MINUTES

Board/Committee	:	Governing Authority
Meeting	:	Meeting M24-11
Venue	:	Boardroom, LISB
Date	:	29 October 2024
Attendance	:	June Arnold (MST); Ronan Cahill; Donal Donovan; Síofra Foley; Lucy Edith Kiiza; Shane Kilcommins; Brigid Laffan (Chair); Edmond Magner; Aibhlín McCrann; Anne O'Connor; Sinéad O'Flanagan (MST); Mark Southern; Bob Strunz
Apologies	:	Liam Carroll; Kevin Fleming; Ann Marie Kennedy;
In Attendance	:	Grainne Frain; Ciara Hogan; John Field; John Kelly; Pat O'Neill.

1. GENERAL

1.1 NOTED Briefing by the Chancellor on the revised format for the agenda. The Governing Authority will in future make time for an in-depth discussion on key issues confronting the University. The December meeting will focus on research, while the January 2025 meeting will address the student record system. Recruitment will be discussed in February 2025. Beyond this outlook, members are encouraged to suggest additional topics by forwarding them to the Chancellor for planning purposes.

1.2 NOTED On October 18, the Minister for DFHERIS announced at Plassey House the introduction of a new direct entry undergraduate medicine program at UL, along with other health-related programs. This programme is a significant enhancement to the University's health service offerings. Relevant faculties will be asked by the Executive to prepare a paper on how this expansion can benefit research and create opportunities within both UL and UHL.

1.3 NOTED The Chancellor, on behalf of herself and the Governing Authority, expressed gratitude for the contributions given by Executive Committee (EC) members, Professor Shane Kilcommins, Mr John Kelly, and Mr John Field, in advancing the Section 64 process, which is now moving into the next phase. The Acting President noted that every member of the Executive Committee worked extremely hard during this period to ensure that the various reviewers' requirements were met, and that the business of the University continued.

1.4 Condolences

1.4.1 NOTED Condolences were expressed to Mr Liam Carroll and Ms Ann Marie Kennedy on their recent family bereavements.

1.5 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1.5.1 AGREED Minutes of M24-10 of 24 September 2024 with one amendment proposed by Mr Ronan Cahill.

1.6 Governing Authority Action Items

1.6.1 NOTED Document entitled "Sixth Governing Authority Action Items to October 2024 Meeting", previously circulated.

1.6.2 NOTED There are a small number of self-assessment questionnaires still outstanding. A report analysing the results will be presented to the December meeting.

1.7 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1.7.1 NOTED The Corporate Secretary requested members to declare if they had a conflict of interest arising in relation to any matters on the agenda. None were declared.

2. PROCESS FOR NEW PRESIDENT

2.1 NOTED Memorandum from the Corporate Secretary entitled "Commencement of Process for Appointment of the President", dated 29 October 2024.

2.2. NOTED Briefing by the Chancellor on the process and role, norms across the sector, which generally included a Search Board and a Selection Board. The University's current processes are set out in Statute 1 (provided), and the Regulations made pursuant thereto. The Search Board can, if it deems it appropriate, utilise the services of professional search consultants. In addition, the HEA wrote to the Chancellor on 7 October 2024 regarding the advancement of gender equality in the appointment process for the new President.

2.3 NOTED Detailed discussion including the following:

- Very likely professional consultants will be required to assist with the recruitment process. The Search and Selection Boards, including their composition, will require further review by the Governing Authority. No decision will be made at this meeting, but general acknowledgement that this will be amongst the most important tasks for this Governing Authority;
- It is essential to reflect on past learnings and processes, evaluate previous performance, consider the use of tools such as psychometric testing, and address any shortcomings identified as needed to ensure the right leadership is in place to facilitate cultural change;
- Suggested there may be a case for the Selection Board to present two candidates to the Governing Authority for consideration giving members an effective and substantive voice but contrary views also expressed about this suggestion;
- A clear and robust process is a requirement to recommend a preferred candidate for a senior appointment;
- The Governing Authority must rely on the Selection Board to do its work and be presented with a substantial dossier on the proposed candidate and what they can bring to the University in line with the norm across the sector;
- A member who was on the previous Search Committee shared their insights about the process, highlighting the consultants' contribution and noting that the process worked well;
- No single candidate will fulfil all the criteria required to fill this strategic role. The best candidate will confidently articulate their strengths and weaknesses, as well as recognise the expertise and skills they need to complement their own and how they can build a team around them;

