

Minutes of proceedings of the Governing Body Meeting

Date: Thursday, 9th December 2021
Time: 10.00am – 1.00pm
Location: Microsoft Teams and Boardroom, Galway Campus

Present: Mr Cormac MacDonncha (Chair)
Dr Orla Flynn (President)
Ms Siobhán Kennedy
Cllr Michael Maher
Mr Gareth Roe
Mr Michael Geoghegan
Ms Maureen Walsh
Ms Mary McGinley
Mr David Leahy
Dr Eleanor Rainsford
Cllr Paul Murphy
Cllr Terry O’Flaherty
Cllr Colm Keaveney
Ms Proinsias Ní Ghrainne
Mr Tom Grady

In Attendance: Mr Jim Fennell, Secretary / VP for Finance & Corporate Services
Dr Michel Hannon, VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Dr Rick Officer, VP for Research, and Innovation
Ms Fiona Faherty, Meeting Secretary

Apologies: Mr Colin Kearney
Ms Maria Ruddy
Mr Joe Cunningham

1.0 Declaration of Conflict of Interest with Agenda Items	ALL
There were no conflicts of interest declared by those present or in attendance.	
2.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting	All
The minutes of Governing Body Meeting held on 25 th November were approved on the proposal of Cllr Terry O’Flaherty and seconded by Mr Michael Geoghegan.	
3.0 Matters Arising from Minutes	All
<p>Cllr Terry O’Flaherty informed the meeting of a proposal by Galway City Council to remove the 30% Education zoning on the site of the Corrib Great Southern Hotel in the draft City Development Plan</p> <p>The meeting noted its significant concern at this proposal. It was agreed that the President would write to Galway City Council on behalf of the Governing Body to express their concerns and to request the zoning be reinstated. It was also agreed that this would be discussed in more detail by the Capital Projects Subcommittee at their next meeting and an update will be provided to the Governing Body in January.</p>	
4.0 President	O Flynn
<p>4.1 President’s Report</p> <p>The President’s report was taken as read and Dr Flynn provided an update on some key issues as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She congratulated the recent graduates of GMIT and commended the graduation ceremonies and the work involved by the Office of Academic Affairs. The President also thanked the Governing Body members who had attended the sessions. - The contracts for Crowley Park are being signed today and this marks a significant achievement and milestone for the Institute. The Chair congratulated the Institute and agreed that this is a significant development for GMIT - SALI Posts – The Institute applied for two posts in 2021. The Sustainability and Design post was approved but placed on a reserve list as there was insufficient funding available. Ten posts were allocated nationally, instead of the fifteen that had been previously communicated. The President wrote to the HEA and THEA will also write to the HEA to express dissatisfaction with the allocation of posts to the IoT sector. - Green Campus - GMIT is participating in a national Green Campus Actions campaign coordinated by An Taisce; the wildflower meadow was the selected action for GMIT. <p>Dr Rick Officer provided an update on Research and Innovation activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following a financial overview presentation by Dr Officer he advised the Governing Body that the Galway iHUB is now operating on a self-financing basis due to rental income doubling in 2021. - 900 directly supported jobs have been created and 75% of companies who started in the iHUB remain in business. <p>The Chairman noted the significant transformation in the Research and Innovation function over the past 5 years. The profile of the iHUB assists in getting additional funding and it also assists with the positive promotion of GMIT. He congratulated Dr Officer and his team and noted the strong performance as we enter the ATU merger.</p>	

