

Minutes of proceedings of the Governing Body Meeting

Date: Thursday, 30th September 2021
Time: 10.00am
Location: Microsoft Teams and Boardroom, Galway Campus

Present: Mr Cormac MacDonncha (Chair)
Dr Orla Flynn (President)
Mr Joe Cunningham
Mr Gareth Roe
Mr Michael Geoghegan
Ms Maureen Walsh
Ms Siobhán Kennedy
Mr Colin Kearney
Ms Mary McGinley
Mr Tom Grady
Mr David Leahy
Dr Eleanor Rainsford
Cllr Michael Maher
Ms Ricarda Bolle
Cllr Colm Keaveney
Cllr Paul Murphy

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 & Innovation
Ms Fiona Faherty, Meeting Secretary
Ms Brid Prendergast and Ms Pauline Collins (Agenda Item 6.0)
Dr Des Foley and Dr Lisa Ryan (Agenda Item 7.0)
Mr David Lee (Agenda Item 11.0)

Apologies: Cllr Terry O'Flaherty
Ms Maria Ruddy
Ms Proinsias Ní Ghraíne

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 26 th August were approved on the proposal of Cllr Moegie Maher and seconded by Mr Colin Kearney.	
3.0 Matters Arising	All
There were no matters arising.	
4.0 President	O Flynn
<p>4.1 President's Report (Including COVID-19 Update)</p> <p>The President's report was circulated for information. Dr Flynn provided a brief presentation to the Board which included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were welcomed back on Campus, first years from 27th September and all others on 30th September. • Programmatic Review which takes place this year will focus on three main themes of Assessment, Sustainability and Employability. • Higher Education 4.0 Project (€12m). The President highlighted the two main aspects of this project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting people in the workplace through recognition of prior learning and development of career pathways. 2. Building lean internal systems to respond rapidly to those needs • Two New MSc Programmes under DASBE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Circular Economy 2. Building Regulation. • The President congratulated Dr Des Foley and Dr Eugene McCarthy and Team on the recognition by CORU of the BSc in Medical Science as well as the successful audit of the same programme by the Institute of Biomedical Science • GMIT welcomed the French Ambassador to Ireland in September. The Galway International Hotel School will host the FICAHT conference in April 2022. <p>Research and Innovation:</p> <p>Dr Rick Officer, VP for Research and Innovation provided a brief update on research activities to the meeting. He noted the significant increase on grant approvals and acknowledged the large breadth of research activity across the Institute. This was noted as a welcome news story.</p> <p>COVID-19 Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HSE have provided a free box of masks for each student and staff member. The President will write to the HSE to thank them for this gesture • Workplace canteens still require 2m distancing • All students are back onsite for some activities • Dual pressure of increasing the onsite activities while supporting those students who cannot find accommodation • Purchase of microphones to aid staff lecturing with masks and purchase of CO2 monitors which are to be deployed in prioritised areas • The monitoring of congregation areas will continue with a marquee and access to external courtyards being essential 	

4.2 Media Coverage Report

The Media Coverage Report, which was tabled for information was also uploaded to SharePoint and was taken as read.

4.3 Honorary Fellowships – GB Subcommittee

The President updated the Board on the nominations received for the Honorary Fellowships Award. All nominees are male.

Cllr Colm Keaveney, Chair of the EDI Subcommittee, added that the EDI Subcommittee expressed their concerns on the gender breakdown of the nominees, given GMIT's commitment to the Athena Swan principles. He expressed the view of the EDI Subcommittee that the closing date for nominations should be extended until the end of October to enable more diverse nominations to be sought.

Dr Flynn noted that the Institute is proposing to celebrate the 2020 Honorary Fellowship recipients at the 2021 Graduation Ceremonies and that it should be possible to celebrate the 2021 Honorary Fellowship recipients at the Golden Jubilee celebrations which are planned to take place in September 2022.

It was agreed to extend the closing date of Honorary Fellowships 2021 until the end of October, on the proposal of Cllr Colm Keaveney and seconded by Mr Michael Geoghegan.

4.4 Meeting with HEA on Interim Review of Mayo Campus Working Group Report

A meeting was sought by the HEA with GMIT following the completion of the Mazars' interim review of the Mayo Campus Working Group Report. GMIT proposed a revised context for some of the actions, considering the anticipated TU designation. Restructuring on the Mayo campus is also a factor, as we are trying to instil a "whole of institute" approach to a range of activities, rather than a campus-specific approach.