- The role for senior UL staff and members of Governing Authority is to generate interest in the position, thereby attracting a strong field of candidates;
- UL needs to understand what is needed for the next phase and ensure that the appointed candidate will offer the University robust leadership given the sensitivities of the current situation;
- As the costs will likely exceed €50k a tender process will be necessary for selecting consultants;
- The significance of having external members on the Selection Board with a broad perspective, relevant experience, and potentially a former President of a similar institution on the Board.

2.4 AGREED The previous process, which involved inviting input from the campus community regarding the qualities desired in the President, should be maintained and perhaps further developed.

2.5 AGREED A paper on the recruitment process for the President to be considered at the next meeting.

3. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE (SDZ)

3.1 NOTED Memorandum from the Acting President entitled "Proposed Strategic Development Zone, University of Limerick / Clare County Council", dated 22 October 2024.

3.2 NOTED A briefing by the Acting President included the following:

- [redacted]
- Although the Governing Authority received a briefed from a GA SDZ Working Group in November 2021, [redacted]
- The due diligence conducted included assigning the Acting CCO to review the SDZ process to-date. Additionally, a consultant was engaged to examine reports commissioned by both UL and CCC, [redacted]
- Briefing documents presented to the GA outlined costs over a four-year period, most of which have been largely expended. [redacted] Future costs for master-planning are estimated at circa €200k, which might have been met with assistance from CCC. The capital costs moving forward will depend on the specifics of the masterplan and funding related to the nature of the development;
- UL has developed a draft Framework for Physical Development and Landscape Management Policy that will inform the masterplan, thereby shortening both the process and costs. The final costs will be shared between UL and CCC, with the

latter estimating [redacted] However, it is believed these costs will be substantially reduced due to existing documentation;

- Under current land zoning regulations, the normal planning process is applicable. Each element of any development plan necessitates specific planning approvals and additional information from the local authority, which may be subject to challenge. This can lead to significant delays, increased costs, and uncertainty;
- In contrast, SDZ affords certain advantages including:
  - Future planning applications complying with the principles in the masterplan (subject to appeal) will be granted permissions and are not appealable to An Bord Pleanála;
  - Experience noted shows that full Grants of Permission would take approximately eight weeks after designation;
  - SDZ would assist with concerns around planning, timing and lands within the SDZ not in UL, options for compulsory purchase could be exercised by CCC in accordance will all legal requirements;
  - Other advantages were noted including:
    - Detailed plan for long term development on the North Bank campus
    - Significant attraction for industrial 'partners' in developing Academies of Learning designed to their requirement
    - Flexibility and agility, potential catalyst for FDI or indigenous industries to locate and innovate on campus or general area
    - Additional land for future development, opportunity to redevelop Errina Canal, and further development of commercial/recreational facilities
    - Revive plans for Limerick Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and local rail stations
- [redacted]
- [redacted]

[redacted]

