

GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

Report of meeting of Wednesday, June 21st 2023
2.00pm, AG01, Albert College, DCU Glasnevin Campus

PRESENT:

Ms. Brid Horan (Chair)	Ms Fiona Naughton
Prof Daire Keogh	Ms Deirdre O'Connor (on line)
Prof Yvonne Daly	Mr Thomas O'Dowd
Mr Justin Doyle	Prof James O'Higgins Norman
Ms Sarah Fitzpatrick	Dr Aisling de Paor
Ms Carol Hanney	Ms Michele Pringle
Ms Rachel Hussey	Ms Marie Sinnott
Mr Cathal Marley	Mr Brian J. Smyth
Dr Kara McGann	Mr Seamus Walsh

APOLOGIES:

Mr David Harney	Cllr Jimmy Guerin
Dr Declan Raftery	Dr Audrey Bryan
Ms Zainab Boladale	Prof Lisa Looney
Prof Ray Walshe	Ms Marian Corcoran
Mr John Darby	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr John Kilcoyne	Mr Gareth Yore
Prof Anne Sinnott	Ms Marie Mellett
Dr Robbie Roulston	

WELCOME

The Chancellor welcomed members. She thanked everyone for their participation and noted the apologies.

The Chancellor welcomed Sarah Fitzpatrick to her first Governing Authority meeting. SF is the Students' Union Vice-President for Wellbeing and will be a member of the Governing Authority for 2023/2024.

The agenda was adopted.

The Chancellor enquired if there were any conflicts of interest in relation to any item on the agenda that required a declaration on the part of a member(s) – None were declared.

1. **MINUTES OF GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 28TH APRIL 2023**
Approved by the Authority.

2. **REPORT OF MEETING OF 28TH APRIL 2023 FOR WEB PUBLICATION**
Approved by the Authority subject to amending agenda item 7.

3 **REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

Action 1: Ongoing

Action 2: Ongoing

Action 3: Ongoing

Action 4: Ongoing

Action 5: Agenda item 10.3

Action 6: Agenda item 6

Action 7: This was circulated to the Authority in advance of the meeting. This is the first DCU Stakeholder Matrix. The Authority believes it captures what is needed regarding the approach to communication and suggested the addition of Trade Unions, IBEC and the EU Commission. The Chancellor asked for this document to be reviewed regularly by Executive.

Actions to be tracked:

Action 1: Ongoing

Action 2: The September meeting will take place on SPC and Ongoing.

Action 3: September meeting

Action 4: Ongoing

4 MATTERS ARISING

None

5 GOVERNANCE

5.1 Governing Authority reconstitution

The Chancellor informed the Authority that she worked with the Governance and Nominations Committee on the proposal being submitted to this meeting for approval and has consulted with the current members who will be directly affected by the proposed approach.

If approved, the proposal will be submitted to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for approval as required. Subject to the Minister's approval, the membership of the transitional Governing Authority will take effect in November.

To comply with the HEA Act 2022, which amends the Universities Act 1997, the membership of Governing Authority has to be reduced to 19. The following is proposed:

- **The Chancellor and Chief Officer** - to remain.
- **Senior Officers** - to be in attendance rather than be members of Transitional Governing Authority.
- **Student Members** – to remain at three, two undergraduate student members and one postgraduate member.

- **Staff Members** – to retain two non-academic members of staff, to treat academic staff without distinction of grade for the duration of the transitional arrangement and to reduce their number from five to three. This takes into account the relative numbers of employees in these categories. This will reduce the number of staff members, excluding the Chief Officer, to five as required under the revised Act.
- **External Members** who are serving their second term will depart and those serving their first term will remain. This will reduce the number of external members, excluding the Chancellor, to nine as required under the revised Act.

The impact of the proposed changes on Governing Authority committees and roles were noted as follows:

- **Chair of Audit Committee** – Cathal Marley will remain.
- **Chair of Risk Committee** – Marie Sinnott will remain.
- **Chair of Strategic Finance Advisory Committee** – Brian Smyth will remain.
- **Chair of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee** – as Rachel Hussey is serving her second term, Seamus Walsh has agreed to serve as Committee Chair
- **Review of Quality Reports** – as Deirdre O’Connor is serving her second term, Carol Hanney has agreed to take on this role
- **Review of HR Personnel Matters** – as Kara McGann is serving her second term, the Chancellor will liaise with Director HR during the transitional GA period in relation to personnel matters being tabled to GA
- **Deputy Chair** – Cathal Marley will remain.

The Chancellor also proposed to reduce the current term of Governing Authority to four years meaning the transitional GA will serve until July 2025 instead of July 2026. This will mean that remaining members will have the option of being appointed for a second term (without breaching the limit of eight years in total as set down under the revised Act). If the transitional arrangements are approved this Governing Authority’s term will end in July 2025.

The Chancellor noted that it is regretted that this proposal means that the GA will lose members who have shown great commitment to DCU and who have been generous in giving their time and expertise. The GA noted that those departing external members have agreed to support the University in other ways.

The approach was discussed and **Approved** by the Authority

The Chancellor also noted that a group will need to be established by the transitional GA to agree principles for appointing a new Governing Authority post July 2025.

5.2 Governing Authority Dates for 2023/2024

The dates circulated to the Authority in advance of the meeting were **approved**.

FOR DISCUSSION / NOTING

6. RESEARCH STRATEGY

Prof John Doyle, Vice President for Research was welcomed to the meeting. JD briefed the Authority on the current status of research within DCU and advised that the new Research Strategy will be launched in September and is for a 5 year period. While DCU is not where it

wants to be in terms of research, this Strategy will help achieve this by building on the following:

- **Intensity** - publishing a quantity and quality of peer-reviewed research equivalent to our European peers. DCU aims for a 30% increase in internationally ranked publications.
- **Impact** - in international academic debates and in social and economic impacts.
- **Doctoral Community** - growing the community and the level of peer-reviewed publications based on their work. We would hope to see a 50% increase in Doctoral Students and encourage them to publish while in DCU. This will then help them enter into a competitive job market.
- **Support and Communication** - Build an effective, cross-university research support and communications programme.

To achieve all of the above there would need to be a 20% growth in research funding and clear targets set among staff.

JD outlined a number of recent wins in DCU Research activities.

The Chancellor thanked JD for this valuable oversight into Research, welcomed the progress being made and looked forward to further success arising from the new strategy.

7. AUDIT COMMITTEE

7.1 Report of meeting of 08th June 2023

Cathal Marley, Chair of Audit Committee gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- The Committee were informed that a review of the Treasury Management Policies and Procedures is being conducted. The Committee agreed that in future treasury management should be reported to Audit Committee once a year.
- Internal Audit are planning a Culture Audit, initially meeting with SMG to establish what they perceive culture in DCU to be. It is hoped the audit will follow from this and begin next year.
- Internal Audit presented their Internal Audit Report. There had been good progress in closing actions however it was noted that the number of actions being tracked was increasing. This will be monitored by the Audit Committee.
- The Director of DCU Sports and Wellbeing attended a meeting to discuss actions arising from an audit on scholarships. There was a good discussion and it is understood that progress has been made on the audit findings.
- The Committee requested that the Protected Disclosures procedures/policy be reviewed to ensure that there is adequate management independence, and that the role of the Audit Committee is considered further. The policy should be benchmarked against other educational institutions and corporates as required.