<p>COVID-19 Update</p> <p>The President noted that the onsite exams due to be held before and after Christmas would be held in compliance with Public Health guidelines. Following a risk assessment, the current situation remains, that exams will continue on site, however, this is subject to on-going review.</p> <p>Semester 2 – due to the new variants of COVID-19 the return to campus will continue to be monitored. Some classes will continue online and there will be an increase in some on-campus activities.</p> <p>Funding is being provided by the Minister for Education and Skills for free antigen tests for students for next semester.</p> <p>4.2 Media Coverage Report</p> <p>The Media Coverage Report was taken as read.</p> <p>4.3 Atlantic Technological University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chairman welcomed the decision on the new university name, Atlantic Technological University (ATU), or Ollscoil Teichneolaíochta an Atlantaigh. - Work continues on the ATU branding. - A plan is underway to mark the launch of the ATU. - Constructive joint executive meetings are taking place with the goal being a single integrated university across all functions. - Technological University Transformational Fund (TUTF) – GMIT continues to receive funding for the costs associated with the transition to a TU - Additional funding will be allocated for TU’s through the Resilience and Recovery Fund of €19m. - Potential funding from ERDF from 2022/23 <p>4.3.1 Terms of Reference Joint Academic Council Subcommittee</p> <p>The terms of reference for Joint Academic Council Subcommittee were agreed and are circulated for approval by each Governing Body.</p> <p>This was approved on the proposal of Cllr Michael Maher and seconded by Cllr Colm Keaveney.</p> <p>Mr Gareth Roe noted that the terms of reference did not provide for specific Students’ representation, however, it was noted that inclusion of a student representative was a requirement in all three partner institutes.</p>	
<p>5.0 Report from EDI Subcommittee</p>	<p>C Keaveney</p>
<p>Cllr Colm Keaveney provided an update from the EDI Subcommittee meeting which was held on 30th November.</p> <p>SALI Initiative – Sustainability and Design post was approved but not funded at this time. President will write to the HEA to seek further clarification regarding the funding of this post.</p> <p>New Members of EDI Subcommittee – two new external members are being proposed to join the EDI Subcommittee. They are being contacted and if accept they will join the Subcommittee in the new year. 1. Paddy Maughan – Mayo Traveller Supporter Group and 2. Pamela Uba – GMIT Graduate, Medical Scientist and the first black Ms Ireland.</p> <p>TU Gender Action Plan – A merged TU Gender Action Plan is required, and this is underway..</p>	

