda item at a future Governing Body meeting.

<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
Revise Key TUS Strategic Priorities 2022 to include appropriate metrics as necessary	President	July Governing Body meeting

With regard to 'culture' in TUS – the President agreed to revert to Governing Body on the Cultural audit.

It was noted that a Data dashboard of key metrics is also being currently worked on.

With regard to the Strategic Plan – the process has commenced and Governing Body members will be contacted by Mazars in the coming weeks.

The President was thanked for the document.

#### **16. Staff Appointments**

The staff appointments as presented were noted.

**Section D:**

**17. AOB**

The Work Plan included on Decision Time is a fluid document and is adapted and adjusted as required. Members are encouraged to become involved in the process and are therefore invited to propose agenda items for meetings by submitting same to either the Chair or Governing Body secretary in advance of meetings.

Members were requested if they were agreeable to having a list of Governing Body members and contact details (e-mails and contact numbers) being compiled and made available to the Chair and Committee Chairs on the Decision Time Platform (Resource section). This was agreed.

<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
Compile contact details of all Governing Body members & upload to Decision Time Portal (Resource Section) for the Chair and Committee Chairs.	Recording Secretary	For next meeting

The Chair requested that members would send their bios to Martina for upload to the TUS website (Governance section).

<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
Submit bios for upload to TUS website	Members of Governing Body	With immediate effect

Correspondence re Compliance with Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001- completion of Statement of Interest or Nil Interest by Governing Body members will issue to all Governing Body members.

<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
Issue correspondence to GB re Compliance with Ethics in Public Office (SIPO)	Governing Body Secretary	April 2022

The President and the Governing Body secretary have been requested to arrange a team building event for Governing Body members in June/July this year.

Members were advised if they had any housekeeping issues to contact Martina Moran.

A photo was taken of Governing Body members present at the meeting.

**The meeting concluded at 1:10pm.**

Signed: Josephine Feeney  
Chair of TUS Governing Body

Date: 16/5/22