7.2 Minutes of meeting of 24th April 2023

Noted by the Authority

8. RISK COMMITTEE

8.1 Report of meeting 14th June 2023

DCU is a registered charity under the Charities Act 2009

DCU Charity Number: 20013653

Marie Sinnott, Chair of Risk Committee gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- As a standing item, the Risk Committee are presented with the Audit Committee minutes. These were reviewed and concerns were raised as to why Risk Committee had no oversight of certain risks in advance of Audit Committee. It was agreed that the Risk and Compliance Officer and the Head of Internal Audit will investigate this and create a more streamlined process.
- HEIs met about Cyber Security considerations across the sector. It was noted that DCU are better placed than their counterparts.
- It was agreed to use the current SRR as a living document and to have rankings reflect how the risk currently stands.
- The 2023 risk process has begun and submissions received. From this, the Risk and Compliance Officer has compiled a report which Senior Management will use when conducting their 'blank paper' exercise. A date for the Governing Authority risk 'blank paper' exercise will be agreed.
- The Faculty Manager from the IOE, gave a comprehensive presentation on their work in terms of risk. It gave assurances to the Committee. The Committee also provided feedback.
- The presentation from the Dean of Teaching and Learning to discuss Academic Integrity and ChatGPT was deferred.
- The Committee formally noted that the draft ESA Contract was approved by email.
- The Committee met separately with the Head of Internal Audit and the Risk and Compliance Officer without other management present. How interaction between both areas can be improved and the resourcing of the Risk and Compliance Function were discussed.

8.2 Minutes of 22nd February 2023

Noted by the Authority

8.3 Annual Report y/e 2022

The Chair of Risk Committee noted that the Annual Report contained the following recommendations:

- Standardise the consistency of language and the approach to risk management.
- The Risk Committee to work with the Chief Operations Officer on providing early updates to the Committee about emerging risks.
- The Chancellor and President to meet once a year with the Chair of the Risk Committee.
- Update the University's Risk Appetite Statement to reflect the new DCU Strategy.

The Authority agreed that the Director of HR, Director of Finance and the Chief Operations Officer should look further into resources for the Risk and Compliance area.

FOR NOTING

9. STRATEGIC FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

9.1 Report of meeting 02nd June 2023

Brian Smyth, Chair of Strategic Finance Advisory Committee gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- This meeting had a single item agenda on the New Student Residences Tender. This will be discussed under agenda item 9.3.

9.2 Minutes of 4th April 2023

Noted by the Authority

FOR APPROVAL

9.3 Agreement to proceed to tender for Student Residences Phase 1

The Deputy COO and Director of Finance gave an update to the Authority. DCU want to ensure affordable on-campus accommodation and wish to progress previously planned developments, subject to satisfactory financial arrangements.

Phase 1 of the overall development consists of 405 beds for which agreement has been reached with HEA for a grant of €40.5m subject to approvals at appropriate stages of the development process.

In compliance with the Public Spending Code, the pack circulated prior to the meeting was reviewed by the Strategic Finance Advisory Committee which had recommended to the Governing Authority proceeding to tender. If approved today, approval from the HEA will be sought. It was noted that the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) was based on a version developed in 2017, however figures are now in line with inflation. The CBA was prepared by EY. The updated CBA for phase 1 remains positive.

When tenders are received, more detailed figures will be provided and reviewed by the Strategic Finance Advisory Committee and Executive. After that review, the Strategic Advisory Finance Committee will make a recommendation to Governing Authority.

After careful consideration, the Authority **approved** proceeding to tender.

FOR DISCUSSION / NOTING

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

10.1 Report of meeting of 15th June 2023

Rachel Hussey, Chair of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- The success in the Times Higher Impact Rankings. The Committee congratulated all involved. The Authority endorsed this.
- Deputy COO, Martin Ward, provided an update on the Public Sector Duty.
- Two policies, Dignity and Respect and Sexual Misconduct were launched.
- A presentation was received by the new EDI Manager, Rachel Power, on a Race Equality Plan being developed and gave an overview of current EDI activities.

10.2 Minutes of meeting of 06th April 2023

Noted by the Authority

10.3 Presentation on Athena Swan

Joanne Mulligan, Athena Swan Co-ordinator, was welcomed to the meeting. JM gave an overview on the criteria needed to achieve a silver award.

The Self-Assessment Team (SAT) are coordinating this and the team consists of people from various departments to ensure diversity.

The application closing date is April 2024 and the process takes a year.

Staff consultation has been the focus over recent months including the Staff Athena Swan Survey. This survey has concluded and analysis has begun. The full analysis should be completed by the end of September. There was a 57% response rate. A summary report will be shared with staff and it is hoped a full action plan based on the findings will be drafted by year-end.

The 2022-2024 Gender Action Plan will be submitted as part of the Silver award process.

The Authority thanked JM for a comprehensive presentation.

FOR DISCUSSION / NOTING

11. PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS

DCU President

The President gave an overview of his report which had been circulated to GA and highlighted the following:

- With great sadness, the President informed the Authority of the deaths of two students. The Chancellor will write to both families expressing condolences on behalf of the Authority.
- The President represented DCU on a Fingal County Council visit to Seattle at the Council's invitation.. The President noted that Fingal County Council are hugely supportive of DCU's role in Morton Stadium.
- Law Lecturer of the year was presented to Dr Aisling De Paor. The Authority congratulated AP on her award.
- DCU are signing an MOU with Louth/Meath Training Board and the initial focus of this is a pathways into Nursing programme.
- The Authority recognised the significant successes outlined in the President's written report.

Vice President of Academic Affairs

The Vice President of Academic Affairs Report was circulated and there was no further update.

Chief Operations Officer

The Chief Operations Officer Report was circulated and there was no further update.

Director of Finance

The Director of Finance noted that the accounts presented are for the five months up to 30th April 2023, and show a small surplus of €380k. Based on latest assumptions, the forecast is for a breakeven out-turn for the University for financial year 2022/23.

The Commercial Group financial group outlook remains strong, with good summer bookings.

The procurement competition for electricity costs has been completed and these costs increased by 80%-85% from 1st May 2023.

The COVID-19 Business interruption Insurance claim is ongoing and it is hoped there will be an update by the end of the year.

Director of Human Resources

Following on from the Athena Swan update, there was no further update from the Director of HR.

12. PERSONNEL MATTERS

The Chancellor noted that Kara McGann discussed the process of selecting the candidates being submitted for approval by the Authority (as previously agreed by GA) with the Director of Human Resources. Kara confirmed to the Chancellor that she is satisfied that the process followed was appropriate.

The Director of Human Resources submitted the following candidates for approval:

- Prof Ernesto Panadero for appointment as Prometric Chair in the DCU Institute of Education.
- Dr Agnes Maillot for appointment as Professor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Dr Debbie Ging for appointment as Professor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Dr Mark O'Brien for appointment as Professor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Approved by the Authority

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

Chancellor

Date

Action Items:

Action		Person responsible	Deadline
1.	Presentation from the Director of Student, Support and Development. The presentation should include Critical Incident Response and Lessons Learned on the sudden passing of a student.	Director of SS&D	December 2023
2	Circulate Organisation Diagram	Deputy President	When complete
3.	Report on DCU Educational Support Services, Educational Trust and Office of Student Life.	Marie Sinnott, Marian Corcoran, Cathal Marley	2023
4.	EICU Presentation	VP of Academic Affairs	2023
5.	Update the Stakeholder Matrix and have it reviewed by Executive on a regular basis.	Deputy President	ASAP
6.	Resources for the Risk and Compliance Area	Director of HR/Finance and COO	September 2023 meeting

Items to be tracked:

Action		Person responsible	Deadline
1.	Quarterly progress reports on each risk in the Strategic Risk Register.	President	Next update in October 2023
2.	Meetings of GA to be held at different locations.	COO	September 2023 meeting to take place on St Patrick's campus.
3	New Executive Director of Engagement to present on International Affairs	COO	2023

4.	Update on any changes to the Universities Act.	COO	As they arise
5.	Strategy only meetings.	Deputy President	Annually
6.	Deans to present on rotation	COO	Anne Looney to present at September 2023 meeting