3.3 NOTED Detailed discussion including the following:

- UL aims to avoid a narrow perspective, maintaining its partnership with CCC and keeping development on the North Campus to the fore, but not through the vehicle of the SDZ at this time;
- It was suggested that UL should avoid short-term thinking and to keep avenues open for significant opportunities, including collaboration with industry;
- In an effort to improve, UL will need to adopt a more outward-looking perspective;
- The Chancellor and members conveyed their gratitude to both the Acting CCO and the Acting President for the detailed analysis and their efforts on this project;
- Concern expressed that the relevant matters were not previously considered and/or given adequate consideration by either the EC and Governing Authority;
- View expressed that, as an educational institution, the primary focus should be on education and research which was not clearly reflected in the SDZ;
- Important to clarify how the funds were utilised and ensure that this aligns with the appropriate regulations;
- Highlighting the significance of research for engaging with industry, as UL serves as a valuable resource for them. Additionally, it is important to consider the competition posed by the technological universities;
- It is essential to ensure that proposals such as the SDZ go through appropriate process while allowing UL to maintain its capacity for innovation;
- The Chair of the ARC noted that it supported the view that the SDZ should not progress. He mentioned that there is currently a low appetite for such risks, and stakeholders would view it positively that UL is not hurrying due to a time-sensitive project of this magnitude;
- The CFPO confirmed that although there are still some invoices pending payment, there will be no additional significant financial outlay;
- It was noted that the Campus Development Committee will review the Framework for Physical Development, which outlines the long-term vision for the campus, and this will subsequently be presented to the Governing Authority.

3.3 AGREED That the application to seek designation of lands adjacent to the North Campus as a Strategic Development Zone will be withdrawn.

4. APPOINTMENTS

4.1 Promotion - Personal Chair

4.1.1 [redacted]

4.1.2 AGREED In accordance with the Policy for Internal Promotion to Professor (Personal Chair) to approve the promotion of [redacted] to Full Professor (Personal Chair).

4.2 Academic Staff Appointments

4.2.1 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997 to appoint [redacted] as Teaching Fellow in Electrical Engineering on a [redacted] contract basis.

4.2.2 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997 to appoint [redacted] as Associate Professor B in Food Science on a [redacted] contract basis.

4.2.3 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997 to appoint [redacted] as Practice Education Coordinator in Occupational Therapy [redacted] on a [redacted] contract basis.

4.2.4 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997 to appoint [redacted] as Assistant Professor in Psychology on a [redacted].

4.2.5 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997 to appoint [redacted] as Assistant Professor in Psychology on a [redacted] contract basis.

4.2.6 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997 to appoint [redacted] as Assistant Professor in Public Health on a [redacted] basis.

4.3 Support Staff Appointments

4.3.1 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997, the filling of the following staff posts:

[redacted] Student Engagement Officer
Regional Placement Facilitator in Speech & Language Therapy
Senior Technical Officer
Senior Administrator
Senior Technical Officer
Administrator
Senior Technical Officer
Public Engagement Officer (ISE)
Senior Multimedia Designer.

4.4 Academic Promotions

4.4.1 NOTED Memorandum from the Director, Human Resources entitled "Academic Promotions – Associate Professor A to Professor", dated 29 October 2024.

4.4.2 NOTED Academic promotions from Associate Professor A to Professor recently approved by the President on the recommendation of the University Promotions Board.

4.5 NOTED Memorandum from the Director, Human Resources entitled "Notification of appointments", dated 29 October 2024 which set out the appointments approved by Governing Authority online since the last meeting in September 2024.

4.6 NOTED Memorandum from the Acting President entitled [redacted] dated 29 October 2024 setting out [redacted]

4.7 NOTED Research funded contract appointments for October 2024 as circulated.

4.8 Promotions Review Request

4.8.1 NOTED The Corporate Secretary advised members that he has received review requests from three candidates unsuccessful in the promotion process from Associate Professor A to Professor.

4.8.2 NOTED In accordance with the Policy and Procedures for the Promotion of Academic Staff, the Governing Authority are requested to appoint a Review Committee comprising three of its members (none of whom will be a senior officer of the University,) one of whom will chair the Committee.

4.8.3 AGREED The Corporate Secretary will liaise with external members after the meeting seeking interest in joining the Review Committee.

4.8.4 NOTED Discussion regarding members' current capacity to handle appeals. It was noted the process is currently under review and that revising the relevant policies will require some time.

4.9 NOTED A member voiced concerns about the number of errors in the appointments submitted to the Governing Authority in recent months.

4.9.1 AGREED The Acting President will address this matter with the Human Resources Division.

4.10 AGREED Recruitment and management will be the focus of a detailed discussion at the February 2025 meeting, involving the appropriate personnel from the Human Resources Division.

