



TUS

Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest
Oileolaí Teicneolaíochta na Sionnainne.
Lár The Iarthair Láir

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

Wednesday 15th of December 2021 at 11am via MS Teams & in person – Athlone Campus.

Members: Ms. Josephine Feehily – Chair (in person)
Mr. George O’Callaghan (Teams)
Professor Vincent Cunnane (in person)
Ms. Colette Ryan (in person)
Mr. John Griffin (in person)

In Attendance: Ms. Áine Daly (Teams)
Mr. Cormac Dillon (Teams)
Ms. Anne O’Leary (in person)
Ms. Brigid Delamere (in person)
Mr. Tony Mahon (Teams)

Apologies: Ms. Shelley Ann McCarthy Buckingham
Mr. Eoin Woodlock.

In Attendance: Mr. Bill Delaney, Corporate Secretary (in person)
Ms. Martina Moran, minute taker (in person)

1. Chairperson’s opening

The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.
Prior to the meeting the President and the Chair signed a Public Works Contract for Minor Building and Civil Engineering works for the Applied Polymer Technology (APT) Gateway Expansion & Refurbishment with Bourke Builders.

2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

3. Expressions of Sympathy



5. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There were no Conflicts of Interest noted.

6. Correspondence

Correspondence from Mr. Paul Kehoe T.D. Cathaoirleach of the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science dated 2nd and 14th December were noted. As a result of the recent visit, the Joint Oireachtas committee has had a detailed briefing on the sector, which is particularly timely regarding the discussions on the future funding for Higher Education in Ireland (Cassells Report).

7. Minutes of GB meeting of 11th November 2021

Minutes were agreed.

Proposed by C. Ryan and seconded by G. O'Callaghan.

8. Matters arising.

Registration of TUS on the Pobal portal did not proceed. Further clarification is required.

The External Governing Body Members' Brief, as approved by the nominations committee was submitted to the HEA on the 1st of December 2021. B. Delaney sent a follow up e-mail to the HEA in relation to the HEA agreement of competencies, as required by TU Act, Sec. 12 (4). No response to-date has been received. B. Delaney has also made contact with the State Board re advertisement of posts.

Action: B. Delaney to follow up with the HEA.

It was agreed that the next Nomination Committee meeting would take place at 8.30am on 21st December 2021 by TÉAMS.

Action: B. Delaney to draft agenda for this meeting.

9. Presidents Report

The President gave a verbal report, which included the following:

- Semester 1 is essentially complete with the final week of exams taking place
- Storm Barra caused disruptions which resulted in various issues throughout the various campuses. As per instructions from the Department, campuses in red and orange zones were closed. This, however, had an impact on those who could not travel from these zones to other areas, particularly for students travelling to the Athlone campus to sit exams. Therefore, after consideration and in consultation with the TUI, an alternative date of Monday 20th of December was offered to these students to sit the exams. Apprentice exams have been dealt with nationally by SOLAS who have put a process in place and these exams will now take place this coming Saturday.
In response to a question raised re a Crisis Management Team – the President confirmed that a committee (previously formed under the umbrella of Covid Crisis Management Team which comprised of 2 VPs, Communication team & chaired by the President) met to discuss and make contingency plans for Storm Barra. Communication Gaps have since been identified and the process was refined on the 2nd day of the storm. Communication from the President to all staff and students was issued via email and social media.

Academic Council are intent in providing an early solution for students who tested positive for Covid and who were subsequently unavailable to sit exams, so as they are not disadvantaged. Students Union requested that they would be part of these discussions.

It was acknowledged that it was very positive having a 'face to face' learning experience for the students this semester and it is hoped that this will continue in the New Year, and it was noted that it is the objective of the Governing Body to proceed in this manner and in a safe environment.

- The Government has put in place funding of €9m for Antigen Testing. There is currently no national procurement process in place for the purchases of Antigen Testing Kits. Management is in discussion with the Department and THEA to secure a process and it is hoped to have testing kits in place early in the New Year.
- The President circulated a TUS Organisation chart at the meeting (this will be uploaded to the Resource Section of Decision Time). The main structure of the organisation chart was compiled by KPMG who were commissioned to design a structure. Consultation took place with the VPs. The President also explained anomalies and overlaps within the structure with particular reference to Teaching & Learning and Graduate Studies. Some issues have been identified which will need to be addressed in the coming weeks/months.