<p>Accessibility Audit – Quotes have been sought to carry out the audit, which are now being evaluated. An update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Draft TU Policy on Sexual Violence & Harassment – This is a new joint TU Policy which is currently being finalised. It is hoped to have a final document for review at the next meeting.</p> <p>Launch of SpeakOut Tool – This was launched by Minister Harris in October. In GMIT this is a collaborative effort between EDI and Student Services. It is an anonymous tool to report any issues of bullying and harassment.</p> <p>Cllr Keaveney thanked Ms Mary Nestor, EDI Manager and the President for their commitment to this subcommittee, and the real progress being made.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the significant efforts and work being done by this Subcommittee.</p> <p>The President noted the team effort from all members on the Subcommittee.</p> <p>The Chair, Mr Cormac MacDonncha, left the meeting. Cllr Michael Maher deputised as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.</p>	
<p>6.0 Registrar / Academic Council</p>	<p>M Hannon</p>
<p>6.1 Academic Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24</p> <p>Dr Michael Hannon presented the Academic Plan for 2021/22 – 2023/24 which outlined the projections over the next four/five years. This information will provide a basis for the Programmes and Budgets for next year.</p> <p>The increase in retention rates has contributed to the overall growth in undergraduate student numbers.</p> <p>Mr Gareth Roe asked if the amount of funding per student under the Resource Grant Allocation Model (RGAM) is likely to flat line or decrease, or will the department increase funding. Mr Fennell advised that his understanding is that the top slices in respect of various funding calls together with the overall increase in student numbers in the sector will result in the funding per student for 2022 remaining at the same level as 2021.</p> <p>Dr Eleanor Rainsford raised concern regarding the ongoing lack of space and the increase in student numbers. Dr Michael Hannon noted this and advised that a space planning process is taking place.</p> <p>Mr Fennell noted that space had been reassigned from the Hotel School to laboratory space for Science students.</p> <p>The Academic Plan for 2021/22 – 2023/24 was approved on the proposal of Mr Gareth Roe and seconded by Ms Maureen Walsh.</p> <p>6.2 Report on Progression and Retention</p> <p>Dr Hannon presented a report on Progression and Retention and noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduate performance has been consistent with no grade inflation in the last number of years. - Mr Gareth Roe asked if a review takes place of any irregularities and data quality of exam. - A strong quality assurance exists around the processing of exam results and appropriate mechanisms are in place to review this. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A move from online exams and assessments to onsite exams has taken place this year. <p>The President noted that we are fortunate to have access to this data and a review could be carried out by Academic Council if required.</p> <p>Cllr Michael Maher complemented and congratulated Dr Hannon and his team on the success of the recent graduation ceremonies.</p>	
<p>7.0 Corporate Governance</p>	<p>M McGinley</p>
<p>7.1 Review of Internal Controls & Risk Management</p> <p>Ms Mary McGinley introduced the review of Internal Controls & Risk Management and Mr Fennell presented (copy attached) the review of Internal Controls and Risk Management and explained the responsibilities of the Governing Body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that an effective System of Internal Control is implemented ➤ Annual Review of the effectiveness of the System of Internal Control take place within 3 months of the year end ➤ Identify areas where corrective action is taken ➤ Identify any material control weaknesses that need to be reported in the Statement on the System of Internal Control (SSIC) ➤ Confirm in the SSIC that a review of the effectiveness of Internal Control and Risk Management has taken place. <p>Following review by the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) the ARC expressed the following opinion:</p> <p>"Based on consideration of its ongoing work and the information supplied to it, the Audit and Risk Committee is satisfied that corrective action for weaknesses in internal control that have been identified during the period have been addressed, with control actions put in place or in progress at the year end. Reasonable assurance can be provided to the Governing Body in relation to the adequacy of the sources of assurance provided to the Audit and Risk Committee and to the operation of risk management, control and governance in GMIT".</p> <p>7.2 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Governing Body</p> <p>Ms Mary McGinley, Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) acknowledged the significant contribution from all members of the ARC. She also thanked Mr Fennell, the Executive and supporting staff for their contribution and support in addressing various queries raised by the ARC over the past year. This indicates that risk management and good corporate governance is a high priority for the Institute.</p> <p>One of the challenges faced by the ARC is the vacancy of the Corporate Governance and Risk Management Officer. It is hoped to have this post filled in the new year.</p> <p>Some of the actions reviewed by the ARC were highlighted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential Cyber attack - Data Breach - COVID-19 Risk Register - Green Campus Bank Account - Interaction with Internal Auditors - Review of New Policies such as Risk Appetite, Anti-Corruption Policy, Anti-Fraud Policy, Social Media Policy <p>A handover plan will be prepared by the ARC at their next meeting to allow a transition into the new TU.</p>	

Cllr Michael Maher, Acting Chair, complemented the enormous amount of work and topics covered by the ARC. He thanked the members for their commitment to the Board and the Institute and noted the report provides the necessary assurance to the Governing Body

7.3 Governing Body Assessment of Effectiveness of Internal Controls and Risk Management (Based on Item 7.1 and 7.2 Above)

The Governing Body approved the Effectiveness of Internal Controls and Risk management (based on item 7.1 and 7.2 above) on the proposal of Cllr Michael Maher and seconded by Mr Tom Grady.

7.4 Governing Body Assessment of Effectiveness of Audit & Risk Committee (Based on Item 7.1 to 7.3 Above)

The Governing Body approved the effectiveness of the Audit & Risk Committee (based on items 7.1 to 7.3 above) on the proposal of Dr Eleanor Rainsford and Ms Proinsias Ní Ghraíne.

7.5 Internal Audit Charter

The Internal Audit Charter as recommended by the Internal Audit Committee and circulated to the meeting was approved on the proposal of Mr Gareth Roe and seconded by Mr Tom Grady

7.6 SIPO Declarations

Mr Fennell reminded the members to return their completed SIPO declarations by the end of January and advised that both he and Ms Fiona Faherty were available to assist members with any queries.

