

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY

MONDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2024 @ 10:00

VIA MS TEAMS & T.K. WHITAKER BOARDROOM

Present in the Boardroom

Prof. Thomas (Tom) Collins	Chair
Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan	President
Ms. Ann Marie Lacey	
Ms. Anna Shakespeare	
Ms. Antoinette Rourke	
Mr. Bill Sweeney	
Ms. Ciara O'Shea	
Dr. Fatima Hamroush	
Mr. Fergus Grimes	
Dr. Fiona Lawless	
Dr. Jennifer Brennan	
Mr. Patrick W. Malone	
Prof. Paul Moynagh	
Mr. Richard Hanlon	
Mr. Tommy Fanning	
Ms. Tobi Bewajii	

Online via MS Teams:

Mr. Patrick McCormick	left the meeting at 10:20
Ms. Holly Lambe-Sally	left the meeting at 10:06 due to IT issues

In attendance for all agenda items:

Mr Hugh Nolan	Secretary to the Governing Body and Vice President of Finance, Resources & Diversity ("Secretary" / "VP FRD")
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In attendance for Agenda Item 5:

Dr. Edel Healy	Executive Project Lead
Dr. Sheila Flanagan	Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar (VP AAR)
Ms. Irene McCausland:	Vice President of Strategic Planning, Communications and Development (VP SCD)

The meeting commenced at 10:04.

At the outset of the meeting the Chair welcomed new members of the Governing Body; Dr. Fatima Hamroush, Prof. Paul Moynagh and Mr. Tommy Fanning. A round of introductions followed.

Declarations of Interest

Mr. Paddy Malone declared an interest for agenda point 8:

G.317.1 Minutes**Draft Minutes of Meeting G316 held on 24 September 2024**

The Draft Minutes of Meeting G316 dated 24 September 2024 were approved.

Proposed by: Mr. Bill Sweeney

Seconded by: Mr. Richard Hanlon

G.317.2 Matters Arising**Student Numbers & Recruitment Strategies – presentation to Governing Body on 24 September 2024.**

The Chair drew member's attention to the presentation included in meeting packs from the meeting on 24 September 2024. The Chair referenced a plateauing of student numbers in DkIT since the mid-2000s. The Chair also discussed wider sectoral issues such as pressures on capital infrastructure, specifically areas for students to socialise and experience third level.

Ms. Antoinette Rourke referenced the all-day Governing Body schedule for 20 March 2025 and how this may potentially clash with Programmatic Review for the School of Engineering. This may result in a number of staff members being unable to attend.

G.317.3 Correspondence**Correspondence from the Minister for Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science**

The Secretary referred to correspondence from the Minister noting his approval of the updated Procedures for the Appointment of a Governing Body for DkIT, as approved by the Governing Body on 24 September 2024.

The Governing Body noted this correspondence.

G.317.4 President's Report**President's Report & Personnel Report**

The President briefed members on the President's Report, drawing attention to the most pertinent aspects.

The Chair requested the President to consider an overview of the PeacePlus submissions at a future meeting given the immensity of the success of the Institute under this funding stream.

Recent progression and appointments were noted by Governing Body.

Dr. Edel Healy, Executive Project Lead; Dr. Sheila Flanagan, Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar (VP AAR) and Ms. Irene McCausland, Vice President of Strategic Planning, Communications and Development (VP SCD) joined the meeting at 10:28 and left at 11:42.

G317.5 Strategy around DkIT and Maynooth University

The President provided a recap on discussions at Governing Body since February 2023. The President introduced his colleagues Dr. Edel Healy, Dr. Sheila Flanagan and Ms. Irene McCausland, advising Governing Body this subset of the Executive Board are the members of a High-Level Steering Committee for this project.

Dr. Healy and Dr. Flanagan provided Governing Body with a presentation on DkIT's positioning in the higher education landscape; progress to date and the next steps in line with the recently signed Letter of Intent between DkIT and MU and the deliverables in WP 1 of the TSAF project.

The Chair thanked the Executive for their presentation finding it hugely informative. The approach to Level 10 awards through a Regional Graduate Academy is a significant milestone and of interest. The Chair referenced the different national models of engagement between Universities and College and commented that the model between DkIT and MU would be unique. Some examples to consider outside of Ireland included the Highlands and Islands University and the New York State University.

Dr. Jennifer Brennan agreed with the Chair and queried consultation to date with relevant government departments and agencies. The President responded to queries raised by Dr. Brennan speaking to the recent investment by the HEA under the TSAF funding stream.

Ms. Anna Shakespeare queried any potential legislative frameworks that may need to be considered. Dr. Healy spoke to the need to critically consider all possible options and investing time now as part of the scoping process will help identify relevant legislation, frameworks etc.