5. HEA PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

5.1 NOTED Document entitled "HEA System Performance Framework 2023-2028: Performance Agreement between University of Limerick and the Higher Education Authority".

5.2 NOTED The Acting President provided an update on the HEA Performance Agreement, highlighting that Draft 5, was shared with the FSPC for feedback after being reviewed by the Executive Committee. The deadline of 29 October created a very tight timeline for members to submit their comments.

5.3 NOTED FSPC members raised several concerns, including: the tight timeframe for providing feedback; [redacted]

5.4 NOTED The Acting President thanked the Chair and the FSPC members for their feedback, which they will incorporate in the draft if the HEA is open to it. He also acknowledged the contribution of [redacted] for their work on the Agreement, which is set to be submitted to the HEA in November. The Agreement can be adjusted to incorporate the S.64 reports and will evolve as the new strategy is developed. The strong relationship with the HEA, along with the expertise of the Director of Strategic Planning, will be of valuable assistance for the Agreement moving forward.

5.5 AGREED To incorporate the feedback into the HEA Agreement to the best ability and identify key areas for consideration in the strategic plan.

5.5 NOTED The Corporate Secretary will ensure the Agreement is included in the Governing Authority's programme of work for next year.

6. S.64 REVIEW, IMPLEMENTATION/RECOVERY PLAN

6.1 NOTED The Acting President informed members that representatives from the HEA will be visiting UL on 6 November. In the meantime, informal discussions have taken place regarding ongoing initiatives. The upcoming meeting with the HEA will focus on a comprehensive and robust recovery and implementation plan for UL. This draft plan will incorporate all findings and recommendations from the S.64 reports. The Executive Committee will consider the recovery plan and its tracker on a bi-weekly basis.

6.2 AGREED The recovery plan will be shared with Governing Authority for review on November 14, after incorporating any amendments requested by the HEA. Members will be invited to share their feedback, and if significant changes are proposed, the Governing Authority will convene an MS Teams meeting to discuss them.

6.3 NOTED Both the [redacted] will be circulated to members as soon as they are received.

6.4 NOTED Discussion around the responsibility of the Governing Authority and Executive's Committee in leading cultural change.

7. RISK

7.1 NOTED Documents entitled "Enterprise Risk Management Policy", "Enterprise Risk Appetite Statement" and "Enterprise Risk Management Handbook".

7.2 NOTED Briefing by Mr Pat O'Neill, Chair, Audit & Risk Committee and the Corporate Secretary on the updated Policy and Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) reflecting the latest consideration regarding [redacted] It also outlines the linkages between the Fundamental Risk Register and Local Risk Registers; details the process for handling deviations from the RAS; and outlines the next steps moving forward.

7.3 NOTED The Chancellor expressed appreciation for the efforts made so far in identifying and clarifying mitigations and thanked the Corporate Secretary and the Risk Management Officer for their contributions to this important work.

7.4 AGREED To approve the Enterprise Risk Management Policy", "Enterprise Risk Appetite Statement" as presented.

7.5 NOTED The "Enterprise Risk Management Handbook" as presented.

8. ACTING PRESIDENTS' REPORT

8.1 NOTED Document entitled "Acting President's Report to Governing Authority, October 2024, previously circulated. A briefing by the Acting President included the following:

- **Undergraduate Medicine:** introduction of new direct entry undergraduate medicine program expanding UL's dedication to innovation and quality in education and fostering a new generation of skilled and compassionate health care professionals;
- **S64:** update with a visit in early November by the HEA to discuss the next steps in the Section 64 report process. The final two reports relating to culture and protected disclosures will be instrumental in shaping the recovery plan;
- **HEA Performance Agreement:** with the fifth draft before the Governing Authority for approval and five key performance objectives in teaching, research, access, regional regeneration, and leadership;
- **Strategy:** the Director of Strategic Planning, is liaising regularly with EC on timelines and priorities for the new strategic plan 2025-2030, establishing priority KPI baseline targets and concentrating on three pillars research, teaching and learning, and engagement/impact. The Director has also developed performance scorecards/ digital dashboards;
- **Risk Management:** including streaming of the Fundamental Risk Register to 13 key risks;
- **ULF Board Meeting:** updating members on work being undertaken around institutional reforms and governance, recovery and implementation plan, reputational rebuilding, SDZ, Honan's Quay, and research;
- **Vice President Research:** including two applications to Research Ireland with one progressing to full proposal stage and noting that Lero will not have new centre funding beyond 2026; UL PI's leadership roles with TCU and TCD with regard to centre applications; Enterprise Ireland Technology Centers ecosystem; world top 2% scientist rankings; KT Boost Metrics; RIS Implementation;
- **Faculty Reports:** AHSS**:** focus on transforming education and internationalization; EHS: submissions to EU Postdoctoral Fellowships and IRC and significant uplift and postgraduate registrations; KBS: Visit by EQUIS Accreditation body; S+E: focus on student staff ratios.

8.2 NOTED Detailed discussion including the following:

- Members expressed their approval of the new format of the Acting President's Report, noting that it is both improved and more concise;
- The recent positive launch of the undergraduate medical school programme by the Minister at UL was met with enthusiasm and approval. This positive development is seen as a significant step forward in enhancing medical education and training;

- It was suggested the University should review the insights gained from the veterinary school submission to inform future possible calls e.g. pharmacy. Learnings voiced by the Acting President included presenting with a unified institutional voice, advocating for early drafting instead of reacting to calls, and ensuring alignment with our existing strengths;
- The absence of future funding for Lero is very disappointing for the University. Engaging in a thorough discussion about this issue could provide valuable insights that may benefit other research centres as well;
- The importance of conducting a multi-year analysis with regard to rankings;
- The VPR will address the issue of rankings and research centres during the upcoming meeting focused on research;
- There are numerous synergies in UL, particularly in health sciences, which is a growth area with opportunities for curriculum development, such as social care and social sciences and pharma.

9. STUDENT RELATED MATTERS

9.1 Student Life Report

9.1.1 NOTED Document entitles "Report of UL Student Life for the Governing Authority – Authored by Ronan Cahill and Siofra Foley as of 18/10/2024". The President, Student Life and Deputy President & Welfare Officer highlighted a range of items in the Report including: Commuter Hub; Accommodation Demonstration; Pressing Welfare Issues, specifically the counselling service with UL as an outlier on the student to counsellor ratio; cost of living; laptop loan scheme; concerns for the semester with a 25% in financial aid requests; Advice & Advocacy; Appointments; Accommodation; Academic and Financial Issues; Information and Services; and Student Life Statistic Summary.

9.2 Postgraduate Students' Union Report

9.2.1 NOTED Document entitled "Report from UL Postgraduate Students' Union to Governing Authority, dated October 29th 2024 – Authored and presented by Lucy Edith Kiiza". The President, PSU highlighted a range of items in the Report including: Part-time jobs for students; PSU Breakfast Club including a request for a yearly longstanding commitment; PSU Executive and Council Election; Voicing for Students; Progress update on PSU automatic door; and Events Update.

10. ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

10.1 NOTED Document entitled "Academic Council (AC) Report". The Acting President briefed members on the Report including the following:

- Ratification of Examination Board Results;
- Linked Provider Institutional Reviews including MIC and Garda College;
- Rescinding of Joint Degree and Dual Awards Policy – approved by Academic Council;
- Student Dignity & Respect Policy and Procedures – approved by Academic Council;
- EU Qualifications Governance Framework;
- Generative Artificial Intelligence Principles;
- Academic Programme Review Committee Report;
- Academic Regulations Committee Report;
- Credit Base;

- External Examiners Nominations;
- Human Rights Based Framework to Guide Institutional Activity
- Limerick International College at Henan Polytechnic University Update.

10.2 NOTED Exploration of the effects of transitioning the existing credit framework to a more standardised model, which will be reviewed further by the Academic Council.

