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## GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

**Minutes of meeting of Wednesday 11 September 2024**  
**2.00pm, Accenture, 7 The Dock, Hanover quay.**

**PRESENT:**

|                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ms. Brid Horan (Chair)   | Mr Karl Ormsby              |
| Prof Daire Keogh         | Dr Audrey Bryan             |
| Prof Yvonne Daly         | Ms Michele Pringle          |
| Ms Carol Hanney          | Ms Marie Sinnott            |
| Ms Fiona Naughton (Zoom) | Mr Brian J. Smyth           |
| Mr Seamus Walsh          | Mr Justin Doyle             |
| Mr Cathal Marley         | Mr Josh King (Zoom)         |
|                          | Prof James O'Higgins Norman |

**APOLOGIES:**

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Ms Aoife Butler    | Mr David Harney |
| Ms Marian Corcoran | Mr John Darby   |

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Mr John Kilcoyne  | Prof Lisa Looney                         |
| Dr Declan Raftery | Mr Gareth Yore                           |
| Prof Anne Sinnott | Ms Lorraine Meaney (recording secretary) |

**WELCOME**

The Chancellor welcomed members and noted the apologies. It was noted that Josh King had joined the Governing Authority as the postgraduate student representative and was welcomed and introduced to the other members.

The Chancellor also thanked Accenture for hosting the Governing Authority meeting and their warm hospitality and invited Bryan Smith (Accenture) to speak about the building and location for the afternoon's meeting.

As today marks 23 years since the 9/11 terror attacks, the Chancellor spoke briefly on the anniversary, pausing to allow for members to acknowledge the significance of the date.

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 19th June 2024**

Subject to a correction on the attendance, the minutes were Approved by the Authority.

**2. REPORT OF MEETING OF 19th June 2024 FOR WEB PUBLICATION**

Approved by the Authority.

**3. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

**Action 1:** Presentation on AI - Ongoing

Prof. Lisa Looney and Dr. Monica Ward will present at October's meeting

There is a new online AI training programme in development with DCU People Training & Development Unit for all DCU staff, which will be available soon.

**Action 2:** Circulate Organisation Diagram - Complete

Item 3.a) on this meeting's agenda

**Action 3:** Update from the DCU Educational Trust Review Group -Complete

Item 5.1 on this meeting's agenda

**Action 4:** Update on DCU's Climate Action Plan - Complete

Item 3.b) this meeting's agenda

**Action 5:** Evaluation of GA - Ongoing

Item 5.2 on this meeting's agenda for appointment of selected service provider.

**Action 6:** Presentation on HR strategy and risks - Complete

Item 9 on this meeting's agenda.

**Actions to be tracked:**

**Action 1:** Quarterly progress reports on each risk in the Strategic Risk Register - Ongoing

It was noted that the Strategic Risk Register is due to be presented at the October meeting.

**Action 2:** Meetings of GA to be held at different locations - Ongoing

It was noted that locations for meetings are to be agreed in advance.

**Action 3:** Update on changes to the Universities Act 1997 - No changes to report

**Action 4:** Strategy meetings - Ongoing

It was noted that the Governing Authority should have at least one meeting per year focused on the University's strategy. It was suggested that January would be a suitable time to hold this meeting.

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**Action 5:** Deans to present in rotation - Ongoing

It was noted that Prof. Dominic Elliot, Executive Dean of the DCU Business School, will be asked to present at the October meeting.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

**No matters were arising.**

#### **5. GOVERNANCE**

##### **5.1 Governing Review of Educational Trust**

Deputy President, Prof. Anne Sinnott provided an update from the governance review group of the Educational Trust. There were eight governance-related recommendations under the following headings that were each outlined to the Governing Authority.

1. Board, Composition, Role and Diversity
2. Advisory Board formerly known as the (Council of Trustees)
3. Terms of Directors
4. Succession Planning
5. Reporting Relationship
6. Financial Management
7. Appointment of the Chair
8. Relationship to DCU Governing Authority

It was noted that the Chancellor had met with the chair of Educational Trust, as had the Chief Operations Officer. They spoke about governance and connection with the university.

It was clarified during the meeting that the chair role of DCU Educational Trust is not remunerated. The Governing Authority **adopted** the recommendations and these will be presented at the next meeting of the board of the Educational Trust.

##### **5.2 External Effectiveness Review of the Governing Authority**

Following the receipt of three quotes, it is proposed to appoint Governance Ireland to carry out the end of term effectiveness review of the Governing Authority. If approved, they will commence their review as soon as possible and the review should be completed within seven weeks.

The appointment of Governance Ireland is **approved by the governing authority.**

##### **5.3 Formation of next Governing Authority**

The process for selecting a new governing authority needs to be agreed by the Authority and the Minister for Further and Higher Education. The COO will bring a proposal for this process forward to the October meeting.

