

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Munster Technological University held on Thursday, 4 November 2021 at 3.00pm via video conference.

Members: Mr Jimmy Deenihan, Chair
Prof. Maggie Cusack
Ms Ursula Barrett
Ds Joan Cleary
Ms Paula Cogan
Ms Mary Cooney
Mr Martin Dineen
Mr Thomas Doyle
Mr Jim Finucane
Ms Mary Hegarty
Prof. Sigbritt Karlsson
Mr Denis Leamy
Ms Christina Mandrusiak
Mr Jerry Moloney
Mr Alan Murphy
Ms Aoife O’Brien
Mr Colman O’Flynn
Ms Aisling O’Mahony
Ms Ingrid O’Riordan
Mr Peter Somers

In Attendance: Ms Ciara Looney, MTU Kerry Campus
Ms Geraldine Faherty, Minute Taker
Dr Áine Ní Shé, MTU Cork Campus for agenda item 7 only

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting of Munster Technological University Governing Body. Apologies were received from Mr C Clifford and it was noted that Ms C Mandrusiak would join the meeting at 3.15pm.

Prior to dealing with the agenda, the Chair outlined the procedures for the meeting in relation to confidentiality of the proceedings, all documentation relating to the meeting were confidential and any breach was a criminal offence under the Act. No recordings of the meeting were permitted, the Teams chat may be enabled to record votes as and when necessary and the only record of the meeting will be the agreed minutes, which will be published in due course. Conflict of interest was addressed and no conflicts were declared.

1. Matters Arising

a. Adoption of agenda

The Chair sought Governing Body approval of the agenda before proceeding with the meeting. The following was raised and agreed prior to approval:

- The President requested that the Terms of Reference of the Committees be discussed under item 9 in order to deal with an over-subscription in two of the Committees.
- A Governor requested that a time sensitive item in relation to “Cork Area Bus Route Changes” be included on the agenda due to the proposed changes to the Local Bus Services for the

greater Cork Metropolitan Area and its impact on the MTU student community. Governors unanimously agreed to this inclusion under “emergency item” as a result of time constraints.

In relation to a process for the inclusion of proposals for future agenda items, Governors noted that the agenda is proposed by the President in agreement with the Chair. Proposals received for agenda items from members may not always be included on the agenda at the next meeting due to the availability of documentation.

The Governing Body agreed to the adoption of the agenda, proposed by Mr T Doyle and seconded by Mr D Leamy.

b. Draft minutes from the meeting of Governing Body held on Thursday 7 October 2021

The minutes of the meeting of the MTU Governing Body held on Thursday 7 October 2021 were approved subject to the following clarifications/corrections:

Under agenda item 8, second paragraph on page 5, clarification was provided in relation to revisions that may be made to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Committees at their meetings would not relate to substantive items, it was merely to resolve minor corrections that may be required.

Governors agreed to the amendment of the second sentence of this paragraph to include the following clarification:

“Finalisation of minor corrections to the Terms of Reference will be done by the Committees at their first meeting. Final copies of the Terms of Reference of each Committee to be presented at Governing Body for approval.”

Under agenda item 3, President’s Report, Governors noted the reports from the University Executive meetings of 7, 14 and 21 September.

Under agenda item 7, paragraph 1, the following to be included “Governors voted by a majority of 10 to 8 to the inclusion of “at least six of whom must be external members” for completeness of the quorum under 5.1”. The amended sentence to read as follows:

Governors noted the error in relation to the date of approval of the previous revisions and agreed to its correction to reflect the correct date of 10 June. Following discussions Governors voted by a majority of 10 to 8 to the inclusion of “at least six of whom must be external members” for completeness of the quorum under 5.1”.

Under agenda item 2, paragraph 2, the following to be included “by a majority of 15 to 3” and “independent”. The amended sentences to read as follows:

Governors discussed the circulated correspondence and, following discussion, members voted on the two proposals received by a majority of 15 to 3. Governors resolved that only independent external members should be on the Audit & Risk Committee.

The approval of the minutes was proposed by Ms M Hegarty and seconded by Mr J Finucane.

In relation to matters arising from the minutes of this meeting, the following was noted:

- Confirmation that the simultaneous raising of the MTU Flag will take place on Monday 8 November at 10.00am at Bishopstown Campus Cork and Kerry North Campus. In response to a query about an opportunity for Governors to meet Minister Harris after this event, the President confirmed that this was unlikely given the full schedule and the time allocation from the Minister's office. Governors noted that Minister Harris will be at Bishopstown Campus on Monday and Minister Foley will be at the Kerry Campus.
- Confirmation that the digests from the Governing Body meetings held on 22 July, 16 September and 7 October will be made available on the MTU website as soon as possible.

(i) Update from the NMCI re: Sail Training vessel

The Chair referred to his visit to the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) on 1 November, a state-of-the-art facility and a very important part of MTU's offering. A Governing Body meeting will be held at the NMCI when guidelines permit in 2022.

The President referred to the circulated document which provides further information for Governors in terms of the national sail training vessel for Ireland and the history of these.

Governors welcomed the update and discussed the importance of this State need, as opposed to an NMCI responsibility. They discussed the potential for North/South Border Cooperation and the funding available including linkages with Queens University, Belfast.

ACTION: The President to follow-up with the Head of the NMCI in relation to an update on progress.

2. Correspondence

The Governing Body noted that there was no correspondence for Governors' attention this month.

In response to a query in relation to what correspondence should be presented to Governing Body, the President gave an assurance that all correspondence concerning Governing Body and its functions will be presented at Governing Body Meetings.

3. President's Report

The Chair invited the President to discuss her circulated report.

The President referred to her report and to the activities that she has been involved in across the University since the last meeting. She referred to the highlights on page 5 and wished to record her thanks to Minister McConalogue, Minister English, Deputy O'Sullivan and Minister McGrath who had recently visited MTU and to the staff involved in preparing for these visits.

The President recorded her thanks to all involved in the preparation of the videos for the countdown to the Flag-Raising Ceremony. She looked forward to the ceremony and hoped that as many Governors as possible could attend the live events to acknowledge and celebrate MTU coming into being.

The Chair referred to the meeting with Minister McGrath on 1 November and outlined the positive support received. In terms of Capital Projects, the President confirmed that the MTU Masterplan will be discussed at the Strategic Development Committee and will be presented to Governing Body in due course.

In response to a query on the Strategic Plan, the President confirmed that all staff will have an opportunity to contribute to the strategy and this will in due course be presented to Governing Body.

A request that the timeline and sequence of the process to be presented and discussed at the first meeting of the Strategic Development Committee was noted.

ACTION: The President to ensure that the order and timeline in relation to the Strategic Plan be presented and discussed at the Strategic Development Committee.

Governors thanked the President for her report and noted the report from the University Executive meeting of 5 October 2021.

4. Human Resources Reports

The Chair invited Ms Looney to present the reports.

a. Staff Appointments Report

Ms Looney outlined the detail in relation to the approval for the post of Head of Department of Media Communications, MTU Crawford College of Art & Design.

The Governing Body approved the appointment as presented.

b. Summary of other posts

In relation to the summary of other posts, Ms Looney confirmed that there was a disparity in terms of the timeframe of the reporting period in the circulated report. In response to a query in relation to a recruitment policy, Ms Looney confirmed that the MTU Recruitment Policy is not finalised, it has gone through consultation and will be presented for approval to Governing Body in due course.

Governors requested that the Executive Team develop a reporting template to take into account Governors' responsibilities in terms of assurance of compliance under 1.7(a) of the Code of Governance. The template to link in with the quarterly Public Sector Numbers Report (PSN) and refer to compliance with the breakdown of posts in the Employment Control Framework (ECF) report.

As confirmed at the previous Governing Body Meeting on 7 October, the post of Assistant Registrar at the Kerry Campus was a pre-existing role which will continue on a short-term basis to ensure that there is provision/support for students.

ACTION: The Executive to draft a template for the HR report to address compliance with Governing Body responsibility under 1.7(a) of the Code of Governance and including linkages with PSN and ECF.

5. Risk Register

The Chair invited Ms Looney to discuss the circulated document.

Ms Looney discussed the update to the Risk Register since the last meeting.

A Governor referred to the change of the implementation date in relation to a cyber-attack from 30 September to 31 December and urged the need for a proactive focus in terms of cyber-security.

Ms Looney discussed the rationale in relation to the change of date and confirmed that there was ongoing work taking place in relation to cyber-security. It was noted that staff are currently undertaking online training in cyber-security and the President took the opportunity to remind staff that they must complete their three training courses.

Governors noted the changes and conveyed their thanks for the update.

6. Return to Campus and MTU Covid-19 Update

The Chair referred to his recent visits to all campuses and noted the full compliance to mask wearing and the responsible behaviour of all.

Ms Looney discussed the communication circulated to all staff and students across the University post the changes announced on 22 October. She outlined the control measures in place and how these will remain until at least February 2022. Plans have begun for a continued increase in onsite learning for Semester 2.

Governors discussed the importance of compliance and noted the ongoing situation at Bishopstown Campus. They were supportive that a communication be circulated to students as quickly as possible in relation to timelines for Semester 2.

The Chair thanked Ms Looney for her update and acknowledged the work being done to keep the MTU community as safe as possible during these unprecedented times.

7. CAO Analysis Report

The Chair welcomed Dr Áine Ní Shé to the meeting to discuss the CAO Analysis Report.

Dr Ní Shé discussed the background outlining key census dates for the University in terms of returns to the HEA and an overview on CAO and how it works. She discussed the key statistics for 2021 on page 2, highlighting the significant increase in first preference options and offers and the analysis of the Rounds on page 3. She confirmed that the University seeks to deliver as much as possible from Round 1 and discussed the huge effort in the leadup to CAO and the work done on establishing collaborations between the University, Cork ETB and Kerry ETB in terms of streamlining the access from Further Education Colleges. A more detailed follow-up report to be presented to Governors at the next Governing Body Meeting on 2 December.

Governors were appreciative of the analysis and discussed MTU's ambitions in terms of making the University an attractive choice in the marketplace as well as the possible constraints that impact on this. They discussed the ladder of opportunity open to students which allows them to progress through the system to qualifications appropriate to their requirements and the importance of programme planning at the University.

A Governor noted that previously, at CIT, a report from the Registrar was provided to the Governing Body.

A Governor conveyed her compliments to the MTU Access Office for their great work in promoting access for all students.

The Chair thanked Dr Ní Shé, Dr O'Donnell and all involved for the great work in getting the University to this favourable position. Dr Ní Shé also conveyed her thanks to colleagues across the University for all the work, led by the Admissions Officers. Dr Ní Shé left the meeting at 4.30pm.

8. TU Act 2018:

a. Revised Standing Orders

The Governing Body noted the revised Standing Order circulated for their information. They further noted that no appointment had been made in relation to the position of Secretary to the Governing

Body. The role is currently shared by the two Vice Presidents, Mr Gallagher and Ms Looney with the support of Mr Coughlan in terms of legal affairs. Ms Faherty is the recording secretary.

ACTION: The position of Secretary to the Governing Body to be discussed at the next Governing Body Meeting.

b. Governing Body Draft Plan of Work for the next 12 months

The Chair invited Ms Looney to discuss the tabled report.

Ms Looney outlined the draft work plan for the remainder of this academic year, December to July 2022.

Governors conveyed their thanks for the document and agreed to review and expand over the next number of months. They noted the intention that meetings will be held at each of the campuses across the University in line with the public health guidelines at that time.

9. Governing Body Committees

The Chair invited the President to discuss this item.

The President referred to the over-subscription to two of the Governing Body Committees and how this can be dealt with in the Terms of Reference under the composition of the Committees.

Following discussions, the Governing Body agreed to the following changes:

1. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Proposal: Increase the membership of the Committee by increasing the number of Governors to 5 and raise the ceiling for all members from 7 to 9. This was proposed by Mr C O'Flynn and seconded by Mr D Leamy.
2. Strategic Development Committee
Proposal: Increase the membership of the Committee by increasing the number of Governors to 9. The following is the breakdown of the Governing Body representation:
 - Chair of Governing Body ex-officio
 - President ex-officio
 - 1 x Student Member of Governing Body
 - 3 x Staff Members of Governing Body (1 PMSS, 2 Academic)
 - 3 x External Members of Governing Body (2 regional, 1 international)

Governors voted by a majority of 11 to 8 in favour of the proposal.

Membership of the Committees is not based on constituency representation, Governors are all representing MTU. The President reassured Prof Karlsson who currently resides on two Committees that, when other external members are appointed to the Audit & Risk Committee, she may step down.

The President confirmed that the appointment of a Chair for each of the Committees will be done by the Committee itself at their first meeting.

In relation to the final Ministerial appointment, the President confirmed that we await confirmation from the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in this regard.

Ms Looney to circulate the updated proposed membership of the Committees and to seek confirmation that each member is satisfied that the changes accurately reflect what was agreed at the meeting.

ACTION: Ms Looney to circulate the listing of the updated membership of the Committees.

The President and Chair thanked Governors for their input to the discussions.

b. Proposed Schedule of Meetings for the Committees

In relation to the draft schedule of meetings for the Committees, it was agreed that following confirmation of the membership, a doodle poll of proposed dates for the first meeting of each Committee would be circulated to Governors.

A request for a process in terms of setting agenda items for the various committees and the suggestion that an invitation will be circulated to Committee members was noted.

ACTION: Following confirmation of the membership of the Committees, a doodle poll of proposed dates for the first meeting of each Committee to be circulated to Governors.

10. Request for Documentation:

a. MTU Policy on Awarding of Titles: Emeritus Fellow and Honorary University Fellow

Governors noted the policy with thanks. The President confirmed that a Policy for Honorary Degrees/Doctorates will be looked at in due course.

b. Minutes of the Academic Council Meeting held on 16 June 2021

Governors noted with thanks the circulated document.

11. Proposals for Agenda at the next meeting

The Chair referred to the recent positive meeting with Minister McGrath and the importance of having a certain amount of capital projects at the “shovel-ready” stage. Governors noted that the Masterplan will feature on an agenda at a future Governing Body meeting.

12. Emergency Item

The Chair invited Ms Aisling O’Mahony, Students’ Union President, Cork Campus to discuss the emergency item approved for inclusion on the agenda under item 1 (a) Adoption of the Agenda.

Proposed Changes to the Local Bus Services for the greater Cork Area

Ms O’Mahony confirmed that approximately 40% of the student population commute. She outlined how long it took to get the main bus routes to come onto Bishopstown Campus and how the current proposal may eliminate this. A streamlining of the bus service will have a massive impact for students and staff with the elimination of the key essential bus routes to include no main route from the train station to MTU.

The second round of consultations is due to begin with a view to implementation in 2023/2024. Ms O’Mahony requested the support of Governing Body so that urgent action can be undertaken.

Governors agreed to the following action:

1. The University Executive to write and seek a meeting to highlight this key critical issue, expressing the concern of the Governing Body.

2. Circulation of the data in relation to the consultation in order to encourage participation.

Simultaneous Flag-Raising Ceremony

The Chair referred to the simultaneous Flag-Raising Ceremony on Monday at Bishopstown Campus and the North Campus and conveyed his thanks to the President for her work in ensuring that this happened.

The President confirmed that all guests will be obliged to produce their Covid Certificates and that masks will be required in-line with current guidelines. She concurred with the Chair on the importance of all 6 flags being raised and welcomed the opportunity to meet Governors in person after the formalities have taken place.

The Chair thanked Governors for their commitment and valuable contributions this afternoon. He also conveyed his thanks to the President and other members of the executive team for their work and for all the materials provided. The President echoed the Chair's thanks and appreciation for the contributions this afternoon.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm.

Signed: *Jimmy Seenuk*
Chair of MTU Governing Body

Date: 2 December 2021