



**Minutes of the sixth ATU Governing Body Meeting  
Held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 11 am.  
ATU Donegal, Killybegs Campus and MS Teams**

**Present:**

Maura McNally (Chairperson) - online	MMcN
Dr Orla Flynn (President) - in person	OF
Ursula Cox – in person	UC
Michael Geoghegan - online	MG
Dr Brian McCann – in person	BMcC
Mary McGinley - online	MMcG
Anne McHugh – in person	AMcH
Felim McNeela - in person	FMcN
Oonagh Monahan – in person	OM
David Minton - online	DM
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 Billy Bennett – in person - Agenda item 4.2	BB
Dr Sean Duffy – in person Agenda item 7	SD
Dr Brendan McCormack – in person Agenda item 7	BMcC
Henry McGarvey – in person Agenda item 9	HmCG

**Observers:**

Edward Grant – SU Donegal – in person	EG
Colin Kearney – SU Galway-Mayo – online	CK
Dáire Martin – SU Sligo – online	DM

**Apologies:**

Dara Foynes	DF
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#### **GB 006.01 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests**

There were no conflicts of interest declared at this meeting.

#### **GB 006.02 Minutes of the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> July were reviewed by the members.

The Chairperson requested an amendment to the minutes relating to the financial statements (GB005.07), to change the wording from "approved" to "received". The Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August, for IT Sligo and LYIT were received and had not been approved by the ATU Governing Body.

The President highlighted that the C&AG may raise an issue with the financial statements not being approved.

**Decision:** The minutes were approved subject to the amendment above. Proposed by GR and seconded UC.

#### **GB 006.03 Matters arising and Correspondence**

The Chairperson welcomed David Minton and Mary McGinley to the meeting. She advised that [REDACTED] was no longer available to fulfil the obligation as a Governing Body member and the Nominations Committee would now seek to appoint another Governing Body member with expertise in higher education outside the State. The Chairperson stated that the three Students' Unions had not advised the Governing Body on their proposals for nominations to membership of the Governing Body. The Chairperson advised that the Student Union Representatives can only continue as attendees which means that they cannot contribute to the meeting or take part in any voting. The Chairperson highlighted the need for the Students' Unions to come together and reach a consensus on their representation at Governing Body.

The President advised that the Students' Unions had been invited in April to propose nominees

#### **GB 006.04 Presidents Report**

The President's report was circulated in advance of the meeting and was taken as read.

##### **GB 006.4.1 Process for Establishment of Academic Council**

Dr Billy Bennett joined the meeting and provided a presentation on the on-going work to establish an Academic Council for the University. He outlined that the interim Academic Council had allowed for the completion of the examination processes and the approval of new programmes in development, however it was important that the Academic Council of the ATU be formed as soon as possible.

The meeting was advised of the consultative process within the University to date on both membership and proposed standing orders for the Academic Council. A table outlining the consultation process was included in page 6 of the document. The proposed membership of the Academic Council is 69 members of which there shall be 12 elected academic staff members from each college, 1 PMSS staff member

from each college and 5 student representatives. The election for academic staff will provide for a male and female constituency at each college thus providing for 18 male and 18 female staff members.

The meeting was advised that staff representatives from St Angela's College (STACS) could attend Academic Council meetings but not have voting rights until STACS is integrated within ATU, and a similar approach would apply for a staff representative from Mountbellew Agricultural College (MAC).

BMcC advised that he had been involved in the joint subcommittee tasked with developing the proposed membership model and draft Standing Orders and it had been an extensive and inclusive process. BMcC indicated that it was good to see the level of student representation on the proposed Academic Council and good to see PMSS staff representation.

The President advised that the minutes of Academic Council would be made available to the Governing Body. GR asked if the advantages and disadvantages of various models of Academic Council membership could be presented to the Governing Body for their consideration. He advised that he felt the proposed model was similar to that which had previously existed in the Institutes, and this is an opportunity for change. He proposed that a smaller Academic Council could be formed with members taking part in sub committees. MR advised that regional provision is not discussed in this paper, and it was very important given the geographic scope of ATU. It was agreed that the minute on this discussion would be given to the joint Academic Council subcommittee to allow them to consider the points raised by the Governing Body.

BB advised that the joint subcommittee had considered a stronger and larger model however this was not the preferred option. They had also considered a smaller model with fewer academic staff, student and PMSS representation however it was felt that this would lead to less representation, and this was not desirable.

**Decision:** A paper outlining the advantages and disadvantages of each model of Academic Council will be presented to the Governing Body to inform its decision-making.

The minute on the discussion of the standing orders would be provided to the joint subcommittee to consider.

Dr Billy Bennett left the meeting.

#### **GB 006.4.2 Process for Development of the Strategic Plan**

The President outlined the proposed strategic planning process. She advised that a productive session had been held with senior staff of ATU with input from the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA), Enterprise Ireland (EI) and IDA. She advised that a three-stage process is proposed with a final draft by May 2023 for consideration and approval by the Governing Body. The President advised that a secondment post at SL3 level is proposed to be advertised in September 2022 to assist with the process and that while some other TUs had appointed external consultants it was the preference of senior staff in ATU that work could be carried out inhouse with some supporting external facilitation. The President also advised that the mission and vision outlined in the CUA submission document would inform the Strategic Plan. The meeting discussed the importance of consultation with external stakeholders and agreed that a list of external stakeholders to be consulted should be compiled and provided to the governing Body.

**Decision:** A secondment role at SL3 level would be advertised to assist with the Strategic Planning Process

The methodology proposed by the President for the development of the Strategic Plan was endorsed by the Governing Body.

A list of external stakeholders be compiled and circulated to Governing Body members.

#### **GB 006.04 President's Report (continued)**

The President advised that a number of EU alliance bids had been made, namely the RISEN alliance and the STARS alliance. Unfortunately, neither had been funded; however, STARS did receive a mark above the threshold but there was insufficient funding available to fund the proposal.

The President also advised that work was being carried out on master planning and a brief update will be given at the September meeting. The President highlighted that student accommodation would continue to be a challenge for the new academic year at all campuses.

The meeting discussed the student accommodation crisis and expressed concern at the impact on students and the student experience. The President advised that perhaps more detailed discussions on student accommodation could take place at a Capital Planning subcommittee when established.

#### **GB 006.05 Nominations Subcommittee**

##### **GB 006.05.1 Report from Nominations Subcommittee**

The Chairperson informed the meeting that the Nominations subcommittee held a meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> June and the minutes were circulated.

##### **GB 006.05.2 Appointment of External Members**

The Chairperson tabled a document which contained the names and background information of four nominees for appointment as external members of the Governing body in accordance with TU Act (2018) section 12(1)(h):

1. Seamus Hughes
2. Patricia King
3. Michael Gilvarry
4. Dr Mary Kelly

The Governing Body considered and welcomed the nominations. FMcN again highlighted the lack of student union representation now that the Governing Body membership is almost complete.

**Decision:** The four external nominees, as listed above, were approved as members of the Governing Body on the proposal of GR and seconded by BMcC.

## **GB 006.06 ATU Recruitment and Selection Appeals Procedure**

The Secretary advised that this item would not be considered as the consultation process was not complete.

## **GB 006.07 Integration of St Angela's College**

Dr Brendan McCormack: Head of College, ATU Sligo and Dr Séan Duffy Vice President ATU Integration, joined the meeting and presented an update on the integration of St Angela's College.