#### 5.4. Chancellor - President Performance Review

The Chancellor asked for the Authority to note that she had met for the second time recently with the President as part of his bi-annual Performance Review and reviewed progress to date and set new performance targets for the period ahead.

#### FOR APPROVAL

#### 6. Tender for Approval: Legionella Risk Assessment Services

A Memo from the COO was circulated with the papers for the meeting with details of the Legionella risk assessment tender recommendation. The University Executive had reviewed the results of the tender process and recommended proceeding to sign the 3 year contract with the option to extend for a further 2 years in line with the recommendations outlined.

It was confirmed that central procurement and the finance department have been consulted in this process. The remit of this appointment spans across all campuses and campus companies including Campus Residence and DCU Sports. There is approximately a 20% increase in the cost associated with this appointment.

This proposal is **approved by the governing authority.**

#### 7. C&AG audited Financial Statements

John Kilcoyne, Director of Finance, provided an overview of the audited financial statements 2022/2023 to be certified by the 30th of September for the year ending 30th September 2023. There were only minor changes since this had been presented in April as a draft document. No additional disclosures were requested by the C&AG. The Letter of Representation was circulated with the meeting papers.

The Financial Statement and Letter of Representation were **approved by the Governing Authority.**

#### 8. Presentation of Budget 2024/25

The Special Standing Committee of the Governing Authority received a detailed briefing from the President and the Director of Finance on September 3rd last on the University Budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

It was agreed following that meeting that the full Governing Authority should also receive a detailed briefing from the President and the Director of Finance at today's meeting.

Although the University presented a balanced budget for the approval of the Governing Authority the following was noted:

1. Significant and difficult cost reduction measures have had to be taken to present a balanced budget.

2. Core teaching, research, and student support activities of the University have been prioritised in terms of resource allocation.
3. There are very significant underlying risks in the budget position presented including little or no capacity for the University to absorb unforeseen costs over the course of the next financial year.
4. Planned capital investment on existing buildings has had to be reduced by 50%
5. The University is dealing with a number of years of accumulated inflation that is impacting on the costs of a broad range of goods and services purchased by the University. Key examples include the recent gas price tender that resulted in a c.43% increase in the unit cost, and maintenance costs have increased by over 25%.
6. The University remains under-funded from the recent public sector pay awards and with a further public sector pay award due in October.

The financial position of the University is the most challenging experienced since the financial crisis of 2008. The Governing Authority agreed to get regular updates on the budgetary position and the underlying risks, at each meeting for the year ahead. The University continues to have a strong balance sheet and cash position.

#### FOR DISCUSSION / Noting

### **9. DCU People: Strategy and Risks (Presentation)**

Director of DCU People, Gareth Yore, presented “DCU People & Risk Mitigation” to the governing authority.

The presentation linked the DCU People risk register with the mission for the university’s strategic objectives and also outlines the actions for DCU People in the coming months, including:

- Full Launch of a new DCU People website
- Proposed Changes to Resource Committee going to Executive
- Launch of new Strategic Workforce Planning (SEP) Process
- Remote Working Pilot converting to a new University Policy
- Presenting a redesigned Staff Retention and Strategic Recruitment policy for Executive Approval
- New DCU EDI Governance Structure established
- Revised Essential E Learning Strategy post SWP
- Employee Engagement Survey
- AI Awareness training for all staff
- Implementing a Living the Values campaign promoting our culture, values and on campus environment

### **10. DCU - HEA Performance Agreement 2023-2028**

Deputy President, Professor Anne Sinnott, outlined the context of the Draft HEA Performance Agreement, which was circulated to the members of the Governing authority prior to the meeting.

There is typically a four-year period between agreements which was expected to be signed off in July with the HEA, however it still has not been published. Although it is believed that this is the final version.

There are 5 key pillars addressed in this agreement:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Research
3. Access and Participation
4. Engagement (Sustainable development)
5. Engagement

## **11. Audit Committee**

### **11.1 Report of meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2024**

Cathal Marley, Chair of the DCU Audit committee, provided an update to the Governing Authority. The Audit committee met on September 3rd, 2024. There are a number of internal audit reviews and follow up action tracking items being worked through. A joint risk committee and audit committee meeting is scheduled for 20th November 2024. There were no matters of significance that the Audit Committee wished to highlight from their meeting at this time.

There has been a resignation in the internal audit department, so there is a potential delay expected while a new internal auditor is recruited. The head of Internal Audit will discuss resourcing with the Director of DCU People and the Director of Finance as this challenge presents a significant risk to the Internal audit department's current audit plan.

**Noted** by the Authority

### **11.2 Minutes of meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

The minutes of the Audit committee meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 were **Noted** by the Governing Authority

## **12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee**

### **12.1 Report of meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Seamus Walsh, Chair of the EDI Committee, provided an EDI update to the Governing Authority.

The Governing Authority EDI subcommittee meeting took place on the 4th of September 2024. On the public sector duty update, compliance has been delivered across all 10 functional areas.

