

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

Thursday 11th of November 2021 at 10.00am via MS Teams & in person.

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

Apologies: Ms. C. Ryan

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

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

Note: Items are recorded in the order they were discussed.

1. Chairperson’s opening

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting. Since the last meeting 11 graduation ceremonies have taken place in exceptional venues which were arranged by exceptional staff on both campuses. The Chair wished to formally record her appreciation and that of the Governing Body and asked the President to convey this acknowledgement to all staff involved.

2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

Action: B. Delaney to distinguish agenda items for noting, discussion or decision.

3. Expressions of Sympathy



5. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There were no Declaration of Conflicts of Interest noted.

6. Correspondence

The chair received & replied to a letter from the relevant Oireachtas committee re her appointment, a further reply from the committee is awaited.

Copies of the Application for Designation as a technological university will be provided to both members and attendees after the meeting for their information.

7. Minutes of GB meeting of 27th October 2021

Minutes were agreed.

Proposed by J. Griffin and seconded by J. Feehily.

8. Matters arising

A consultation meeting on the Regulations for Election of Staff Members to Governing Body has taken place with the academic staff union. A draft regulation has been circulated and a further meeting will take place next week.

A meeting with the PMSS union is also scheduled to take place next week.

B. Delaney will arrange a Nominations Committee meeting in the coming weeks.

9. Risk Management

In light of rising numbers in Covid-19 cases the President & B. Delaney gave an update & the measures that are currently in place on both campuses:

- Both campuses are fully open with all academic delivery, laboratories, workshops, services, and restaurants fully operational.
- Covid Marshalls sanitise door handles/areas continuously throughout the day, monitor mask wearing by all, ensure that large groups do not congregate in halls/corridors, etc. Spot checks are also carried out in the restaurant on the Athlone campus to ensure those utilising the seating area are doubly vaccinated.
- Ventilation (mechanical and natural) has been risk assessed and maximised in teaching and non-teaching areas. Co2 monitors are in place and are being monitored to mitigate Covid transmission risk. Academic staff are on campus for academic delivery and PMSS staff continue to operate in a blended / hybrid fashion. Vulnerable staff are reviewed on a case by case basis and accommodation provided in accordance with public health regulations.
- End of term exams will not return fully to 'face to face'. Operation of exams will be kept under review with the changing situation to minimise risk where possible, in accordance with public health regulations
- A difficulty has been identified for students on the Athlone campus travelling to the HSE Testing centre which is located in Mullingar.
Action: President will seek a solution to facilitate these students
- Social engagements/Christmas parties – it was noted that this presents a risk particularly to the college brand & staff should be mindful of this.

10. Campus Companies

B. Delaney gave a background to the operation of the four companies which are all wholly owned subsidiary companies of TUS:

CSS CLG – operation & management of student services including main restaurant & other

food outlets on the Athlone campus. (company has charitable status)

AIT Sportsco Ltd – manage & operate the international arena, athletics track, gym, training rooms and other campus sports facilities (commercial company registered for VAT)

LIT Sports & Leisure – provides sport & leisure facilities (run on a non-profit basis)

Action: B. Delaney to draft organisation structure similar to other companies

AIT Training International Ltd – Company was established as part of international tender application process for the provision of international higher education provision. This is a dormant company and has never traded as it was not successful in related tender application).

Action: President & B. Delaney to make a decision whether to retain company and make a recommendation to the Governing Body

The following points were raised & discussed:

- Consolidation – some companies have similar remits –consolidation be considered?
Action: The President and B. Delaney to review and revert to future Governing Body meeting

- In relation to CSS CLG it was queried why the Athlone campus operates this as a service when many HE institutions have outsourced this service.
Action: The President and Bill Delaney to consider and revert to future Governing Body.

- Commonality of directors on the Boards, particularly the President and Secretary to Governing Body, given due consideration to process, governance & risk was raised.
Action: President will review & engage with Deloitte in order to ascertain what is best practice in the sector.

12. Recognition of Staff Unions

After discussion regarding negotiating rights in the sector nationally, it was agreed to formally recognise the four Staff Unions: Forsa (Administration & Library staff), Unite the Union (Technical staff) SIPTU (Maintenance Staff/General Operatives), and TUI (Academic/Research) in accordance with those rights.

