



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

**Minutes of the 15th ATU Governing Body Meeting
Held on Monday 15th May 2023 at 10.30am
MS Teams**

Present:

Maura McNally (Chairperson) – in person	MMcN
Dr Orla Flynn (President) – in person	OF
Ursula Cox – in person	UC
Dara Foynes – in person	DF
Michael Gilvarry – in person	MGil
Michael Geoghegan – online	MG
Edward Grant- online	EG
Séamus Hughes - online	SH
Colin Kearney- in person	CK
Dr Mary Kelly- online	MK
Patricia King – online	PK
Dáire Martin - online	DM
Dr Brian McCann - online	BMcC
Mary McGinley - online	MMcG
Anne McHugh - online	AMcH
Felim McNeela - online	FMcN
Oonagh Monahan – in person	OM
Dr Martin Robinson – in person	MR
Gareth Roe – in person	GR

In attendance:

Jim Fennell (Secretary) – in person	JF
Frances Wilson (Recording Secretary) – in person	FW
Dr Des Foley (item 4.2) in person	DFol
Dr Séan Duffy (item 4.3 and item 7.1) in person	SD
Dr Billy Bennett (item 5) in person	BB
██████████ KPMG (online 4.3)- online	██████████
Barry Breslin (item 5.4) – in person	BBre
Sarah Mohan (item 5.4) – in person	SM

Apologies:

Prof. Rachel Ashworth	RA
David Minton	DMT

GB 015.01 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

There were no conflicts of interest declared at this meeting.

GB 015.02 Minutes of the meeting of 27th March and 8th May 2023

The minutes of the meeting of the 27th March 2023 were reviewed by the members.

Decision: The minutes of the 27th March 2023 were approved on the proposal of OM and seconded by DF.

The minutes of the meeting of the 8th May 2023 were reviewed by the members.

Decision: The minutes of the 8th May 2023 were approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by UC.

GB 0015.03 Matters arising and Correspondence and Log of Actions

OF advised of an exploratory discussion with Galway City Council regarding a potential joint development with Galway City Council to include a swimming pool and the student building at the Galway campus; this conversation could continue in parallel with a re-submission for the existing planning permission. At the 28th March UPT it was agreed to resubmit the planning application for the student building per the current plans, without prejudice to the possibility of exploring the other option. It was agreed that an update from the Galway-Mayo Building and Estates Manager on the student building project be requested for the next meeting. OF advised that it had been the intention to provide an update on all campus plans at this meeting; however, the Buildings and Estates Managers were involved in two funding calls namely, Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme (EEDP) and Apprenticeship. OF advised that the current teams were stretched in terms of capacity and this work had to be prioritised.

Action: A presentation on the Campus Plans would be provided at the June Governing Body Meeting.

OF advised that it was her understanding that engagement on the Strategic Plan development would be with the full Governing Body, to ensure a full oversight at this stage of the process. The Strategic Development Subcommittee would exercise oversight and review progress on the implementation of the Strategic Plan once approved by the Governing Body.

The Chairperson also welcomed the list of actions but asked that a staffing family tree / organisation chart be added to action list so key staff were identifiable at each campus.

Action: A family tree of senior staff at each campus be prepared.

Action: The list of actions to be updated for each meeting and circulated to the members.

GB 0015.03 Action 1: Philanthropic donation

The Chairperson requested that legal advice be sought on establishing a Foundation for receipt of philanthropic donations from the US and elsewhere. The Chairperson noted that while the Ireland Funds were proposed as a mechanism, we would also need to establish what the process would be

to ensure that philanthropic donations received for ATU be ringfenced for ATU purposes. OF also noted that an Alumni Officer had recently been appointed by ATU however this was the first appointment and it would take time to build resources in this area. The Chairperson highlighted that she was attending another event at the end of June, and it was essential that this mechanism was established as a matter of urgency.

Action: Legal advice to be sought within 10 days on the establishment of a Foundation for the receipt of philanthropic donations and on the possibility of ATU receiving philanthropic donations via the Ireland Funds.

GB 0015.04 President's Report

GB 0015.04.1 President's Update

OF provided an overview to the Governing Body of activities since the last Governing Body, highlighting the first ATU Spring Graduation which took place on 4th May in the ATU Galway City campus; it is planned that this location will rotate each year.

GB 0015.04.1 Tertiary Education

OF outlined that work was ongoing with ETBs on the four pilot Tertiary Education programmes. This is a pilot scheme which would allow students to undertake their first year of study in the further education sector to automatically continue with their course in ATU. OF advised that while there are currently many such linkages between further and higher education programmes, typically only a small number of students who complete a programme in further education can progress on to a course within ATU. There are issues around the availability of placements available for nursing students. In response to a query raised about these programmes including the development, entry requirements, assurance and implementation, OF advised that all programmes including entry requirements must be validated through procedures validated by Academic Council. AMcH advised that from the point of view of the ETBs there was a balancing act around the timing of developing these programmes in order to obtain funding and ensuring wrap around supports are available for students entering via this route rather than the traditional CAO route. AMcH advised that other TUs and ETBs are experiencing similar issues and there were other pilots underway, however these were more limited whereas the geographic spread of ATU and the associated ETBs was more extensive.

GB 0015.04.1 Submissions bids

OF outlined that the submission bids for programmes in veterinary medicine and pharmacy were still live with no outcome yet from the Minister.

GB 0015.04.2 Strategic Plan

Dr Des Foley (DFol) joined the meeting and outlined the progress made to date, including the 17 Rooms (Sustainable Development Goals), staff consultations across nine campuses, student consultations (still ongoing) and meetings of the Strategic Development Council.

The presentation covered the key elements of:

- Our Purpose
- Our Vision
- Our Strategic Pillars
- Our Values

The Governing Body members thanked DFol and OF on the work done to date and made a number of suggestions which were noted and would be reflected in the ongoing consultations.

The discussions concluded and DF left the meeting at 12.15pm.

Decision: A further draft of the strategic plan to be considered by the Governing Body following the next phase of work.

MK left the meeting at 12.15pm.

GB 0015.04.3 Organisational design process

██████████ KPMG (██████████) and Dr Sean Duffy joined the meeting. ██████████ shared a summary of the progress to date and the plan for the organisation design process being carried out. He advised that consultations had taken place with Heads of Department and the Executive and approximately 56 sessions have taken place to date. He advised also that benchmarking against similar institutions is underway, including those with a multi campus dimension as well as organisations who had previously undergone integration. ██████████ then advised that the next stage was to develop the strategic design principles for “Executive Structure Design, Academic Structure Design and Support Services Structure Design” to ensure the organisational structure was robust going forward.

The Chairperson asked for a more detailed overview of the process as the use of terminology around the three models required some further explanation.

SD explained that the three models were executive, academic and support services. SD advised that the design principles could, for example, provide for dispersed leadership across the three main campuses and not be centralised in one campus, but with one unified executive team. In term of academic structures SD advised that work would be carried out on the development of the various faculties/ schools. In response to a query on whether research had been considered., SD advised research was provided for within the executive structure as a central function of the University.

The Governing Body thanked ██████████ and SD for their presentation and asked if an update could be put into the Governing Body calendar later in the process.

Action: An update on the organisational design process to be provided to the Governing Body at a later meeting.

GB 0015.04.4 UPT Minutes

The UPT Minutes for meetings held on 28/2/2023, 7/3/2023, 13/3/2023 and 27/3/2023 were circulated under agenda item 4.4. It was agreed that a glossary of terms should be included in the UPT minutes in future.

Action: A glossary of terms to be included in UPT minutes.

GB 0015.05 Registrar's Report

GB 0015.05.1 Academic Council minutes

BB joined the meeting and provided a report from the second meeting of Academic Council which was held on 17th February 2023. Academic Council approved the *Developing and Validating New Taught Programmes Policy* and the *Marks and Standards Policy* (which will be effective for the academic year 2023/24).

GB 0015.05.2 2021/2022 Academic Year Pass Rates and Retention

BB advised that the 2021/2022 Academic Year Pass rates and Retentions was the first ATU-wide report and is a searchable document with an analysis by discipline, school and CAO points band. The report includes full time undergraduate students only. BB noted that the report highlights the challenges around retention and Dr Michele Glacken had established a committee on retention with 4 or 5 working groups. He advised that the HEA provided national statistics however these were slightly out of date.

FMcN left the meeting at 12.55pm

GB 0015.05.3 Draft SRS Student Enrolments as of 1st March 2023

BB advised that the report shows an increase in overall student numbers with a reduction in full time student numbers.

BB advised that the report was an interim report and a more detailed formal report would be prepared in the new academic year which will include FTEs and fee revenues.

Action: The revenue stream beside each student would be show in the SRS report.

GB 0015.05.5 Fee Schedule: Academic Year 2023/2024

BB advised that three phases were required to align fees and to ensure that similar programmes are the same price. It was noted that the term "DASBE pay" should be "DASBE student pay". The Fee Schedule: Academic Year 2023/2024 was approved by the Governing Body on the proposal of the Chair seconded by GR. BMcC had a query re the presentation of research fees in the Fee Schedule and it was agreed that the Registrar would provide clarification direct to him on this.

GB 0015.05.4 Student Union Presentation- Donegal, Galway- Mayo and St Angela's College (STACs)

Barry Breslin (Incoming Student Union President- ATU Donegal) (BB) and Sarah Mohan (Incoming Student Union President- ATU Galway Mayo) (SM) joined the meeting and presented with EG and CK (current Student Union Presidents Donegal and Galway-Mayo) on behalf of Donegal, Galway-Mayo and STACs. They advised that the major issue affecting student retention is the availability and cost of accommodation. The SU officers also explained that due to the price of accommodation students were having to work part time jobs and with some working full-time hours.

The meeting was advised that due to the late publishing of the Leaving Cert Results the time from obtaining a place to starting college is very short and the provision of final timetables is contingent on knowing the student enrolments.

The SU officers highlighted the following:

- need for a review of the operation of the student accommodation offices and the possibility of having a centralised system embedded in the University itself, rather than in the SU.
- difficulties with placements, namely the need for a second accommodation for some placements, the lack of pay and workloads associated with placement diaries while working part time jobs. A discussion ensued on the challenges of securing paid placements particularly for those of a short duration.
- lack of financial support from SUSI over the summer left some students in financial hardship.
- STACs: there is an issue with transport and gender isolation (92% female students) there are also issues around the hidden costs associated with courses. They noted that STACs had limited clubs and societies but had access to ATU Sligo.

AMcH left the meeting at 1.30pm

- Galway (Dublin Road and Well Park): there is an issue with variation in pricing in the canteens and the display of allergen information and also lack of facilities after 5pm with the IT centre closing and no onsite gym.
- Donegal: there are transportation issues, hidden costs within courses and limited course choices.

The SU officers did note however that there were positives: good facilities in Donegal, access to food banks for students, good on campus communities and clubs and societies. They also noted that scholarships were having a positive effect and students also enjoyed the Awards Ball. Concern was expressed about students needing access to foodbanks and the SU Officers agreed to provide more information.

Action: Further reporting on students in financial hardship to be carried out by the student unions.

SH left the meeting at 1.45pm.

GB 0015.05.4 Student Union Presentation- Sligo

DM highlighted the following:

- 1,750 purpose-built accommodation bed spaces in Sligo, 350 underutilised twin rooms and 8% of this accommodation being rented to long term lets and Ukrainian war refugees.
- students were struggling to find accommodation and travelling long distances.
- limited flexibility in transferring between courses and also there were issues with students involved in sport not being able to repeat labs or attendance-based modules if there was a clash with training or matches.
- issues with students with anxiety speaking in class.

The Governing Body members stated they were very disappointed with separate presentations from the Student Unions and proposed that going forward only one presentation would be heard from the Student Union. This was approved on the proposal of the Chair seconded by EG.

Decision: Going forward only one presentation would be heard from the student union.

BB, SM and BBre left the meeting at 2.20pm.

GB 0015.8 Corporate Governance

GB 0015.08.1 Meeting Audit and Risk Committee 9 May 2023

Item 8 was brought forward. Michael Henehan (MH) joined the meeting at 2.20pm. MMcG provided a report from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting which was held on 9th May 2023. She advised that Cllr. Mary Bohan had resigned leaving a vacancy on the committee. The committee have proposed that we seek expertise in public sector capital projects/ research/ higher education when filling the vacancy. GMIT's Financial Statements for the 7 months ended 31 March 2022 were recommended to the Governing Body for approval. The Internal Audit Plan for 2023 was finalised and the Self-Assessment of the Audit and Risk Committee had been carried out. The ARC workplan for 2023/24 was reviewed and approved and a comprehensive presentation on Procurement had been provided by Michael Hopkins (ATU Head of Procurement).

BMcC, MMcG and PK left the meeting at 2.30pm.

GB 0015.08.2 University Risk Register

MH provided an overview of the Risk Register and noted there had been an increase in the risk ratings for some risks and no improvements in any individual risk. The Risk Register was reviewed by ARC at their May meeting and the members of ARC are concerned about the trajectory of the risks identified in the register. While some risk ratings (Cyber threats) were increasing due to external factors it is important that the University manages those risks and related actions which are within our control and mitigating actions which are not progressing should be clearly identified. The meeting noted that the risk descriptions were very broad in some instances and it was agreed to review this with the various risk owners. OF noted that until final agreement on organisation structure it was difficult to assign risk owners and action owners to any one member of the executive. The meeting agreed that the Risk Register is a living document and should be kept on the agenda. A suggestion was made to include a high-level overview or executive summary as to the main risks and implications. It was proposed that the Risk Register would be on the agenda in June with the mitigating actions outlined clearly.

Decision: The Risk Register will be on June's agenda with mitigating actions outlined.

Decision: The Risk Register was approved by the Governing Body on the proposal of GR seconded by DF.

GB 0015.08.3 GMIT Financial Statements for 7 months ended 31 March 2022

Decision: The Governing Body approved the financial statements on the proposal of OM seconded by DF.

MGil left the meeting at 3pm.

GB 0015.08.4 Capital Works Management Policy

The Governing Body approved the Capital Works Management Policy on the proposal of GR seconded by OM.

GB 0015.08.5 Code of Governance GB Self-Assessment Review

The questionnaire is an extract from ATU's Code of Governance, to be forwarded to the Governing Body members via email and in hard copy (if requested) with responses requested within 10 days.

Decision: The Governing Body approved the Self-Assessment Review on the proposal of the Chair seconded by DF.

GB 0015.08.6 Procurement Policy

The Governing Body approved the Procurement Policy (Version 1.2) on the proposal of DF seconded by CK.

GB 0015.9 Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Subcommittee

Professor Jacqueline McCormack (JMcC) joined the meeting and due to time constraints, the meeting update and gender pay gap report were deferred to the June meeting.

GB 0015.09.2 External Expert

JMcC advised that the subcommittee had identified Tonye Benson-Olatunde as a potential external member on EDI Subcommittee. Tonye Benson-Olatunde was approved as a member of the EDI Subcommittee on the proposal of MR seconded by OM.

GB 0015.09.3 Anti Racism Principles

JMcC advised that the HEA have published Anti Racism Principles to be adopted by each Higher Education Institution (HEI).

Decision: The Governing Body adopted the Anti Racism Principles on the proposal of BMcC seconded by the Chair.

GB 0015.09.3 Governing Body Membership for EDI Subcommittee

JMcC advised that two members of the governing body that were neither a staff nor student member were required to fill the membership of the EDI subcommittee. OM agreed to consider appointment and it was proposed that RA may also be interested, however further discussions around time requirements and availability were required.

Decision: Discussion to take place with OM and RA about membership of the EDI subcommittee.

GB 0015.7 STACs Legal Agreement

SD joined the meeting and advised that just this morning a response had been obtained from our legal advisors, Holmes and the Barrister; [REDACTED] The Governing Body discussed the update and approved the legal agreement subject to no major changes.

Decision: The STACs legal agreement to be signed subject to no major changes on the proposal of MR seconded by the Chair.

It was agreed a hard copy of the agreement would be circulated to Governing Body members once signed. The legal advice would also be circulated.

Action: The signed agreement with STACS would be circulated with the legal advice.

GB 0015.6 HEA Act 2022: Regulations

JF advised that the amendments outlined in the minutes of the Governing Body meeting of the 8th of May 2023 had been made and the document had been circulated under Agenda item 6. The Governing Body members approved the Regulations on the proposal of the Chair seconded by OM.

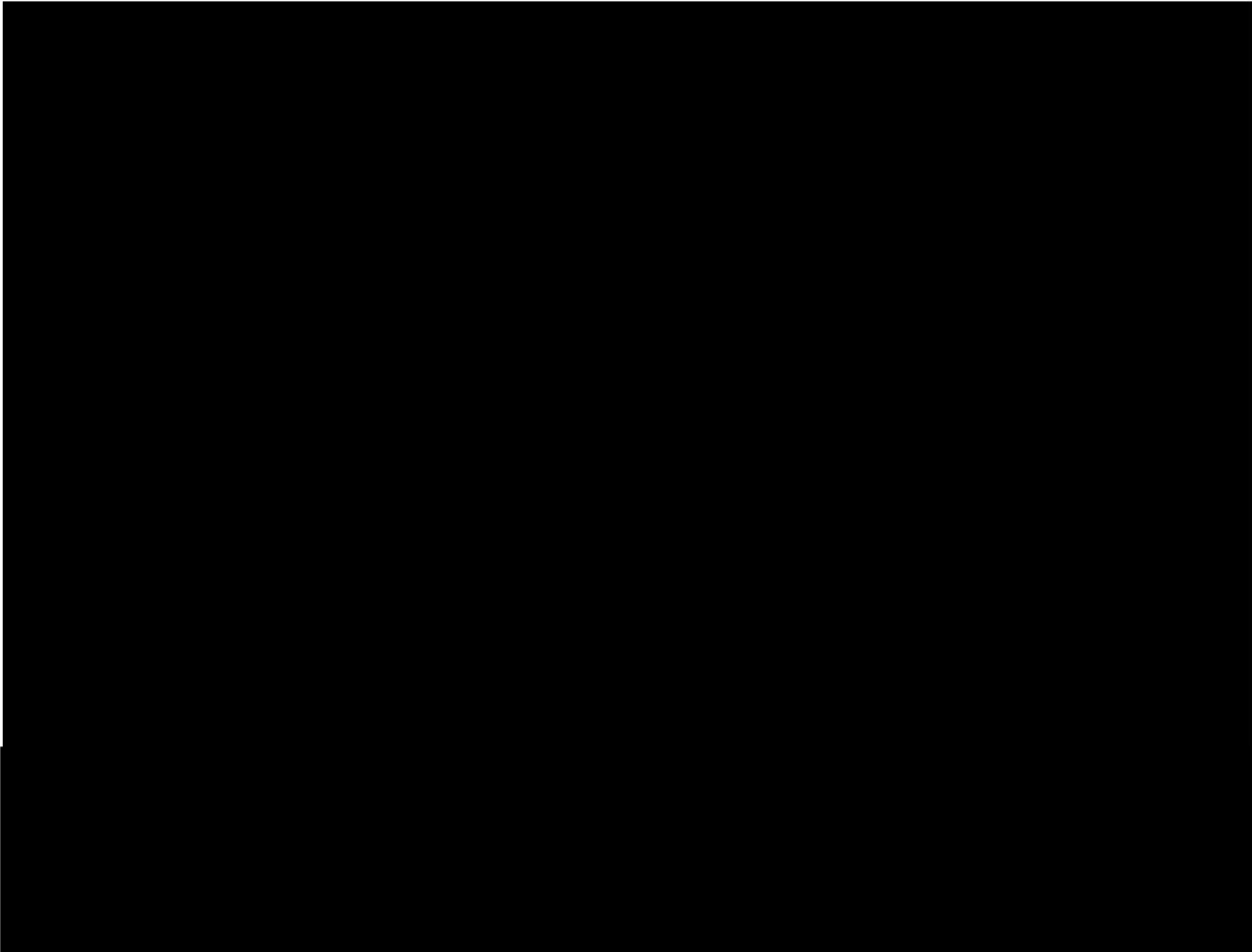
Decision: The approved regulations be sent to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

GB 0015.10 Cyber Security

JF advised that this item would be deferred to the June meeting.

GB 0015.11 HR Appointments

The following staff appointments were presented to the Governing Body for approval:



Decision: The above posts were approved on the proposal of OM and seconded by CK

Decision: It was agreed that there would be an agenda item at the next meeting to consider amending the delegation of authority resolution to delegate authority to the president to make all appointments.

GB 0015.12 ESB Contract

Following a procurement process for electricity supplies, Electric Ireland Ltd were selected as the most economically advantageous tenderer and it was proposed to award a contract for 18 months at a value of €3.0m. The contract was approved by the Governing Body on the proposal of UC seconded by GR. A governing body member asked for a review of the costings of solar panels at all campuses be carried out.

Decision: It was agreed a review of the costing of solar panels would be carried out.

There were no other items brought up under AOB and the meeting ended at 3.30pm

The next meeting will take place ATU Sligo on 19th June 2023.

Signed:  **Chairperson** **Date:** 20/9/23