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The achievement of attaining the Athena Swan Silver award represents a substantial step up from the bronze level and a comprehensive action plan is now being put in place. This is the strong assurance that EDI is valued across the university. Specifically, Joanne Mulligan was thanked for her effort and huge contribution in managing the application process for the Athena Swan Silver level.

Key EDI updates include:

- Race and Equality is being set up with a dedicated web page.
- October will be Black History Month for DCU.
- The new intake for the Aurora Leadership Development Program will commence shortly.
- Well-being initiatives to put in place a policy around menopause is being implemented.
- There's a staffing network for Pride being established.

It was noted that Peter Cosgrove's term on the EDI Committee had come to an end, and the Committee will need to address the gender balance by inviting another external member to replace him. The Chancellor will discuss this with the Chair of the Committee. The Chancellor thanked all involved.

12.2 Minutes of meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

**Noted** by the Authority

### **13. PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS**

#### **DCU President**

DCU President, Professor Dáire Keogh, noted that there has been a strong CAO performance for DCU. Many areas of the university have worked in cooperation to deliver these student numbers in a challenging operating environment that is very competitive. The President notes that Access numbers have held up, while nationally the numbers have dipped. So that is a very positive reflection on the Access program at DCU.

The President recently attended the Aer Lingus Football Classic and observes that it's a great opportunity for DCU to expand its network. DCU had an honourable mention during the event with the University of Notre Dame having announced its collaboration with DCU During the event.

The president also recently met with an Taoiseach, along with IUA Presidents from TU's and IoT's . The meeting was productive and will provide a forum to communicate the key messages from the DCU agenda and concerns echoed across the HE sectors.

#### **Vice President of Academic Affairs**

Lisa Looney, Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar, updated Governing authority on the SIS project. 14,000 students have registered to date. All students will have received

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their invitation to register by 12<sup>th</sup> September. In July, during a testing phase, 30 invitations to register had identified several issues which were resolved at that time, therefore the phased approach has proven to be correct.

The student intake is now being managed by Registry with SIS team support and additional support provided by ISS. While some student issues still exist, they are being managed as they arise. Overall, the launch has gone as expected. The Director of ISS notes that despite such a huge system change the number of issues is comparable to previous years. The next expected milestones will be the exam period, followed by the Progression and Award Boards (PABs). Issues and fixes are being documented to ensure records for resolution are in place for future use.

#### **Chief Operations Officer**

Dr Declan Raftery, Chief Operations Officer, provided updates on capital projects.

The Campus Residence project is now in a competitive dialogue process, as previously advised. Five of the seven tenderers which submitted to the original tender are still being engaged with the process. An information session is scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> of September. The aim is to receive revised tender submission ca November 29<sup>th</sup> that will meet our construction budget target and allow for this project to move forward with grant aid funding from Government. DCUs procurement unit has been engaged throughout this process, with support from our legal procurement advisors, to ensure compliance with procurement regulations.

The Polaris building works are nearing completion with an expected building handover date of the 28<sup>th</sup> of October next.

#### **Director of Finance**

As Director of Finance, John Kilcoyne, presented the budget for 2024/25 as item 8 in this meeting, he provided only a brief further update to advise the committee that the Department of Social Protection have confirmed that their review has now been completed.

#### **Director of DCU People**

Director of DCU People, Gareth Yore, advised that there is a reorganisation of the Business Partners and Talent Acquisition team. This change will allow for more efficient support to the university.

He also advised that the EDI governance structures are changing, and that an update will be provided to University Executive and SMG in due course.

The DCU People website has been launched. Feedback has been positive so far with minor glitches being worked through.



For Approval

**14. PERSONNEL MATTERS**

The Chancellor noted she had discussed the process of selecting the candidates being submitted for approval by the Authority with Gareth Yore, Director of DCU People (as previously agreed by GA). The Chancellor confirmed that she is satisfied that the processes followed were appropriate.

The Director of DCU People submitted the following candidates for approval:

- Professor Sharon O'Brien, Full Professor in Translation Studies, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Permanent Contract
- Professor John Costello, Emeritus Full Professor, School of Physical Sciences, Faculty of Science and Health
- Professor Alan Smeaton, Emeritus Full Professor, School of Computing, Faculty of Engineering and Computing
- Professor Andy Way, Emeritus Full Professor, School of Computing, Faculty of Engineering and Computing
- Professor Peter Hunt, Adjunct Professor, School of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, 3 Year Fixed Term Contract

Approved by the Authority

**15. Artificial intelligence.**

Noel Doody, Accenture, delivered a presentation on artificial intelligence to the Governing Authority. A copy of the presentation will be shared on Convene after the meeting.

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chancellor has requested a change to the Governing Authority subcommittees terms of reference to allow for any of the external Governing Authority members to attend the sub-committee meetings and that they would be considered a committee member when deciding if the meeting was quorate.

**This proposal was approved by the Governing Authority.**