Proposed by J. Feehily & seconded by G. O’Callaghan.

14. Capital Developments Projects – Athlone Campus

Mr. Cormac Cloonan, Estates Manager – Athlone Campus attended the meeting for this item. The Governing Body briefing report, providing information on the following Capital Development Projects for Governing Body approval was reviewed:

- Applied Polymer Technology (APT) Expansion & Refurbishment
- Apprentice Facility Development
- Campus Incubator
- East Campus Car Park Development

Section 6.0 of the briefing report set out the required Governing Body project and funding approvals being sought by Governing Body. Total funding requirement for the above four projects is [REDACTED]. An amount of [REDACTED] is to be provided from external funding providers incl. the HEA and Enterprise Ireland. A further amount of [REDACTED] has

been sought from the HEA towards the cost of the apprentice facility development. A decision on same is awaited. The balance of funding, in the amount of [REDACTED] is to be provided from the Capital Development Reserve (CDR). The President advised Governing Body on the purpose and gave a background of the establishment of the CDR which is maintained to provide funding contributions to capital projects where external funding is not available to meet entire project costs.

A letter, dated 8th November, 2021 from the HEA in relation to the new STEM Facility – Midwest Campus, Athlone which is funded under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) was noted and how it fits with the current projects and the Midlands Campus Masterplan.

Governing Body formally approved the projects and the release of funds from the CDR.
Proposed by G. O’Callaghan and seconded by J. Griffin.

Cormac was thanked on behalf of the staff and was congratulated on the progress of the development strides being made on the Athlone Campus.

13. TUS Seal

The use of the TUS Seal is a requirement under the Act. The Resolution is to be amended to include the following names, these names will be revised when there is full Governing Body membership:

under (a) the Governing Body Chairperson and the following GB members:

- a. Colette Ryan
- b. George O’Callaghan

under (b) the TUS President and the following staff members:

- a. Bill Delaney
- b. Jimmy Browne

The wording in the second last paragraph to be amended to read:
“The technological university will retain a register of contracts and instruments that are made under the seal and this register will be noted at Governing Body”.

It was proposed & agreed to adopt the Resolution. The schedule is not required.
Proposed by J. Feehily & seconded by G. O’Callaghan.

While the seal is applied to graduation parchments the register as referred to above will be a register of other uses beyond its academic use.

11. Governing Body Key Functions & Timelines

The Chair outlined the need for further clarity in relation to the Code of Governance. The President advised that the THEA working group held a workshop which was facilitated by Deloitte in the area of Governance, including an update on the development of the THEA Code of Governance in the context of the TU Act 2018.

In order to properly develop the TUS Code of Governance, the Executive and the Governing Body need a clearer understanding of the import of the formulation in the TU Act, noting that it differs from the previous statutory framework in some fundamental ways. This relates particularly, but not exclusively to the delegation of authority and reserved functions. To this end, a workshop will be arranged with an appropriate expert to assist the Executive and the GB.

The President since his appointment operates in a manner which is in accordance and under the remit of the interim TUS Code of Governance which was approved by Governing Body at its meeting of 12th October 2021. In order to avoid any ambiguity the President requested that he be given a broad delegation of powers, excluding the Governing Body Reserved Functions – Appendix B of the interim TUS Code of Governance, in order for him to carry out his role as President effectively and to run and operate TUS. This would include the authority to appoint staff up to the level of Head of Department (HoD)/Central Services Manager.

This arrangement was approved by the Governing Body subject to very early review following the workshop set out above. It was noted that appointments above HoD level will be presented to Governing Body for approval.

Proposed by J. Feehily and seconded by J. Griffin.

16. AOB

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science have requested a Study Visit to TUS Midlands Midwest, Moylish Campus which will take place on 25th - 26th November.


200 representatives from across Europe (Austria, Finland, Hungary, Portugal and the Netherlands) attended the inaugural General Assembly of the Regional University Network Europe (RUN-EU) for a five-day event commencing on the 1st of November which took place across TUS campuses in Athlone, Limerick and Thurles. The event was very successful with very positive feedback from the participants.

The meeting concluded at 12.35pm.

15. Governing Body Members session

This section of the meeting took place in private. Discussions included a HR matter

Signed:


Chair of TUS Governing Body

Date:

