

**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Munster Technological University held on Thursday, 16 September 2021 at 3.00pm via video conference.**

**Members:** Mr Jimmy Deenihan, Chair  
Prof. Maggie Cusack  
Ms Ursula Barrett  
Ms Paula Cogan  
Dr Joan Cleary  
Mr Chris Clifford  
Ms Mary Cooney  
Mr Martin Dineen  
Mr Thomas Doyle  
Ms Christina Mandrusiak  
Mr Jerry Moloney  
Mr Alan Murphy  
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  
Mr Paul Gallagher, MTU Cork Campus  
Mr Barry Coughlan, MTU Cork Campus for agenda item 8 only

The Chair welcomed all to the first meeting of the new academic year of Munster Technological University Governing Body. Apologies were received from Mr J Finucane, Ms M Hegarty, Prof. S Karlsson, Mr D Leamy, Ms A O’Brien and it was noted that Dr J Cleary would be late joining the meeting.

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 Governing Body agreed to the adoption of the agenda and to the request to change the order of the agenda by taking agenda item 10 prior to agenda item 8 on the basis that the Committees are premised on the Code of Governance.

A Governor requested that Return to Campus and Communications be brought up under matters arising and the Chair stated that this would be dealt with under agenda item 7.

**b. Draft minutes from the meeting of Governing Body on Thursday 22 July 2021**

The minutes of the meeting of the MTU Governing Body held on Thursday 22 July 2021 were approved subject to the removal of the following from agenda item 8, paragraph 3 on page 5:

*“and to indicate which Committee they wished to be a member of”*

The amended sentence to read as follows:

*“They agreed to submit their suggestions for possible committees including a brief description by Thursday 5 August 2021.”*

The approval of the minutes was proposed by Ms U Barrett and seconded by Mr C O’Flynn.

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

- A request for the report from the meetings of the University Executive be circulated to Governors
- The membership of Academic Council to be published on the MTU website as appropriate

**c. Matters Arising from the minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on Monday 28 June 2021.**

A request for the MTU Policy on Awarding of Titles: Emeritus Fellow and Honorary University Fellow be circulated to Governors for their information was noted.

**2. Correspondence**

Governors noted that there were no items to report under correspondence for this meeting.

**3. President’s Report**

The Chair invited the President to discuss her circulated report.

The President welcomed Governors to the first meeting of the new academic year and hoped that Governors managed to get a break over the summer. She conveyed her thanks to the Chair who visited three of the Cork campuses to meet with staff and students the previous day.

The President referred to her report and to the activities that she has been involved in across the University since the last meeting. She highlighted the following points for the information of Governors:

- EleSkate Team, a multidisciplinary team of university-wide students who were recently named the 2021 Ireland National Winners of the prestigious James Dyson Award for their work on addressing the challenges associated with the measurement of technical aspects of skating performance. Eleskate will now represent Ireland globally.
- Congratulations to our three Olympians Monika Dukarska, David Kenny and Jordan Lee on their outstanding achievements at the recent Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, MTU are very proud of our Olympians and their achievements.
- Photos of the current state of construction of Phase 1 of the multipurpose MTU Arena and the artist’s impression of both Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- The summary of the analysis of CAO 2021 and to the overall positive upward trend in preferences detailing Level 8 up by almost 17% and Level 6/7 up by 3.5% for MTU.
- The Executive to issue a tender to provide IR Support as a result of the matter raised in relation to the risk of IR issues at the last Governing Body Meeting. An Executive Liaison Group will be

setup and the appointee will work with this group in order for MTU to be better positioned to work with all staff unions in terms of progressing matters in a timely fashion.

- A tender process has been developed in relation to organisation and strategy, consultations to begin as soon as possible.

### **3(a) OECD Consultation**

The President referred to the circulated letter and informed Governors that this was as result of a request for further input into the OECD consultation at the TURN Meeting on 28 July.

### **3(b) Raising of the MTU Flag**

The President outlined the proposal to the formal raising of the MTU Flag simultaneously at a date to be confirmed in the first semester. A further update to be given Governors at the next meeting.

The President also referred to the visit of Mr Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for the first time on Monday, 20 September to coincide with the Return to Campus of third-level students across the country. Governors were invited to attend.

Governing Body thanked the President for her report.

In relation a query on signage and a timeframe for its completion, the President confirmed that work was ongoing to bring all signage (buildings and road signage) up to date.