Another factor is the digital upskilling brought about through COVID-19 disruption. GMIT will seek an additional year of ring-fenced funding for the Mayo campus beyond the original end date. The Institute will also seek to instigate a formal dialogue with the HEA on the funding model relating to regional/multiple/smaller campuses. It is government policy to support regional development, but a funding model must be found that will support the regional provision of higher education.

The Governing Body Mayo Campus Subcommittee will consider the report and the engagement with the HEA in detail at its next meeting on October 12th, an update will be provided to the Governing Body at the October meeting.

4.5 Membership of THEA

Approval was sought from the Governing Body for the continuation of the Institute's membership of THEA for an additional two years.

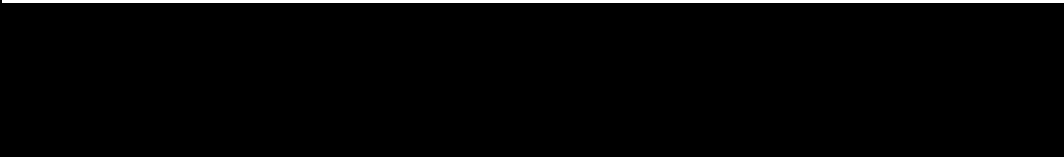
Mr Gareth Roe noted that the Institute should use the two years as an opportunity to review the effectiveness and associated costs.

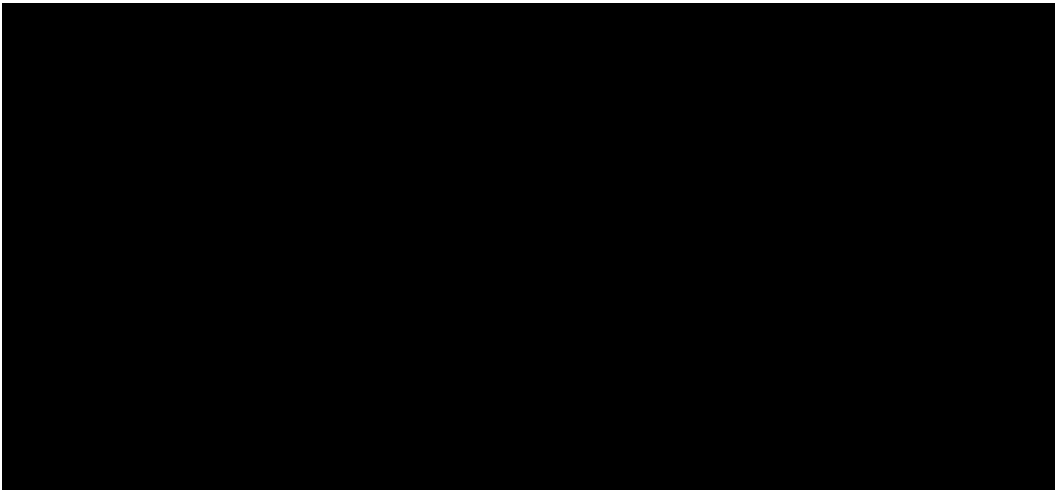
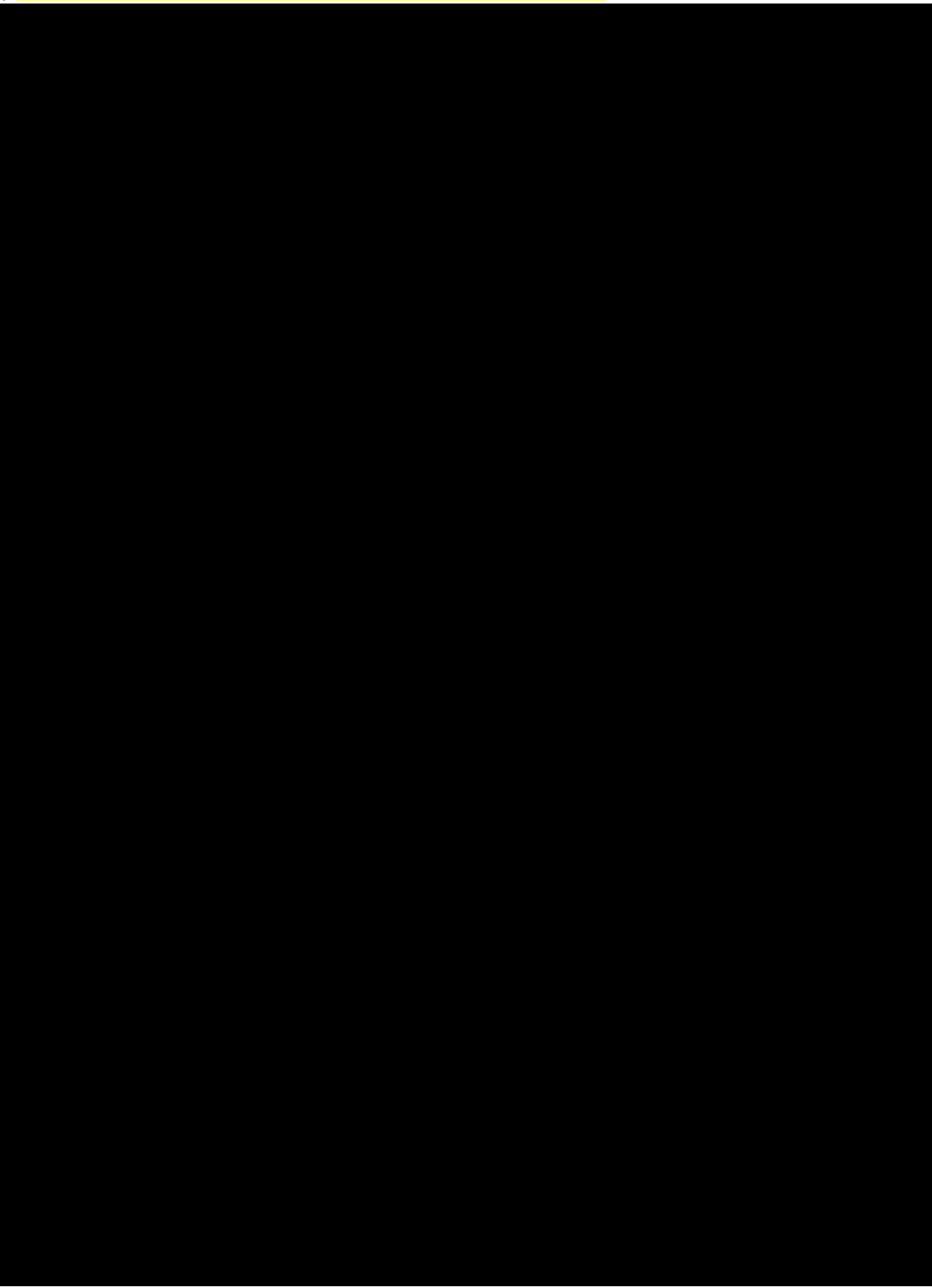
Dr Rick Officer added that THEA have been extremely beneficial for Research and Innovation activities and he recommends the proposal to extend the membership.