10.3 AGREED To approve the rescinding of the Joint Degree and Dual Awards Policy.

10.4 AGREED To accept the Academic Council Report to the Governing Authority.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

11.1 CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CDC)

11.1.1 NOTED Document entitled "Campus Development Committee, October 2024", previously circulated.

11.1.2 NOTED The Interim Chair, Ms June Arnold, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the Governing Authority on the matters addressed in the Report including:

- Ms June Arnold serving as interim Chair;
- Terms of Reference (TOR);
- Workplan;
- Student Accommodation;
- Stables Roof Remediation Project – Committee agreed to approve proposal to seek planning permission;
- Upgrade of Existing Antennae and Provision of Additional Antennae - Committee agreed to approve proposal to seek planning permission;
- Procedural Checklist of Capital Projects.

11.1.3 NOTED Discussion including the following:

- The Chair, CDC must be an external member and with the current external's commitments, the Governing Authority may wish to consider a new Chair once the new Ministerial nominees are appointed;
- Members were broadly satisfied with the draft TOR but with the functions of the FSPC, the mandates of the two committees requires further clarification;
- The provision for the review of risks that relate to the work of the Committee should be added to the TOR;
- The Corporate Secretary and Director Buildings & Estates (D,B&E) clarified to the CDC how following recommendations from the Deloitte Report, the Policy for Acquisition is being reviewed and that Deloitte as experts, have been commissioned to prepare a new policy for the acquisition of assets, property, infrastructure, etc., with a clear due diligence process;
- A broadly similar policy would need to be prepared in relation to capital projects which are not acquisitions to include thresholds, refurbishment and research equipment capitalized and clear approval routes in line with the relevant committee structure;

- Members' conscious the Stables is the first project post Section 64 wanted to ensure the required process was being followed. The procedural checklist will act as an interim measure in providing assurance to both the CDC and FSPC in their consideration of capital projects until the full policy review is completed. The checklist will be also considered by the FSPC at their next meeting;
- The emphasis on the importance of student accommodation. Addressing student accommodation effectively requires a comprehensive strategy that considers both immediate needs and long-term planning.

11.1.4 NOTED As the TOR is currently drafted the CDC has a role in the approval of planning permission in respect of projects that are referred to in (a) approved Framework for Capital Developments; (b) approved Capital Development Plan; or (c) in other developments or change of use which required planning. The Committee questioned their role in reviewing broader capital acquisitions or developments or is it to be confined to just planning.

11.1.5 NOTED The issue of a financial threshold for the CDC was queried, as had been previously raised with the FPSC with its approval limit reduced to €1m. It is important to have clarity on the matter as to whether the CDC are to approve projects to progress to planning permission or whether it should link to a financial threshold.

11.1.6 NOTED With the CDC having two important functions of overseeing the preparation of a Framework for Physical Development for the University Campus and the preparation of a five-year Capital Plan, which will be revised, probably annually, to reflect shifting priorities. The D,B&E will present at their next meeting on the preparing the Physical Development Framework as well as setting out the process and milestones for the preparation of a Capital Plan.

11.1.7 NOTED The area of digital infrastructure would benefit from oversight by a committee and should be considered further.

11.1.8 NOTED The CDC approved both the Stables Roof Remediation Project, and the Upgrade of Existing Antennae and Provision for Additional Antennae in respect of matters requiring planning permission.

11.2 FINANCE, STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE COMMMITTEE

11.2.1 NOTED Document entitled "Finance, Strategy & & Performance Committee, Chair's Report to the Governing Authority, 29 October 2024", previously circulated.

11.2.2 NOTED The Chair, Mr Donal Donovan, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the Governing Authority on the matters addressed in the Report including:

- Masters' Taught Programmes;
- Strategic Scorecard;
- HEA Performance Agreement;
- Student Fee Rates 2025/26 – recommendation for approval;
- Annual Workplan.