7.7 Social Media Policy

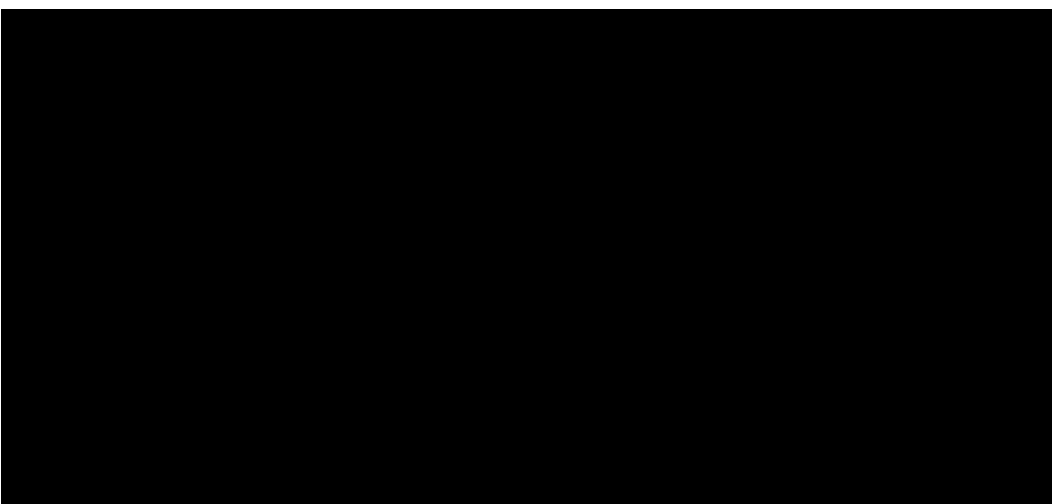
Dr Flynn addressed queries regarding social media posts and whether the policy adequately addresses this and advised that the scope of the policy is for official GMIT domains as opposed to private platforms that staff or students have.

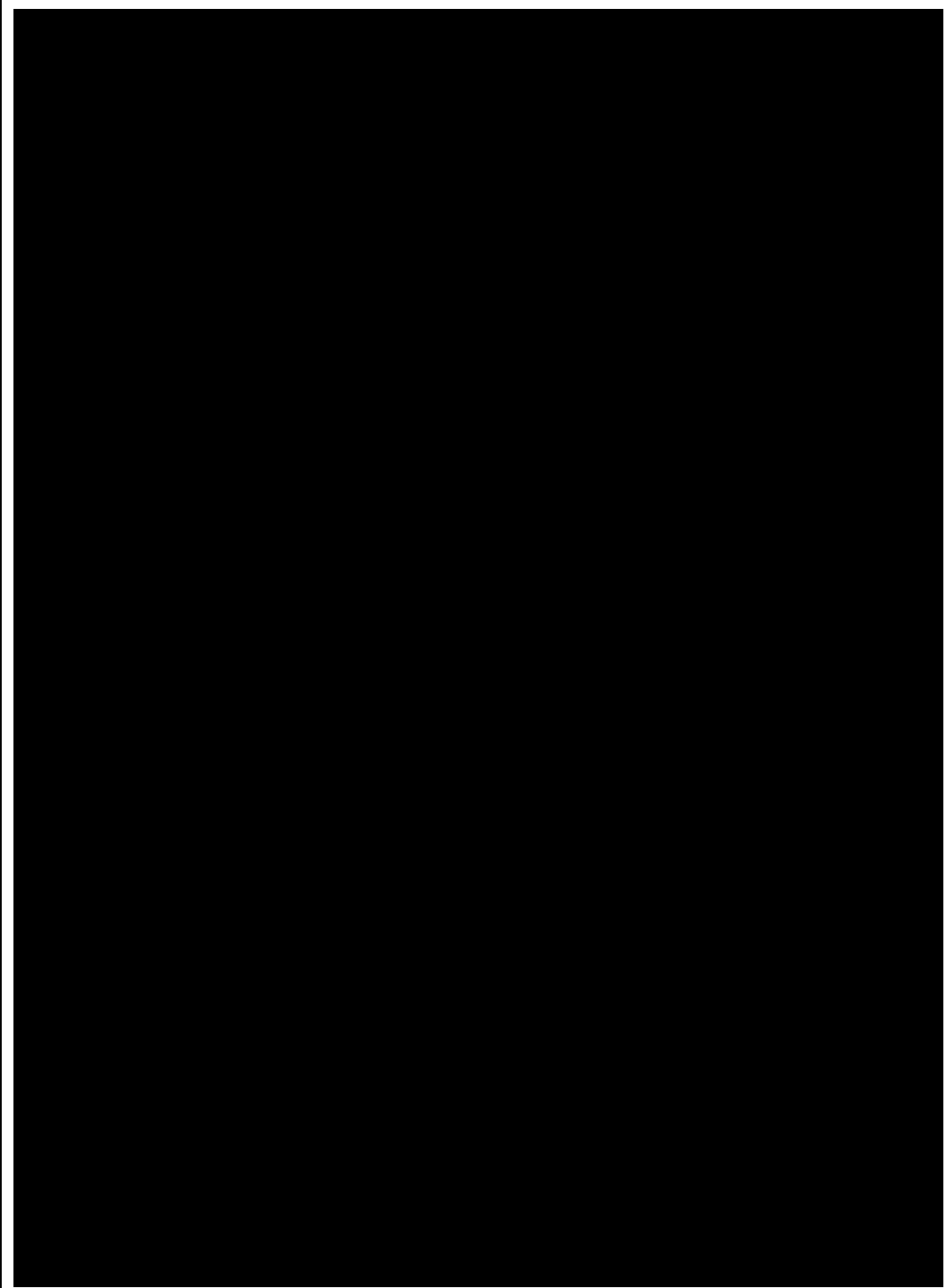
The Social Media Policy was approved on the proposal of Ms Proinsias Ní Ghraíne and seconded by Ms Mary McGinley.