The request was approved on the proposal of Mr Gareth Roe and seconded by Cllr Moegie Maher, with the caveat to review the effectiveness and costs.

5.0 CUA / TU	O Flynn
<p>The President provided an update on the TU status.</p> <p>Dr Flynn advised of a new folder now available for Governing Body members on SharePoint which will contain papers for all CUA meetings and important documents. This will be updated regularly.</p> <p>A meeting of the CUA Joint Governing Body Subcommittee took place on 21st September. The Chair noted two key issues emerging from this meeting: 1. Naming of the New University and 2. Organisational Structures.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the naming of the new University. The Governing Body agreed, unanimously, that only one name should be put forward for consideration on behalf of GMIT, Atlantic Technological University of Ireland (ATU of Irl).</p> <p>The Governing Body expressed the view that the naming of the new University should reflect the views of all stakeholders.</p> <p>Surveys conducted across the CUA also indicate that Atlantic Technological University of Ireland is the preferred name of both staff and students.</p> <p>The issue of Organisational Structures was reviewed by the International panel, in the form of a paper that was provided by the Presidents during the panel visit. Relevant documentation has been made available to members of the Governing Body, and it was suggested by the Joint CUA GB Sub-Committee that the CUA Joint Executive should further develop the structures.</p> <p>Dr Flynn advised that the joint Executive Boards are taking this suggestion on board and reviewing recommendations made by the CUA Joint Subcommittee.</p>	
6.0 Finance	J Fennell
<p>6.1 Approval of Financial Statements for Year Ended 31st Aug 2020</p> <p>Ms Pauline Collins and Ms Brid Prendergast, from the Finance Team joined the meeting and presented the Financial Statements for Year Ended 31st August 2020, for approval.</p> <p>Mr Fennell noted that the Accounts are recommended to the Governing Body for approval by the Finance Subcommittee and the Audit & Risk Committee.</p> <p>The Financial Statements for Year Ended 31st August 2020 were approved on the proposal of Mr Joe Cunningham and seconded by Cllr Moegie Maher.</p> <p>Mr Fennell thanked Ms Pauline Collins, Ms Brid Prendergast, Ms Edel O'Connor, and the Finance Team.</p> <p>6.2 Report from Finance Subcommittee Meeting (27th Sept 21)</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance Subcommittee Cllr Moegie Maher provided an update on the recent Finance Subcommittee meeting.</p> <p>He noted the concern of the Finance Subcommittee regarding the Canteen. Significant losses circa. €750K are being incurred by the canteen due to COVID-19 pandemic and losses are not recoverable from the COVID-19 state grant. This issue needs to be addressed and the canteen seating plan requires a review.</p> <p>Other areas of concern by the Finance Subcommittee are the Galway International Hotel School (GIHS) and International. The restructuring of the GIHS cost base is continuing and expected completion is September 2022. Academic planning is still</p>	