### **GB 006.07.1 Report from meeting with DFHERIS**

Dr Brendan McCormack advised that a positive meeting had taken place with DFHERIS officials and the €83.4m pension liability was discussed. The following is a summary of the discussions:

- Funding for existing pensioners would be provided in the annual recurrent grant funding allocation.
- Existing employees in STACS would transfer to the applicable existing pension schemes of ATU
- There is no proposal on deferred pensions yet, the estimated current liability is circa. €4.02m

The meeting was advised that we are now awaiting a response from DFHERIS, and it is hoped it would be received in September.

In response to a query from GR on any implications for the MOU with the TUI, the Secretary advised that the MOU did not address the pensions issue specifically and that this was a matter for the TUI to consider when the specific details on the transfer of staff to ATU pension schemes are received from DFHERIS. The proposal is that PMSS staff would also transfer into the ATU pension schemes.

### **GB 006.07.2 Joint Application for the Integration of St Angela's College**

Dr Brendan McCormack advised that once a response was received from DFHERIS an internal decision could then be made as to when to submit the "Joint Application for the Integration of St Angela's College" to DFHERIS subject to the approval of the Governing Body. It was acknowledged that the HEA Bill would also need to be passed before the integration could occur however this would not delay the submission of the application. DFHERIS have also advised that the receipt of the submission would allow them to assemble the international panel prior to the Bill being passed. ATU and St Angela's College will also form a 'mock panel' to assist staff in preparing for the international panel. The meeting acknowledged the progress which had been made since the July meeting.

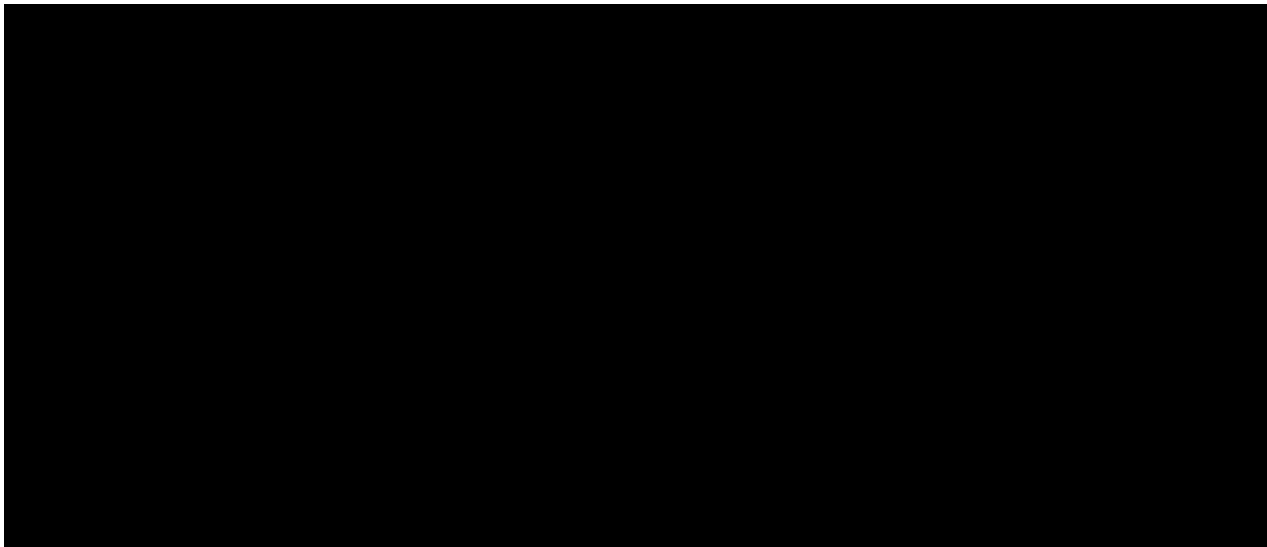
The Governing Body approved the Joint Application for the Integration of St Angela's College and for the submission of the document subject to the resolution of the pensions issue on the proposal of UC seconded by BMcC.

**Decision:** Approval was granted to submit the "Joint Application for the Integration of St Angela's College to the DFHERIS subject to the resolution of the pensions issue.

Dr Séan Duffy and Dr Brendan McCormack left the meeting.

## **GB 006.8 Staff Appointments**

### **GB 006.8.1 Appointment of Senior Managers**



In response to a query, the President advised that it was a reserved function of the Governing Body to approve the appointment of posts at a level of CSM or Senior Lecturer (II) (SLII) and above. The President also advised that job applicants were made aware that this information is provided to the Governing Body as part of the job application process.

DM left the meeting.

## **GB 006.9 Capital Expenditure**

Henry McGarvey, Vice President for Finance and Corporate Services joined the meeting and made a presentation on two capital projects.

### **GB 006.09.1 Appointment of Design Team: Letterkenny Regional Sports Activity Hub**

HMcG outlined that ATU Donegal had carried out a procurement process for design team services for the Letterkenny Regional Sports Activity Hub (LRSAH). He advised that 37% funding for the design stage of the project is being funded via a successful application to the Large-Scale Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. He also advised that Donegal County Council had been an applicant partner on this project. HMcG advised that there was no individual contract above €1million however collectively the contract for design team services exceeds €1million which requires Governing Body approval in accordance with their reserved functions. The President advised that this project was identified strategically by the LYIT Governing Body as essential infrastructure to enhance the student experience and grow the sports offering in Donegal and that a presentation would be given in September on the master plan.

The expenditure of €1,266million plus VAT was approved by the Governing Body on the proposal of MR seconded by OM.

**Decision:** The contracts for Design Team: Letterkenny Regional Sports Activity Hub to overall value of €1.266 million plus VAT were approved by the Governing Body.

#### **GB 006.09.2 Sligo Campus Capital Projects: Inflationary Increase**

Two major capital construction projects (Extensions E01 and Block L) are underway at the ATU Sligo Campus with an overall value of €30million. HMcG advised that the government has acknowledged the extraordinary increases in costs in the construction sector due to the war in Ukraine and COVID19 and have published an Inflation/ Supply Chain Delay Co-Operation Framework Agreement for use with PW-CF1-PW-CF5. He advised that the overall additional costs were in the region of €1,431,500 to €1,925,000 with €200,000 to €450,000 to be funded by ATU. This expenditure was approved by the Governing Body on the proposal of GR seconded by AMcH.

**Decision:** The additional expenditure of €1,431,500 to €1,925,000 of which €200,000 to €450,000 is to be funded by ATU was approved by the Governing Body for projects' Extensions E01 and Block L

HMcG advised that this request was for buildings costs and not related to equipment however there was still contingency in place for some additional costs. MG requested an update on the Galway student building approved by the GMIT Governing Body. The Secretary advised that the tenders had been returned and were higher than anticipated and a report would be available for the September meeting.

HMcG left the meeting.

#### **GB 006.10 Venues for Schedule of Meetings**

The venues for meetings was discussed and the members welcomed the proposal to hold meetings of the Governing Body throughout the region. Due to the early start time, it was agreed that, if available, members may travel the night before the September meeting and meet for dinner.

**Decision:** It was agreed to hold the meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> September in Connemara campus at 10am with Governing Body members to meet for dinner, if possible, on the 25<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **GB 006.11 AOB**

##### **GB 006.11.1 Bank Mandate for ATU Galway-Mayo**

The Secretary presented a revised bank mandate for ATU Galway-Mayo updated due to some staff changes. He noted the number of bank authorisers is required because Galway-Mayo had a weekly payroll. The mandate was approved by the Governing Body on the proposal of GR seconded by OM.

**Decision:** The Bank Mandate for ATU Galway-Mayo was approved

##### **GB 006.11.2 Retirement of Dr Brendan McCormack**

The President and Governing Body acknowledged the contribution of Dr Brendan McCormack who was retiring on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 as ATU Sligo Head of College.

*Laura P. Hall*  
Chairperson      Date  
26/9/22.

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