A Governor requested further analysis of trends in relation to CAO and in particular the acceptances with a breakdown by Departments/per course. Further details in terms of diversity of students and all entry level routes including mature students was also requested and both will be provided at a future meeting.

## **4. Human Resources Reports**

The Chair invited Mr Gallagher to present the reports.

### **a. Staff Appointments**

Mr Gallagher outlined the detail of the three Staff Appointments for approval as follows:

- Manager, Clean Technology Centre
- Vice-Head of iEd Hub, School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering
- Head of Department of Architecture

The Governing Body approved the appointments as presented. This was proposed by Ms C Mandrusiak and seconded by Ms A O'Mahony. They further requested an amendment to the template to include an overview of how many external applicants applied for the advertised positions.

### **b. Summary of Other Appointments**

Governors noted the detail in relation to the summary of other appointments.

In response to a query in relation to Governors having an assurance of compliance with statutory requirements to public sector pay and approval of the appointments of all staff (Code of Governance Functions (page 15, 1.7a(5)), Mr Gallagher confirmed that there is a framework in place to ensure

compliance and that all processes are adhered to, however, an assurance of compliance with procedures will be included in the template to Governing Body.

Further details to be provided at the next Governing Body in relation to a query on the post of Assistant Registrar at the Kerry Campus.

The Public Sector Numbers (PSN) which are returned to the HEA on a quarterly will be shared with Governors for their information.

## **5. MTU Advocacy**

The President referred to the circulated document and discussed the costs and rationale in relation to membership of both THEA and the IUA. She re-iterated MTU's ambition and outlined the importance of support for its current and future needs. Once our strategy is in place, MTU will make an application to the IUA. MTU will also pursue suitable European networks to support international engagement and funding opportunities. An advocacy review to be undertaken every few years to ensure that it meets the needs of MTU.

Governors discussed the benefits and the risks, they acknowledged the importance of not creating a two-tier system of traditional versus emerging technological university as well as welcoming the link to MTU's strategy.

The criteria for membership of the IUA to be circulated for Governors' information.

## **6. Risk Register**

The Chair invited Ms Looney to discuss the document.

Ms Looney indicated that the document circulated was the same as that presented to Governors at their meeting on 22 July. An updated register will be available for the next Governing Body Meeting which will incorporate the two changes approved by the Executive at their meeting on 14 September. Ms Looney outlined the changes and provided clarity in relation to the recruitment/tender process for the IR Support.

The Chair thanked Governors for their comments and welcomed the progress in relation to risk on IR matters.

## **7. MTU Covid-19 Responses 2021/2022**

The Chair referred to the request to discuss the return to campus and communications and acknowledged that Governors would have an opportunity to discuss this under this item. He invited the President and Mr Gallagher to give the overview and presentation.

The President acknowledged the huge amount of work undertaken to prepare MTU for a return to campus and the transition to on-campus learning. She referred to the complexities involved and in particular the issue with ventilation and acknowledged and appreciated all the work done and the challenges involved.

In his presentation, Mr Gallagher gave an account of the work undertaken on the return to campus. He briefed Governors on the complexities surrounding timetabling and the challenges being faced in relation to the increased on-campus delivery whilst adhering to guidelines. He referred to the added challenge in relation to ventilation in the 1974 building at Bishopstown Campus and whilst there has been huge investment over the summer there were still challenges here.

Governors discussed at length the concerns raised in relation to the return to campus and the delay in communicating to students in this regard.

Mr Gallagher referred to the meetings/consultations with both staff and student unions and how the university will continue to provide updates through the Covid-19 portal as the work continues on the transition back to on-campus learning activities.

Governors acknowledged that the health and safety of students and staff must be a priority, however, it was essential to communicate and to do so on a regular basis.

The issue of student accommodation and the possibility of facilitating a transfer of accommodation was discussed and Governors noted that there were options available to students who were experiencing significant financial difficulty through the Student Hardship Fund.

The Chair thanked Mr Gallagher for the comprehensive report and Governors requested that the presentation be circulated for their information.

## **10. TU Act 2018:**

### **a. Review of Code of Governance including Standing Orders**

The Chair invited Mr Gallagher to discuss this item.

Mr Gallagher confirmed that the HEA have committed to undertaking a review of the Code of Governance and that we await their proposal for same.

