

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Munster Technological University held on Friday, 29 January 2021 at 4.00pm via video conference

Members: Mr Bob Savage, Chair
Prof. Maggie Cusack
Prof. Sigbritt Karlsson
Mr Denis Leamy
Mr Jerry Moloney

In Attendance: Mr Barry Coughlan, MTU Cork Campus
Mr Paul Gallagher, MTU Cork Campus
Ms Ciara Looney, MTU Kerry Campus
Ms Geraldine Faherty, Minute Taker

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting of Munster Technological University Governing Body. There were no apologies. Conflict of Interest and the importance of declaring any conflict or perceived conflict was addressed, no conflicts were declared.

1. Draft Minutes

a. Governing Body Meeting held on Friday 22 January 2021

The minutes of the meeting of the MTU Governing Body held on Friday 22 January 2021 were approved for signature.

2. Correspondence

a. Email from the TASS Unions re: MTU Governing Body Representation

The Chair invited the Vice Presidents (VPs) Corporate to discuss this item.

Mr Gallagher referred to the verbal update from the meeting with the Technical Administrative Support Staff (TASS) Unions on 21 January given at the Governing Body meeting last week and discussed the detail of the feedback in the circulated correspondence.

In relation to the staff elections and to the timing of these, the Union have a concern of being underrepresented and conveyed a preference for sections 12(1)(c) and (d) to be completed and filled ahead of section 12(1)(e). They proposed the possibility of using category (e) as constituency to redress this imbalance. Another suggestion was that Research could be identified as a possible constituency. Security and GDPR was a priority in terms of online elections and that equality, gender balance and the use of equitable regional representation be done by the management of the appointments of external membership.

Governing Body welcomed the feedback from the TASS Unions. Their proposal that a position be allowed for a nomination from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) was noted, however, the Governing Body will not seek nominations from organisations, they will as per the Act, advertise on the basis of competencies.

A verbal update from the academic unions to be discussed under agenda item 5.

3. Academic Council

a. Standing Orders of MTU Academic Council

The President informed Governing Body that there was no further update from last week's meeting.

Consideration was being given to actioning the working groups in order for work to commence so that new regulations will be in place for students in September.

4. Governing Body Committees:

a. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – updated Terms of Reference

Ms Looney discussed the circulated updated document which incorporated the feedback given by Governors and the proposed changes by the President.

Governing Body fully supported the Committee name change to “Equity, Diversity & Inclusion”. They agreed to reflect further on the structure/core of the Committee and to submit comments to Ms Looney ahead for next week’s meeting.

ACTION: *Ms Looney to circulate the draft Terms of Reference to Governors for their comments/feedback.*

ACTION: *In relation to the scheduling of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee, Ms Looney to follow-up with alternative dates.*

The Governing Body conveyed their thanks to Ms Looney for all her work.

5. Membership of Governing Body

a. Staff Nominations & Election Process Update

The VPs Corporate referred to their meeting with the both the Cork and Kerry branches of the TUI union earlier in the afternoon and confirmed that the Union have committed to making a written submission next week which will include confirmation of their formal proposal in relation to section 12(1)(c), their preference is for 3 academic staff members. Mr Gallagher confirmed that their discussion included constituencies, electorate, timelines and the VPs provided clarifications on the queries raised. The Union reiterated their strong desire for staff representation on the Governing Body from an early stage and highlighted their concern in relation to the composition of academic council in terms of the lack of staff representation.

The Union also sought the opportunity for staff seeking nomination to be given access to a communications channel thus giving them the ability to communicate across the whole university.

Governing Body welcomed the update and the positive engagement.

In relation to the request for the digest of the minutes of Governing Body meetings, the Governing Body agreed that it was important to be transparent in their work and approved the publication of their minutes as a digest in accordance with Standing Orders, items of a commercial or other sensitive nature to be redacted.

b. Competencies for External Members

Ms Looney discussed the circulated updated document which incorporated the key changes from the feedback given by Governors at the previous meeting.

Governors welcomed the updated document and agreed that business should be included as a category. They agreed to finalising the document and preparing a draft advertisement. The document to be sent to the HEA for their Board meeting on 9 March as agreement with the HEA re: competencies must be reached before advertising. A preliminary meeting of the Nominations Committee to take place thereafter.

An MTU campaign will run to coincide with the advertisement in order to raise the MTU profile.

The Governing Body conveyed their thanks to the VPs Corporate for the considerable work on the document.

6. Policies and Procedures

a. Emeritus Policy

Mr Coughlan referred to the amendments highlighted as tracked changes in the Emeritus/Honorary Fellowship Policy to provide a role for Academic Council in light of its function in this regard under the TU Act. The Academic Council must be the body that formally recommends fellowships to Governing Body and it is then a matter for the Governing Body to approve.

The Governing Body approved the Emeritus Policy as presented.

b. Credit Card Policy

c. Treasury Policy

d. Debtors Policy

e. Accounting for Government Grants Policy

In relation to the policies (b) to (e) for approval, Mr Gallagher confirmed that these MTU policies are based on pre-existing policies that have been aligned and have been through a consultation phase between the two Finance Offices.

The Governing Body agreed to the approval of the policies (b) to (e) as presented.

7. Induction for Governing Body

a. Draft Induction Plan

The VPs Corporate confirmed that the induction plan was a work in progress and that they were engaging with the IPA in order to have a finalised plan in place in the coming weeks which also will include induction for the Audit & Risk Committee.

8. Banking Documentation

Mr Gallagher informed Governors that the documentation was not yet completed as there was a requirement for actual signatures as opposed to digital signatures, this would be presented at another meeting of Governing Body.

Charitable Status

Mr Coughlan informed Governing Body that confirmation of MTU's registration for Charitable Status was received and that this is now complete. Thanks to Mr Coughlan for his work.

Governing Body agreed to taking agenda item 10 before agenda item 9 so that the VPs Corporate and Mr Coughlan could absent themselves from the meeting for agenda item 9.

10. AOB

a. TUI Ballot

Governing Body noted that there was an impending TUI ballot with regard to non-acceptance of the recommendation of the Phase 2 MOU.

The VPs Corporate and Mr Coughlan left the meeting.

9. Organisational Structure

The President informed Governing Body that she had a meeting with Professor David Fitzpatrick, President, TU Dublin and welcomed the opportunity to hear of his experience of setting up the first Technological University.

The Chair thanked Governors for their participation at the meeting this afternoon. The meeting closed at 5.10pm.

Signed: 
Chair of MTU Governing Body

Date: 5 February 2021