<p>ongoing and will be completed when new programmes are rolled out in September 2022.</p> <p>The International Strategic Plan is now an CUA Action Item.</p> <p>The Finance Subcommittee Action Plan will continue to be monitored and updated.</p> <p>6.3 Finance Outturn to 31st August 2021</p> <p>Mr Fennell provided an update on the Finance Outturn to 31st August 2021.</p> <p>The Chair requested an update on student numbers for the October meeting.</p> <p>6.4 Unit Cost Report 2019/20</p> <p>Mr Fennell presented the Unit Cost Report for 2019/20.</p> <p>Mr Gareth Roe suggested the Institute review the short supply of Electronic Engineering Graduates and to review our programme offerings based on job opportunities. The Chair added that Thermo King are currently seeking similar qualified graduates.</p> <p>A review of the RGAM continues to be a topical issue.</p>	
<p>7.0 Connacht Rugby MOU</p>	<p>J Fennell</p>
<p>Mr Fennell noted that the C&AG had advised that the agreement between GMIT and Connacht Rugby required the approval of the Governing Body. Ms Mary McGinley, Chair of ARC noted that it was important that the Governing Body consider this MoU and Agreement.</p> <p>Dr Des Foley and Dr Lisa Ryan joined the meeting and presented on the Connacht Rugby MOU and Agreement.</p> <p>The presentation was positively welcomed by the Board. Ms Siobhan Kennedy asked if there was an opportunity to assist women in sport at GMIT. Dr Lisa Ryan noted that an event was planned prior to COVID-19, 'Women of the West'. Connacht Rugby have been very progressive on women in rugby, with their ethos focusing on sports for everyone.</p> <p>Cllr Moegie Maher congratulated the success of the recent partnership with Connacht Rugby and complimented Dr Foley & Dr Ryan on their presentation & delivery of the strategy. He welcomed the continuation of the partnership with Connacht Rugby and proposed the funding be extended for a further three years.</p> <p>Mr Joe Cunningham also congratulated the team on the success of the programme to date and noted the positive energy and commitment by Dr Foley and Dr Ryan. He noted his support for the continuation of this agreement going forward.</p> <p>Mr David Leahy also acknowledged the success and the positivity around this agreement and initiative with Connacht Rugby. He noted the need for transparency around potential ticket and sponsorship queries. He added a policy should be drawn up to deal with this issue.</p> <p>Dr Rick Officer noted the impact this agreement has on the Research Department also. He added that discussions have already taken place on potential enterprise development and other collaborations and sports opportunities. He acknowledged the significant level of opportunities for our graduates.</p> <p>The Chair noted the positive feedback of the Governing Body members on this collaboration and noted the significance of the achievements to date.</p>	