Both Mr. Malone and Ms. Rourke welcomed the presentation today acknowledging the significant progress has been made and this has the potential to be an innovative engagement.

Mr. Richard Halon spoke of DkIT's rich contribution to the development of the region and its contribution to developing Regional Enterprise Plans. Dr. Flanagan responded stressing the Institute's research is very much applied and embedded in industry.

Ms. McCausland, acknowledging Mr. Hanlon's feedback, spoke to recent conversations with Maynooth colleagues regarding clusters and the need to be one integrated region. Dr. Healy spoke to a body of work yet to be undertaken across the region on socio economic activity, skills profiles and how any collaborations would be cognisant of same.

The President spoke to the regional and student needs first and foremost and the need for these to be protected at all costs. Mr. Bill Sweeney welcomed the President's comments, concurring with the long and rich history DkIT has contributed to the wider region, not just Louth.

Prof. Paul Moynagh spoke to mutual benefit and in his opinion the political appetite for a homogeneous level sector. Prof. Moynagh also spoke to the need to fund and build partnerships to ensure the value of this engagement can be understood by all stakeholders.

Dr. Lawless queried some timelines which Dr. Healy responded.

To summarise conversations Dr. Healy spoke of the need to ensure stakeholder buy in for the "why" and the importance of communication throughout this process.

Dr. Jennifer Brennan wished to thank the VP AAR and her team for the work to-date on the Regional Graduate Academy. Numerous members concurred.

The Governing Body noted this update.

G.317.6 Audit, Risk & Compliance ("ARC") Committee
Minutes of Meeting ARC003 dated 16 July 2024

The Draft Minutes of Meeting dated 16 July 2024 were noted.

The Audit Risk & Compliance (ARC) Chair provided a verbal update of the main points arising from a meeting on 22 October 2024.

Institute Risk Register

The Institute Risk Register was last reviewed by Governing Body on 30 April 2024. In line with the schedule of review laid down in the Risk Management Policy an updated Risk Register was reviewed, and recommended for approval by Governing Body, by the ARC Committee on 22 October 2024.

The Governing Body approved the Risk Register in line with the recommendation from the ARC Committee.

Proposed by: Ms. Jennifer Brennan
Seconded by: Ms. AnnMarie Lacey

Statement on System of Internal Controls for the year ended 31 August 2024

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated in the Institute. The Governing Body delegate the review of the above Statement of Internal Control to the ARC Committee.

The Governing Body approved the Statement of Internal Control, in line with the recommendation from the ARC Committee, and include this statement within the financial statements.

Proposed by: Mr. Fergus Grimes
Seconded by: Mr. Paddy Malone

HEA Feedback on Annual Governance Statement & Response submitted by the Institute

The Institute receives feedback annually on the Annual Governance Statement from the HEA. Feedback received and the response to any queries raised was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Governing Body noted the document.

External Review of the Governing Body – Request for Tenders & Governance Ireland Submission

The Governing Body are required, in line with the Code of Practice for State Bodies (2016), to carry out a review of its own performance and that of its subcommittees every three years. The last review was carried out in 2020 for the period 2018 – 2020.

The Secretary carried out a tender / expression of interest for this engagement on behalf of the Governing Body. The successful party, based on an evaluation matrix, is Governance Ireland. The ARC Committee formally appointed Governance Ireland at their meeting on 22 October 2024.

The Governing Body noted this appointment and the scope of the review.

Annual Report for the years ended 31 August 2022 & 31 August 2023.

The Institute is required, in line with the State Code, to publish an annual report within one month of the completion of the audit of the C&AG.

The Annual Report is a summary of activities that took place throughout the year in question and reflects the various achievements of schools, functions, departments etc. It also details the various programmes that have been validated, graduation statistics, significant events etc.

The Governing Body approved the Annual Reports for the years ended 31 August 2022 and 31 August 2023 in line with the recommendation from the ARC Committee.

Proposed by: Ms. Antoinette Rourke
Seconded by: Ms. Ciara O'Shea

G.317.7 Finance Committee

Minutes of Meeting F003 held on 11 July 2024

The Draft Minutes of Meeting dated 11 July 2024 were noted

The Finance Chair provided a verbal update of the main points arising from a meeting on 19 November 2024.

Draft Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

In line with Section 16 of the Institute of Technology Acts draft financial statements should be furnished to the Comptroller and Auditor General by 30 November 2024 (within 3 months of year-end). The VP FRD presented the enclosed draft financial statements to the Finance Committee on 19 November.

The Governing Body approved the Draft Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2024, in line with the recommendation from the Finance Committee.

Proposed by: Mr. Bill Sweeney
Seconded by: Ms. Jennifer Brennan

Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27

A fundamental principle within the Institute's Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028 is to ensure the longer-term financial sustainability of the Institute. The purpose of the enclosed Financial Strategy (as a sub strategy of the wider Institute strategy) is to map out the key financial indicators (nine in total) to ensure DkIT remains in a financially sustainable position.

This strategy has been approved by the Executive Board and will be monitored in line with financial forecasts and financial reporting, namely the Programmes & Budgets process and the approval of financial statements. Progress will be reported to the Finance Committee on a periodic basis.

The Governing Body approved the Financial Strategy, in line with the recommendation from the Finance Committee.

Proposed by: Ms. Anna Shakespeare
Seconded by: Mr. Richard Hanlon

Fixed Asset Policy

The objective of this policy is to ensure DkIT has in place a systematic, transparent and accountable method of monitoring and controlling the acquisition, management, transfer and disposal of the Institute's fixed assets. The policy has been drafted to provide readers with an understanding of the controls in place around fixed assets and also the roles and responsibilities of all staff when managing fixed assets.

The Governing Body approved the Fixed Asset Policy, in line with the recommendation from the Finance Committee.

Proposed by: Dr. Fiona Lawless
Seconded by: Ms. Jennifer Brennan

Bank Accounts

In line with the Institute's Treasury Policy, as approved by the Governing Body in October 2023, any change to a bank account requires the approval of the Governing Body.

The Governing Body approved the closure of two bank accounts along with the reinvestment of €5 million, (as detailed in the enclosed memos) in line with the recommendation from the Finance Committee.

Proposed by: Ms. Anna Shakespeare

Seconded by: Ms. Ciara O'Shea

G.317.8 Nominations Committee

Mr. Paddy Malone left the meeting at 12:26 and re-joined at 12:30.

Minutes of Meeting N001 held on 23 August 2024

The Draft Minutes of Meeting dated 23 August 2024 were noted.

The Nominations Chair provided a verbal overview of the main points arising from a meeting on 25 October 2024.

Re-appoint of Mr. Patrick W. Malone as an External Member of Governing Body

In line with the enclosed memo the Nominations Committee are recommending Mr. Patrick W. Malone is appointed as an External Governing Body Member for a term of three years ending on 30 November 2027.

The Governing Body approved the reappointment of Mr. Malone in line with the recommendation from the Nominations Committee.

Proposed by: Mr. Richard Hanlon

Seconded by: Ms. AnnMarie Lacey

The Governing Body approved the reappointment Mr. Malone as Finance Committee Chair.

Proposed by: Mr. Bill Sweeney

Seconded by: Mr. Richard Hanlon

G.317.9 Academic Council

Academic Council Minutes 194 dated 20 June 2024

The Minutes of Meeting Ref 194 dated 20 June 2024 were noted.

G.317.10 EDI Committee

The EDI Chair provided a verbal overview of the main points arising from meetings on 8 October 2024 and 21 November 2024.

G.317.11 Apprenticeship Expansion Programme

The enclosed are an expression of interest and a preliminary business case for apprentice expansion (along with funding requests from the HEA) as follows:

HEA Expression of Interest Consortia Led Apprenticeships Equipment

Through this application, DkIT is applying to the HEA for an equipment grant to facilitate the delivery of the Manufacturing Engineering Apprenticeship programme, which is an established consortium led apprenticeship, led by ATU. Equipment costs of €590,277 is forecasted.

Proposed by: Ms. Antoinette Rourke
Seconded by: Mr. Fergus Grimes

Preliminary Business Case Template – Craft Apprenticeship Expansion

This proposal represents the first phase in the expansion of the Institute’s range of craft apprenticeships with the introduction of refrigeration/AC to the portfolio. The recent expansion of workshops which opened in October 2023, coupled with the space coming on stream as part of the TSSPF project will provide the space and infrastructure for this apprenticeship. This proposal therefore seeks financial support for the required equipment and furniture/fixtures only. Equipment costs of €429,850 is forecasted.

The Governing Body approved both expressions of interest / business cases for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Proposed by: Ms. Antoinette Rourke
Seconded by: Mr. Fergus Grimes

G.317.12 Seal

The President advised members of the use of the Institute’s seal since the date of the last Governing Body meeting.

AIB Settlement Agreement Dundalk Institute of Technology and AIB Plc., Gartlan Furey Solicitors 20 Fitzwilliam Square Dublin 2 EG/AIB100/0513 (re Former AIB premises at DkIT) Seal assigned on the 4 November 2024.

The Governing Body noted the use of the Institute’s seal on the above.

G.317.13 AOB

Recent bereavements noted.

The meeting concluded at 12:48.

Prof. Thomas Collins
Chair of the Governing Body