Governors noted that there were a number of minor errors in the Code which required amending. They agreed to undertaking these changes with a view to other changes coming through the HEA process. The Code of Governance document to be made available for Governors to edit through file sharing in Teams.

In relation to the Standing Orders, Governors agreed to increasing the quorum from 2 to 50% plus 1 (12 in total). This was proposed by Ms U Barrett and seconded by Ms I O'Riordan.

They further agreed to reflect on the wording of 5.8 and 5.9, giving consideration to current and future scenarios.

Governors noted that the intention to move to in-person meetings when Government regulations permit.

## **8. Governing Body Committees**

Mr Barry Coughlan, Head of Legal Affairs joined the meeting for this item.

The President outlined the current position in relation to Committees and discussed the proposal to identify which Committees are to be established and populated in order to be in a position to begin the work of those Committees at the next Governing Body Meeting on 7 October.

The requirement of 4/5 members to sit on each of the Committees with the exception being the NMCI Committee which had a requirement for 2 members nominated by Governing Body (in addition to the Head of NMCI).

A lengthy discussion took place in relation to the interpretation of the eligibility of membership of the Committees and clarity was sought in this regard.

Clarity was also sought in relation to the NMCI being a Committee of Governing Body. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister for Education, MTU (formerly CIT) and the Minister for Defence sets out the structure of this Committee.

The Governing Body agreed to the proposal that the remit of the Arts Committee be broadened to include culture and sport. The Committee to be renamed as the “Arts, Sport & Culture Committee”. This was proposed by Mr T Doyle and seconded by Ms U Barrett.

The Governing Body agreed that the following will be the Committees of Governing Body:

- Arts, Sport & Culture Committee
- Audit & Risk Committee
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee
- Finance Committee
- NMCI Committee
- Strategic Development Committee

Governors further agreed to submit their expression of interest in relation to which Committees they wished to be a member. Clarification will be provided by the Head of Legal Affairs in relation to queries regarding eligibility for membership of committees. Governors will move to populate these Committees at the next Governing Body Meeting on 7 October.

## **9. MTU Financial Update**

The Chair invited Mr Gallagher to discuss the MTU Financial update.

Mr Gallagher gave an overview of the circulated document, highlighting the total income, pay, non-pay and the increasing capital expenditure which was attributed to the multipurpose MTU Arena and 1974 building development. He referred to the surplus and the differences in breakdown between the various campuses which will be discussed further under Programmes and Budgets.

He discussed how the budget including academic non-pay is allocated to each Department and the Student Finance Committee who have responsibility for overseeing the budget for Student Services. Mr Gallagher confirmed that the University has been merging its budget processes and has a structured approach to developing the budget during the year. Full details on the forthcoming Programmes and Budgets 2022/23 – 2025/26 will be available to Governing Body at a later date. At the request of a Governor, Mr Gallagher gave an overview on the Moderator and its workings.

The Chair thanked Mr Gallagher for his comprehensive report.

## **11. Use of the University Seal**

The Governing Body approved the use of the university seal as outlined in the circulated documentation. This was proposed by Mr M Dineen and seconded by Mr T Doyle.

## **12. Request for Documentation:**

- a. Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting to date**
- b. MTU Programmes & Budgets 2021/22 – 2024/25**

Governors noted with thanks the circulated documents.

### 13. Proposals for Agenda at the next meeting

Governors proposed the following items for inclusion on the agenda for the next Governing Body meeting on 7 October:

- Update on Covid-19 and Return to Campus
- Update on charity status

In relation to the Strategic Plan and how Governors can contribute to the strategy, the President to consider the timelines and the best approach for ensuring the contributions of Governors.

The Chair referred to the visit of Mr Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to the Kerry Campus and reminded Governors of their invitation. Further details to be circulated to Governors tomorrow.

A Governor referred to the appointment of the last member of Governing Body and the possibility of this being raised with the Minister on Monday. Governors also noted the importance of remaining quorate for the duration of the meeting in light of the change to the quorum at the meeting this afternoon.

The Chair thanked Governors for their contributions and their work this afternoon. He also conveyed his thanks to the President and other members of the executive for their work. The President echoed the Chair's thanks and conveyed her appreciation for the input and expertise.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed: Jimmy Deenihaw  
Chair of MTU Governing Body

Date: 7 October 2021