<p>The Connacht Rugby MOU and Sponsorship Agreement were approved on the proposal of Cllr Moegie Maher and seconded by Mr Joe Cunningham, noting the requirement for transparency around arrangements for any available tickets and/or hospitality, if any.</p>	
<p>8.0 Registrar / Academic Council</p>	<p>M Hannon</p>
<p>8.1 Establishment of LTA (Learning Teaching Assessment Subcommittee)</p> <p>At Academic Council meeting on 16th June 2021, two polls took place in relation to the establishment of a Learning Teaching Assessment Subcommittee. Three nominations were received rather than the required two nominations therefore Governing Body approval is sought for three.</p> <p>Ordinary Members of the LTA: Trish O’Connell, Marie Finnegan, and Mary Rogers.</p> <p>This was approved on the proposal of Ms Maureen Walsh and seconded by Ms Mary McGinley.</p> <p>The Chair asked Dr Hannon if an update could be provided on student numbers at the October meeting. Dr Hannon agreed and noted the shortage of space on campus is having a negative knock-on effect on student numbers. However, current student numbers have increased on last year’s numbers. A more detailed report will be provided to the next meeting.</p>	
<p>9.0 Students Union President Report</p>	<p>C Kearney</p>
<p>Mr Colin Kearney, SU President, asked if there was anything that the Governing Body can do to assist in alleviating the accommodation crisis in Galway for our students.</p> <p>Cllr Moegie Maher informed the meeting that he is currently engaging with local bus services with a view to setting up a potential bus service direct to GMIT from Loughrea and the surrounding area. This would assist with alleviating accommodation requirements for students from the area and allow other students find accommodation in Loughrea. He is working with the Students Union on this initiative at present.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Cllr Maher for his work on this initiative and welcomed other similar suggestions from the Board. He noted the lack of accommodation in Galway was impacting on those in the workplace also.</p> <p>The SU President added that he had recent interviews with RTE Radio 1 and the Taoiseach about the accommodation crisis in Galway.</p> <p>Ms Siobhan Kennedy added that she could assist in advertising in the Connemara area to potential Letterfrack Students. She voiced her concern about the need for the Institute to be more vocal on a national level on this topic.</p> <p>Dr Flynn said she will get in touch with Mr Kevin Heanue in Connemara West regarding advertising for student accommodation in the Letterfrack area. The President also added that she will raise this issue at the Galway Chamber and show our support for the Students and Students Union in this crisis.</p>	
<p>10.0 HR Matters</p>	<p>J Fennell</p>
	



11.0 Capital Projects	O Flynn
<p>11.1 Report from Capital Projects Subcommittee Meeting (23rd Sept 21)</p> <p>Mr David Lee joined the meeting and presented an update on Capital Projects.</p> <p>Mr Fennell sought approval from the Governing Body, on the recommendation of the Capital Projects Subcommittee, for contracts to be signed for the acquisition of Crowley Park with conditions precedent that:</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Purchase will not be concluded until both conditions precedent have been met. This will allow GMIT to forward the necessary documentation to the HEA to get all the appropriate approvals including that of the Minister, while Galwegians RFC are addressing the conditions precedent. This will facilitate a closing in this calendar year.</p> <p>This was approved on the proposal of Cllr Paul Murphy and seconded by Cllr Moegie Maher.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Lee and acknowledged the work he and his team has made regarding progressing the projects outlined in his report.</p>	
12. Report from EDI Subcommittee Meeting (20th Sept 21)	O Flynn
<p>Dr Flynn provided an update from the EDI Subcommittee to the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Framework on Sexual Misconduct was considered by the Subcommittee - Gender Identity Policy was reviewed - Age Friendly week is taking place - Athena Swan Award will formally be presented in October 	
13.0 Corporate Governance	J Fennell
<p>13.1 Safety Statement</p> <p>The Safety Statement was revised following queries raised at the August meeting. Mr Fennell provided an update on the queries following consultation with the Health and Safety Officer.</p> <p>Dr Eleanor Rainsford requested further clarification and it was agreed that Dr Rainsford would document her specific queries to Mr Fennell, who would consult with the Health & Safety Officer. Should there be amendments to the Safety Statement following this consultation it will be brought back to the October meeting for approval.</p> <p>13.2 Email Retention Policy</p> <p>The Email Retention Policy was approved on the proposal of Cllr Moegie Maher and seconded by Mr Tom Grady.</p>	
14.0 Any Other Business	All
<p>Dr Rick Officer proposed to hold the October Governing Body meeting in the iHUB. This was welcomed by the Board with the President and Chair to review.</p>	

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Chairperson

Date: _____

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 at this time
26.09.19 – 3	Establishment of GHS Working Group / Review of School/Strategic Plan	Chair & President	Nov/December 2019	Presented to December 2019 meeting
28.01.21 – 10.0	Seek staff nominations for Mayo Campus Subcommittee	Sec/VP Fin Services	March 2021	Seek nominations again
25.02.21 – 9.3	Maintain Conflicts of Interest Register	Sec/VP Fin Services	Ongoing	Ongoing
26.8.21- 4.1	COVID Officer	President	September	Provide Update at September Mtg
26.8.21 – 5.0	Update on Due Diligence by Deloitte	President	September	Provide Update at September Mtg