

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

Monday 16-9-2024 at 2:00pm

Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

Members: Josephine Feehily – Chair
Vincent Cunnane
George O’Callaghan
Tony Mahon
Noel Gavin
Jos Gijbels
Gearoid Folan
Marguerite Doyle
Maureen Falvey
Darina Kneafsey
Pamela O’Brien
Geoff Shannon
Amelia Lown
Colette Ryan
Catherine Collins
Kevin McLoughlin
Anne Cusack

In Attendance: Bill Delaney, Governing Body Secretary
Martina Moran, Recording Secretary
John McKenna, VP Strategy, Transition & Projects
Janet Owens, Project Officer
Jimmy Browne, VP for Corporate Services & Capital Development

4. Apologies: James Ring, John Griffin

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1) TUS Strategic Plan 2023-2026 – September 2024 Progress Report

- 1.1 Update on Key Performance Indicators**
- 1.2 Challenges Arising**
- 1.3 Student Numbers**
- 1.4 Student Accommodation Issues**
- 1.5 Discussion and Risk Management**

The President gave a power point presentation entitled:
‘TUS Strategic Plan 2023-2026 ‘Connecting and Creating’ September 2024 Progress Report’. The President went through each of the 4 Strategic Priorities (Education, Research, People and Organisation and Connecting Communities) which included the strategic objectives/expected outcomes and strategic indicators/associated metrics for each priority. Each of the priorities were discussed in detail with the following points noted specifically:

Priority 1 Education

- Metric 1.1 indicates a forecast growth of student numbers (12%) is behind schedule at this stage – this will be discussed later in the context of the student numbers presentation .

Priority 2 Research

- TUS are doing exceptionally well in terms of income/funding.
- 78 staff are currently enrolled on PhD Programmes with plans in place to increase this number each year. The statutory provision is 'to increase, within 10 years, from 45 per cent to 65 per cent of staff to hold a doctoral degree or equivalent terminal degree'. New staff recruitment at PhD level also supports attainment of the target. The Risk Register will be updated in this regard.
- The Graduate School monitors the capacity to supervise research students within TUS.

Action	By whom	By when
PhD - Risk Register to be updated	Secretariat	

Priority 3 People and Organisation

- Metric 3.1 – Accredited programme completion is on target and non-accredited programme completion is well ahead of target. A significant number of non-accredited programmes are supported through NTUTOR.
- TUS Application for Athena Swan Bronze Award was successful
- Student Survey – currently under review at National Level, both the President of TUS and the President of Students Union will discuss further off line
- Metric 3.2 – TUS to progress student survey.
- Metric 3.3 a & b - Staff and Student satisfaction ratings are ahead of target. A further staff survey will be conducted in 2025.
- Organisation Structure – there is yet no sanction received from DFEHRIS & DPENDR on the two posts of COO and CAO. The President has had continued engagement on this important matter.

Action	By whom	By when
Off-line discussion to take place re Student Survey	President of TUS & President of SU	

Priority 4 Connecting Communities

- It is expected that the new PPP building on Athlone campus will be handed over to TUS towards the end of '24 and will be fully operational for the first intake of students in September '25. Oversight of this project from a risk point of view will be managed at Executive level. The challenges and risks associated with the Facilities Management (FM) operation and TUS and will be presented to GB at a later meeting.
- Metric 4.4 – Sustainability Leadership Scorecard ((SLS) – sustainability co-ordinator is currently being recruited, funded under TSAF with first SLS analysis to be completed by the end of 2024.

Action	By whom	By when
Challenges/Risks associated with the Facilities Management Operation to be presented to GB	President	Future GB meeting

The OECD recently published a Report entitled 'Education at a Glance 2024', a copy of which will be circulated to Governing Body.

The President gave a power point presentation on TUS Student Numbers which was followed by Q&A. A comprehensive discussion took place including regarding the sustainability of the existing target for Student numbers, the viability of certain programmes with very small numbers of offers, and the market for Level 6 programmes. The President will provide statistical data on Level 6 programmes for the next meeting. A report will also be carried out on the variety of reasons that student 'drop out' of college.

Car-parking was discussed in light of the increase of apprenticeship students on Midlands & Midwest campuses, measures have been put in place for both the Midwest and Midlands campuses to help alleviate the problems being experienced.

The importance for TUS around upskilling was discussed in light of the decline in part-time student numbers and the uncertainty of the future continuance of Springboard and HCI. A detailed exercise will be carried out in January '25 to examine this.

Action	By whom	By when
Provide statistical data on Level 6 programmes	President	14-10-24
Provide a report on reasons students 'drop out' of college	President's Office	Future Governing Body meeting
Detailed look at part-time student numbers intake will take place in January '25	President's Office	Commence in January '25
Strategic Plan target for Student Numbers to be reviewed	President	January '25 Governing Body

Student Accommodation: VP for Corporate Services & Capital Development gave a power point presentation on Student Accommodation which was followed by Q&A. A summary of TUS submissions for Athlone, Limerick, and Tipperary were discussed, it was also noted that the entire TU sector is at a very significant disadvantage regarding student accommodation due in large to its inability to borrow or take on a debt in order to build said accommodation which would require legislative commencement.

The impact on targets for international students and the associated financial and internationalisation risks were also discussed.

TUS will

- **Continue to engage in the HEA process, advocating for a pilot / proof of concept of submitted projects that have planning;**
- **Identify Student Accommodation as a priority in the Campus Masterplan;**

- Continue to engage with the market to understand local drivers;
- Consider survey of students to gather information;
- Potential direct engagement with the Housing Finance Agency (HFA) also to be considered.

2) Strategic Performance Agreement/Compact Update

The President gave a power point presentation entitled ‘TUS System Performance Agreement Process’. The President gave a background to the ‘Compact’, its 11 Transversal areas of impact and 4 associated Pillars. The compact performance objectives are closely aligned to the TUS Strategic Plan priorities and objectives (as mapped in slide 4). The most recent version of the Compact was submitted to the HEA on 13/9/24, and the Team involved comprising of J. McKenna, J. Owens, F. O’Connell, S. Hoyne and L. Moran were acknowledged for their input. The Chair also acknowledged the fact that the Compact provides reassurance to Governing Body and the usefulness of the granularity of the content. The GB will be kept informed of the engagement and outcomes on the compact through the HEA reporting process.

Action	By whom	By when
Compact – keep GB informed of the engagement and outcomes on the Compact through the HEA reporting process	President	Regular intervals

3) Chairperson: Emerging Issues and Governance

This item will be deferred to tomorrow’s meeting.

The meeting concluded at 6.15pm. Members were invited to meet for dinner later in the evening where they will be joined by the VPs.

Signed: Josephine Feehily
Chair of TUS Governing Body

Date: 14-10-24