Dr Flynn proposed that training be provided for all those who use official GMIT social media platforms, and this was agreed.

8.0 HR Matters

J Fennell



	
<p>9.0 SU President Report</p> <p>There was no Students Union Report as the Students Union President Mr Colin Kearney had sent his apologies.</p> <p>A request was made from the meeting that the SU Report be submitted in advance of the meeting.</p>	<p>C Kearney</p>
<p>10.0 Any Other Business</p>	
<p>The Chair and President thanked the Board members for their commitment during the year and wished all a happy Christmas.</p>	

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Date: _____

Signed:

Chairperson

Governing Body List of Actions 2021

Action Items Reference Nos are explained as follows:

- The first number of the reference relates to the Date of the Meeting
- The second number of the reference relates to the Agenda Item

Action Item	Action	Action Owner	Target Date	Status
29.08.19 – 10.5 28.11.19 – 7.0	Strategic plans to be developed for: - 1. Marketing - 2. Communications	President	January 2020	Self-Evaluation taking place as part of QA process in 2021
29.08.19 – 10.5 28.11.19 – 7.0 30.01.20 – 9.1	- 1. International Benchmarking exercise on Internationalisation within the Sector Explore appointment of an External Consultant to review International	VP for International	January 2020 March 2020 March 2020	Delayed due to COVID19 Deferred due to COVID19 Decision not to proceed currently Closed – Moved to TU Activity
26.09.19 – 3	Establishment of GIHS Working Group / Review of School/Strategic Plan	Chair & President	Nov/December 2019	Presented to December 2019 meeting Closed
28.01.21 – 10.0	Seek staff nominations for Mayo Campus Subcommittee	Sec/VP Fin Services	March 2021	Seek nominations again Closed, not proceeding TU Imminent
25.02.21 – 9.3	Maintain Conflicts of Interest Register	Sec/VP Fin Services	Ongoing	Ongoing
26.8.21- 4.1	Update on position of COVID Officer	President	September	Closed
26.8.21 – 5.0	Update on Due Diligence by Deloitte	President	September	Closed
28.10.21 – 6.1	Report from Registrar on Exam Results, Progressions and Awards for 2019/20 and 2020/21	Registrar	December	Closed
28.10.21 – 6.1	Update Risk Register for mitigating actions relating to acquisition of additional space	Sec/VP Fin Services	December	Closed
28.10.21 – 6.3.5	Sponsorship Policy – amend for approval	Sec/VP Fin Services	November	Closed
09.12.21 – 3.0	Send letter to Galway City Council regarding educational zoning at	President	January 21	Agenda item CPS and GB January

	Corrib Great Southern site and provide update to CPS and GB			
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