Two Councils have also been put in place – VP Council (meet fortnightly) and a Deans Council (meet monthly). Both Councils have the same parity. The Deans Council are charged with academic activity of TUS and will work collectively and horizontally. The VP Council are charged with the operation and strategic element of the technological university and the planning for 2022 (i.e. budgets, resource, space, programmes, etc.)

Action: Request VP for Strategy, Transition and Projects to give a presentation to Governing Body in January to assist Governing Body in their understanding of the strategy and transition portfolio and to support a discussion on the Strategic Plan for TUS.

10. Regulation for Election of Staff Members to GB

On presentation of the following documentation:

*Regulations for the Election of Staff Members to Governing Body 2022
Schedule 1 – Electoral Schedule*

Discussions took place and the following was agreed:

Regulations for the Election of Staff Members to Governing Body 2022

- 2.1 – this is an issue regarding Research staff as to where their portfolio resides i.e Academic or PMSS Panel – It was proposed by the President & seconded by C. Ryan that this cohort would join the Academic panel.
- 2.6 – email address of Returning Officer to be inserted
- 4.3 – “the names of four other persons”

The regulations were agreed.

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

The Governing Body asked the Returning Officer to provide an assurance regarding the integrity of the electronic voting and count process.

Action: B. Delaney to assess and revert to Governing Body.

The Governing Body will hold a virtual meeting at 6pm on 25th of February after the closing date of nominations for Electoral Panels B, C, D and E in order to review gender balance of nominations in accordance with the regulations.

B. Delaney was acknowledged for his contribution on the regulation process.

11. **Report from Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 29-11-21**

The Report is as tabled. A full attendance was recorded at the first meeting, it is hoped to expand membership during 2022 when the full membership of Governing Body is in place. The ARC committee recognised that there is a significant body of work to take place. The Work Plan will also be reviewed which may incorporate the requirement for extra meetings.

The Audit Planning Memorandum will be discussed at the next ARC meeting in the context of the Internal Audit (Deloitte).

Risk Management – was discussed at the recent ARC meeting and will also be a standing agenda item at future ARC and Governing Body meetings.

Governing Body discussed risk management and the evolving risks and impact of Covid, which is the biggest risk at the moment. The Risk Register will be a 'living' document, which will be reviewed by ARC and Governing Body on an on-going basis. The TUS Risk Register, including the top 15 risks will be developed by management and presented to ARC and Governing Body. While risk does not appear on the TUS Organisation Chart, the management function rests with the VP of Finance and Corporate Governance. The President, as TUS 'accounting officer', has overall responsibility for Risk Management. The Audit and Risk Committee Report was noted and the Chair was thanked.

12. **Staff Appointments for noting**

HR matters for TUS: Midlands Midwest were reviewed. All staffing posts were under the threshold for Governing Body approval and therefore were noted by Governing Body.

13. **13. Governing Body meeting schedule**

B. Delaney is in the process of drafting a Work Plan for ARC and the Finance Committee, these Work Plans will be shared with the Chair once complete and a schedule of Governing Body meetings will then be drafted.

Future Meetings:

ARC - 13th of January

Finance Committee - 11th and 17th of January

Governing Body meeting - Monday 24th of January and Friday 25th of February at 6pm.

The question was raised if there would be student union representation on the Finance Committee.

Action: B. Delaney will discuss this with SU President. Broader membership of the ARC and Finance committee will be reviewed at later date, after the formation of the full Governing Body.

14. AOB

C&AG have requested the Chair's contact details prior to issuing the Letter of Engagement for the Audit 2021. Further discussions to take place with the Chair, President & B. Delaney.

TUS Website Governing Body section – this will be populated with, agendas, minutes and other general information.

The Chair acknowledged the support and work from B. Delaney and the Finance Team, M. Moran, E. Tucker and R. Cox.

The Chair wished all Governing Body members and attendees a Happy Christmas.

The meeting concluded at 1.30pm.

15. Members session

This section of the meeting took place in private and considered a HR matter.

Signed:


Chair of TUS Governing Body

Date:



