

## Minutes of proceedings of the Governing Body Meeting

**Date:** Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 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 Maria Ruddy  
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  
Mr Justin Kerr (Agenda Item 6.0)

**Apologies:** Cllr Terry O'Flaherty  
Ms Proinsias Ní Ghrainne

<b>1.0 Declaration of Conflict of Interest with Agenda Items</b>	<b>ALL</b>
There were no conflicts of interest declared by those present or in attendance.	
<b>2.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	<b>All</b>
<p>The minutes of Governing Body Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June were approved on the proposal of Mr Gareth Roe and seconded by Ms Maureen Walsh subject to the following amendment which was proposed by Mr Gareth Roe:-</p> <p>Page 3, Item 4.0 COVID-19 Update:</p> <p>“Most GMIT students were able to attend campus for labs and/or tutorials and/or practicals over the last year”.</p>	
<b>3.0 Matters Arising</b>	<b>All</b>
<p>Cllr Colm Keaveney raised his concerns regarding the difficult student experience for students with poor broadband and technical complications in the last Academic Year. He asked what considerations the Institute will have in place regarding mandatory vaccinations.</p> <p>The President advised that COVID-19 would be addressed in further detail under Agenda Item 4.1 but a recent meeting with the Minister indicated that the Institute would also allow unvaccinated students on Campus.</p>	
<b>4.0 President</b>	<b>O Flynn</b>
<p><b>4.1 President’s Report (Including COVID-19 Update)</b></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"> <li>▪ A meeting took place with the HEA on July 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss GMIT Capital projects.</li> <li>▪ Minister Harris and Deputy Dillon visited the Mayo Campus on 19<sup>th</sup> July</li> <li>▪ GMIT facilities were recently used by Connacht Rugby underage groups of boys and girls, wearing the GMIT Logo, with positive feedback being received</li> <li>▪ Post of Alumni Officer is now advertised externally in regional media</li> <li>▪ Discussions have taken place regarding membership of Technological Higher Education Association (THEA). MTU have announced their pending termination of THEA membership. GMIT propose to remain as a member for a further two years. Formal approval and further information will be an Agenda item in due course.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>COVID-19 Update</u></b></p> <p>The Institute is prioritising a safe return to campus for all students to enable practical classes, labs, workshops, and seminars to take place onsite, with a major focus on small group teaching for the first five weeks. A gradual return to onsite lecturers is expected from that point onwards.</p> <p>All students will have activities on campus from the first day. Libraries and canteen facilities will be open.</p> <p>Students can expect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Return to Campus from 20<sup>th</sup> September for continuing students and from 27<sup>th</sup> September for first year students</li> </ul>	

- ✓ Attend tutorials, seminars, practical's, labs, workshops, and some smaller lectures on campus
- ✓ Have some teaching online
- ✓ Experience a blended #First5Weeks Induction programme for first year students.

Public Health advice will continue to be followed. While the Institute is planning a phased large-scale return to campus, a contingency plan will also be in place in case circumstances change

Dr Eleanor Rainsford asked if the #First5Weeks Induction programmed would be extended to 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students. The President advised that this was discussed by the Executive and yes it can be extended to second year students.



He also asked what resources were in place to accommodate small group tutorials for Business Studies students. The President confirmed that large lecture theatres would be used with a 1 metre social distancing recommendation.

Cllr Colm Keaveney noted his concern regarding the Delta variant of COVID-19 and its potential impact should this continue to rise. The risk assessment analysis is crucial in planning for the year ahead. He acknowledged the leadership of the President and Executive on the Safe Return to Campus initiative.

Ms Siobhan Kennedy asked if the agreed additional external space for students has been put in place. The President confirmed that work has been done on this and additional sheltered spaces are now available both inside and outside on Campus.

The SU President added that the Students Union is committed to supporting and advising students to adhere to the Public Health guidelines both on and off Campus.

#### **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**

It was proposed that the previous members of the Honorary Subcommittee would remain, this was approved on the proposal of Mr Joe Cunningham and seconded by Ms Maureen Walsh.

The Subcommittee members are Cllr Moegie Maher, Dr Orla Flynn, Ms Mary McGinley, and Mr Michael Lally.

#### **5.0 CUA / TU**

**O Flynn**

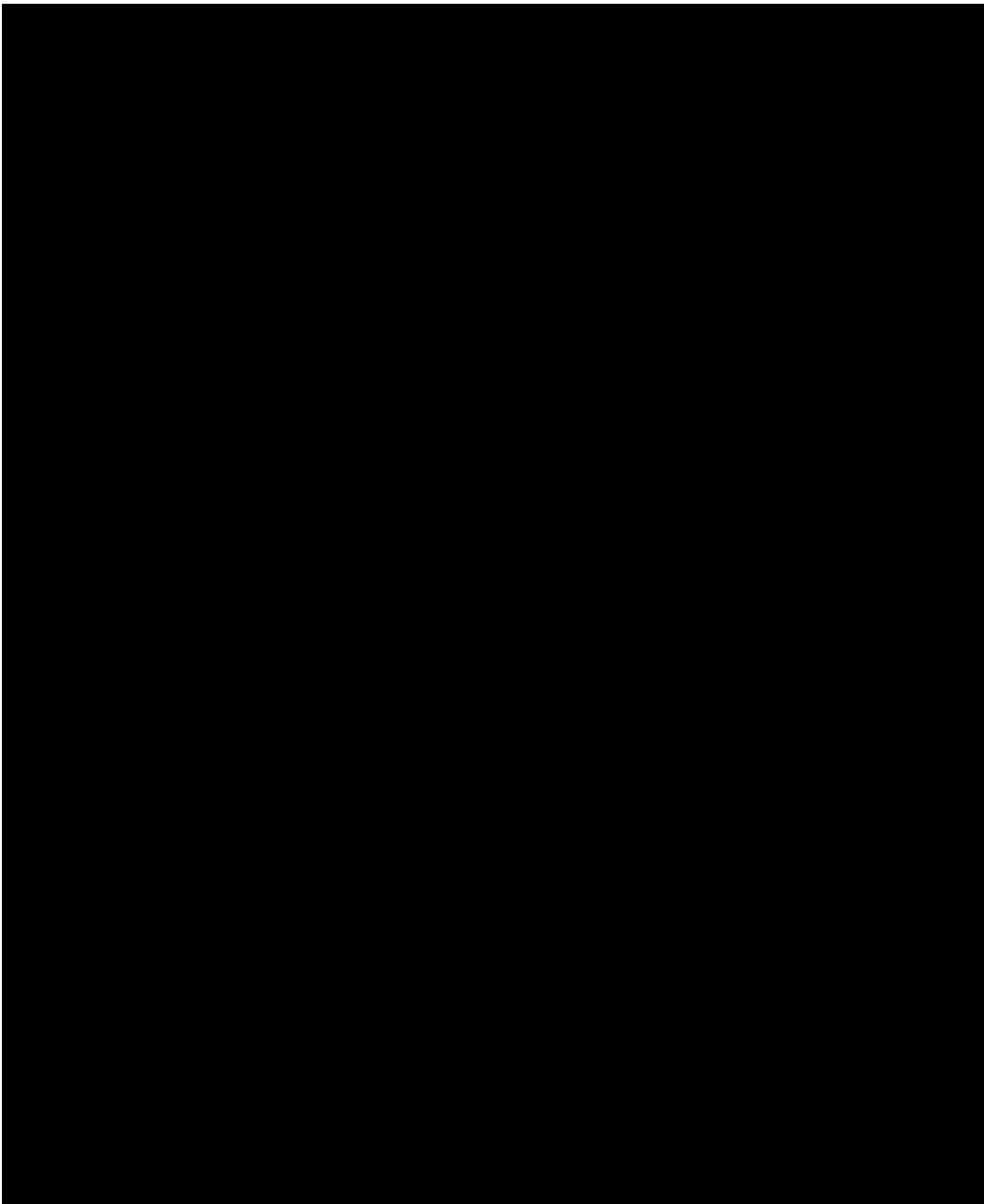
The President provided an update on the CUA Status.

The International panel meetings took place from 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July to review our application. Meetings were held with the Chairman, President, research staff and students, all unions, and many other different groups. Clarity was sought from the panel on the type of organisational structure the Institute was putting forward.

A report from the panel will be provided to the Board of the HEA on 7<sup>th</sup> September, and from there to the Minister.

<p>The Chairman noted his queries with the Panel regarding the organisational structure and added that the issue of a long-term structure requires clarity and clarity. A discussion took place regarding the transitional phase and organisational structure required to become a TU and the requirement for a long-term structure to be agreed at an early stage. While acknowledging a transitional phase will take place, emphasis was placed on the requirement to have a longer-term organisational structure developed.</p> <p>The Chairman suggested a meeting of the joint Governing Body Subcommittees be arranged soon to discuss these matters. It was proposed by Mr Cormac MacDonncha and seconded by Ms Maureen Walsh that that proposals for the organisation structure of the TU be developed and considered by the joint Governing body Subcommittee.</p> <p>Governing Body Subcommittees will resume meetings in the new Academic year and updates will be provided to the Governing Body.</p> <p>An additional phase of due diligence was recently completed by Deloitte. An update will be provided at the September meeting.</p> <p>Work continues regarding the naming and branding of the new University and Dr Flynn will inform the Board of any progress.</p>	
<p><b>6.0 School of Health Science, Wellbeing &amp; Society (Mayo Campus)</b></p>	<p><b>J Kerr</b></p>
<p>Mr Justin Kerr, Head of Mayo Campus, joined the meeting and presented to the Board on the New School of Health Science, Wellbeing &amp; Society based on the Mayo Campus.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Mr Kerr and welcomed the plans for the Mayo Campus as very positive. The new programmes are a welcome addition to the Campus as well as the Institute.</p> <p>Cllr Moegie Maher congratulated Mr Kerr on his presentation and noted the positive news story for the Mayo Campus and the Institute. He wished Mr Kerr and the staff on the Mayo Campus well for the new Academic Year and the New School.</p> <p>Ms Maria Madden congratulated Mr Kerr on the presentation and asked how the new programmes are being communicated to potential new students. The meeting was advised that new programmes will be communicated by the Schools Liaison Officer who will reach out to the ETB's and Secondary Schools and advise of the programme profile that will be on offer.</p> <p>Ms Maureen Walsh added her congratulations and noted the importance and significance of this new project to the area and for industry.</p> <p>Dr Rick Officer also complimented Mr Kerr and reassured the Governing Body that the research alignment with the Mayo campus will continue to ensure the realisation of this new exciting vision.</p> <p>Mr Kerr thanked the Board for their comments and acknowledged the challenges that comes with creating and building a new School but welcomed the challenge and the positivity it will bring to the Mayo Campus and region. He noted the staff awareness of launching a new School and programmes under the GMIT umbrella and then under the TU umbrella in this transitional phase.</p> <p>Mr Gareth Roe asked if the Mazars report on the Working Group Report had been addressed. The President noted that the report had been finalised and sent directly to the Minister. The continuation of ring-fenced funding for the Mayo Campus was raised by the Chairman and Mr Gareth Roe. The President added that two items for discussions with the HEA are STEM and a proposed amendment of the RGAM funding model to consider small campuses. It was agreed to put this as an Agenda item for further discussion at the September meeting.</p>	

<p>Mr Fennell added that these issues would be discussed by the Finance Subcommittee and the Mayo Campus Subcommittee at their next meetings. In addition, the meeting with the HEA will have taken place therefore a more comprehensive update can be provided to the Board at the September meeting.</p>	
<p><b>7.0 Capital Projects</b></p>	<p><b>J Fennell</b></p>
<p>Mr Fennell provided an update on some of the Capital Projects to the Board.</p> <p>Crowley Park: Due diligence and licence agreement to be complete by September. Ministerial approval will then be sought.</p> <p>STEM: Project approved in August to proceed to tendering process. Project will not be complete until Academic Year 2025.</p> <p>Canteen will be open and operational on the Galway Campus for the new Academic Year.</p> <p>A meeting of the Capital Projects Subcommittee will be convened prior to the September Governing Body meeting and an update will be provided to the Board at their next meeting.</p>	
<p><b>8.0 Finance</b></p>	<p><b>J Fennell</b></p>
<p><b>8.1 Finance Outturn to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b></p> <p>Mr Fennell presented the Outturn to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</p> <p><b>8.2 Treasury &amp; Cash Policy</b></p> <p>The Treasury &amp; Cash Policy was approved on the proposal of Cllr Moegie Maher and seconded by Ms Mary McGinley.</p> <p>A proposal to continue to maintain Institute cash reserves with NTMA was approved on the proposal of Mr Tom Grady and seconded by Ms Maureen Walsh.</p>	
<p><b>9.0 Registrar / Academic Council</b></p>	<p><b>M Hannon</b></p>
<p>Dr Michael Hannon, VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar presented the Registrars report to the meeting.</p> <p><b>9.1 Code of Practice 4 – Access, Transfer &amp; Progression</b> on the recommendation of Academic Council</p> <p>Dr Hannon outlined the changes to the document. This was approved on the proposal of Cllr Moegie Maher and seconded by Dr Eleanor Rainsford.</p> <p><b>9.2 Programme Deferral and Withdrawal Policy</b> on the recommendation of Academic Council.</p> <p>This was approved on the proposal of Cllr Moegie Maher and seconded by Dr Eleanor Rainsford.</p> <p><b>9.3 Student Charter</b> on the recommendation of Academic Council.</p> <p>This student charter is a formal statement of what our students can expect from the Institute and in turn what GMIT expects from our students. This Charter has been developed by the Institute in consultation with the Students’ Union. The Governing Body approved a Quality of Service Charter at the April meeting.</p>	

<p>Following some discussion the Student Charter was approved on the proposal of Mr Gareth Roe and seconded by Cllr Moegie Maher.</p> <p><b>9.4 Registrar's Report</b></p> <p>An updated Fee Schedule was approved on the proposal of Ms Maureen Walsh and seconded by Cllr Moegie Maher.</p>	
<p><b>10.0 Student Union President Report</b></p>	<p><b>C Kearney</b></p>
<p>SU President Mr Colin Kearney provided an update to the meeting on the Students Union Team activities over the Summer Months.</p> <p>The team attended various meetings, working groups, training and began preparations for the new Academic Year. This included a plan of campaigns and events for the year ahead.</p>	
<p><b>11.0 HR Matters</b></p>	<p><b>J Fennell</b></p>
	

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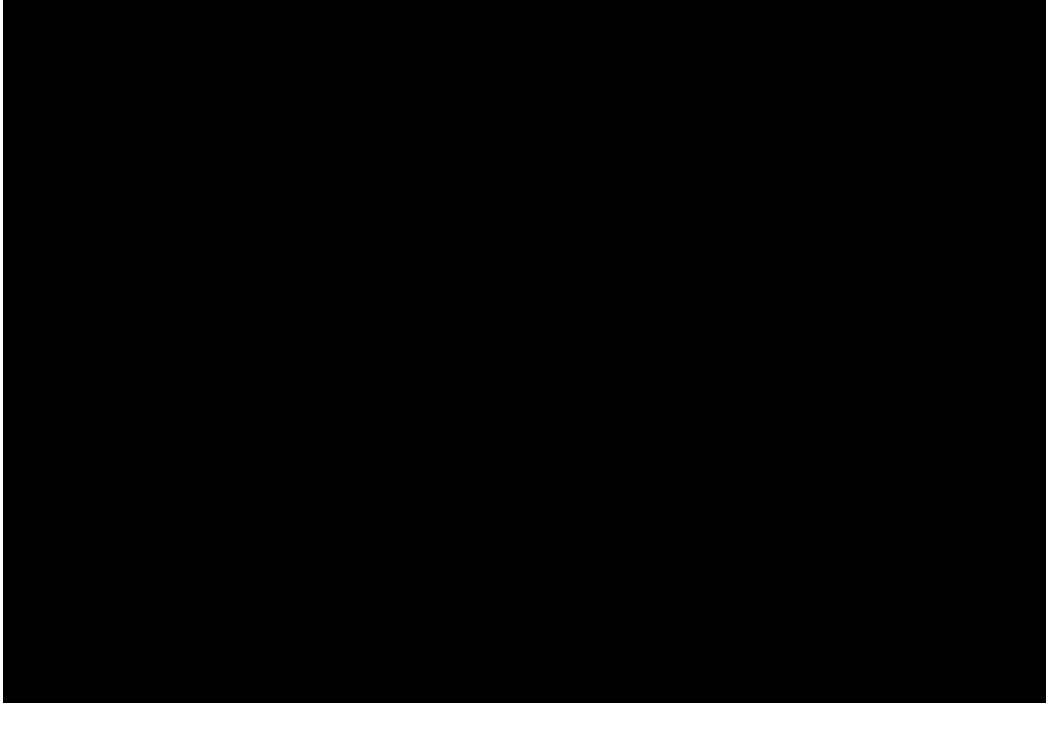
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<b>12.0 Corporate Governance</b>	<b>J Fennell</b>
<p><b>12.1 Report from Chair of ARC (Meeting of July 13<sup>th</sup>)</b></p> <p>Ms Mary McGinley, Chair of the ARC provided an update to the Board from the last meeting of the ARC on July 13<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>She informed the meeting that the candidate selected for the post of Corporate Governance Compliance Officer had declined the role. The post is now readvertised.</p> <p>Items discussed and reviewed at the ARC meeting included the ARC action tracker, GDPR Training, reduction of bad debts with thanks to the Finance Department.</p> <p>The next meeting of the ARC will take place in October.</p> <p><b>12.2 Management Letter: Financial Statements Y.E. 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019</b></p> <p>The issue of VAT on iHUB is now complete with the Institute agreeing to review its invoicing systems process.</p> <p>The C&amp;AG have requested the agreement between Connacht Rugby and GMIT be submitted for approval to the Governing Body together with the MOU. This will be provided at the September meeting.</p> <p>The Institute confirms that it has not entered into any agreement with Connacht Rugby regarding the purchase of tickets.</p> <p>Excessive carryover of Annual Leave. This issue is being managed internally taking into consideration COVID-19.</p> <p>A recommendation to implement a Hospitality policy has been implemented.</p> <p><b>12.3 HEA Feedback to Annual Governance Statement 2018/19</b></p> <p>The meeting noted the email from the HEA on "Feedback to Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 and in particular the following:</p>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The request of the HEA that feedback to the AGS be brought to the attention of the Governing Body.</li> <li>- The actions of the Institute to improve compliance with Intellectual property and Conflict of Interest</li> <li>- The amount of non-competitive procurement. The meeting noted that this was addressed by the Audit &amp; Risk Committee (ARC) and at the request of the ARC the HEA were requested to provide a definition of non-competitive procurement.</li> <li>- The need to provide a procedure for oversight of any expenditure on external consultants. This proposed procedure should be referred to the Finance Subcommittee and the ARC for views.</li> </ul> <p><b>12.4 Safety Statement</b></p> <p>The Institute Safety Statement was circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting for consideration by the meeting.</p> <p>Following a brief discussion, the following queries were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the procedure for Waste Management</li> <li>- Consideration be given to the appointment of a Biological Safety Officer</li> <li>- Consideration be given to a procedure for managing risks to people with vulnerabilities</li> <li>- Clarification on the Chair and membership of the Safety Committee</li> </ul> <p>The Institute Safety Statement was approved on the proposal of Cllr Moegie Maher and seconded by Mr Gareth Roe. The Executive were requested to consider the above issues and revert to the Governing Body at the September meeting with any proposed amendments.</p> <p><b>12.5 Risk Management Policy &amp; Procedure</b></p> <p>The Risk Management Policy and Procedure was approved on the proposal of Cllr Moegie Maher and seconded by Mr Gareth Roe. It was agreed that the policy and procedure can be further reviewed at another meeting should this be required.</p> <p><b>12.6 Risk Register</b></p> <p>The Risk Register was briefly discussed, and Mr Fennell highlighted the new layout of the register. The Chair complimented the President for her extensive efforts in reducing the Mayo Campus risk. The President attributed this to a team effort and her previous successor Dr Michael Hannon.</p> <p><b>12.7 Governing Body Subcommittees – Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>Mr Fennell recommended that the subcommittee Terms of Reference be reviewed by each subcommittee at their next meeting.</p> <p>This was agreed on the proposal of Ms Mary McGinley and seconded by Ms Maureen Walsh.</p>	
<p><b>12.0 Any Other Business</b></p>	
<p><b>This concluded the business of the meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Signed:</b> _____ Chairperson</p>	<p><b>Date:</b> _____</p>



## 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 GIHS 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	THEA Membership	President	Ongoing	Agenda item for September Mtg
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
26.8.21 – 6.0	Update on Mazars WGR	President	September	Provide Update at September Mtg
26.8.21 – 12.2	Connacht Review MOU to be approved by Gov Body	President	September	Agenda item for September Mtg
26.8.21 – 12.4	Exec Board to review Safety Statement following GB comments	President	September	Agenda item for September Mtg