11.2.3 NOTED Detailed discussion including the following:

- The Director of Strategic Planning delivered an informative briefing to the FSPC on the strategic scorecard, with the first prototype set to be presented to the Committee in January 2025;

- The scorecard will gather data from within the University using a data warehouse to display performance against the agreed KPIs;
- It is envisaged that new senior management will seek to contribute to the new strategic plan, which could affect timelines and should be taken into consideration;
- It would be beneficial to have details on the components of the ranking system and to utilize this data to contribute to broader discussions at the Governing Authority;
- Our chosen KPIs should be aligned with the rankings metrics;
- It was suggested that additional IT support would expedite the strategic scorecard process;
- It is essential that the University determines the maximum number of students it will accept, and that this should be factored into the strategic plan;
- Where UL sees itself positioned in the higher education landscape in Ireland, Europe and internationally is an important topic for discussion. This should include an analysis of rankings, even though being in the top 500 can seem arbitrary. Additionally, significant ratio measures are important since they are quite high in UL;
- There is strong support from the Government for the technological universities and they will also require significant resources going forward.

11.2.4 NOTED Member requested a memorandum on the most important rankings setting out where UL stands with regards to the various indicators.

11.2.5 AGREED To approve the fee rates for 2025-25 as set out in the Appendix to the Report.

11.3 PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE (P&CC)

11.3.1 NOTED Document entitled “People and Culture Committee, Chair’s Report to the Governing Authority 29 October 2024”, previously circulated.

11.3.2 NOTED Ms Aibhlín McCrann, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the Governing Authority on the matters addressed in the Report including:

- Marketing and Communications Plan – with a presentation by the Director of Marketing & Communication;
- Performance Development Review Policy;
- Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy – recommendation for approval;
- Terms of Reference and Programme of Work – to be revisited on completion of [redacted]

11.3.3 NOTED There was extensive discussion at the P&CC regarding the Performance Development Review Policy, with some members raised concerns about a lack of ambition, and the need for attention to tone. The Committee plans to further review this Policy before making a recommendation to the Governing Authority for approval.

11.3.4 AGREED To approve the Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy as presented.

11.4 STUDENT EXPERIENCE, ACCESS & EQUALITY COMMITTEE

11.4.1 NOTED Document entitled “Student Experience, Access & Equality Committee, Chair’s Report to the Governing Authority”, previously circulated.

11.4.2 NOTED The Chair, Ms June Arnold, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the Governing Authority on the matters addressed in the Report including:

- Terms of Reference – recommendation for approval;
- Workplan;
- Student Health;
- Student Accommodation;
- Student Substance Use Policy – recommendation for approval.

11.4.3 NOTED Detailed discussion including the following:

- Two primary areas of concern are support for health services and student accommodation;

- The Acting President informed members that, together with the President, Student Life, and COO, PCC have meet with B&E to discuss both affordable interim accommodation solutions and long-term plans for additional beds on campus;
- There are concerns regarding the counselling ratios at UL, which fall well outside the sectoral norm. This Executive Committee is currently addressing this issue through workforce planning;
- Queries raised as to how the system currently operates; the use of digital platforms; how appointments are made; and how interventions are dealt with for acute cases; linking student union support in line with inflation; benchmarking;
- The CFPO noted that the capitation to the students' unions will increase by €10 euro over the next two years noting that undergraduate fees have remained unchanged for the last twelve years;

11.4.4 AGREED A paper will come through the SEAEC with regard to the health services and then the Governing Authority for further discussion.

11.4.5 AGREED To approve the Terms of Reference and the Student Substance Use Policy as presented.

11.5 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE (ARC)

11.5.1 NOTED Document entitled "Audit and Risk Committee, October 2024, previously circulated. Mr Pat O'Neill, Chair, ARC briefed the Governing Authority on the matters addressed in the Report including:

- Section 64 Review Update;
- Student Records System Update;
- [redacted]
- Update on KPMG Report;
- Quarterly Procurement Update;
- Internal Audit – Charter; Resourcing; Draft Internal Audit Plan 2024-26;
- ARC Terms of Reference – recommended for approval;
- Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement - recommended for approval and in Section 7 above;
- Strategic Development Zone;
- Contract Signing Policy – recommendation for approval;
- Annual Meetings with Risk Management Officer and Internal Auditor.

11.5.2 NOTED A clause concerning term of membership, along with a process for appointing ore removing members, should be included in all committees' terms of reference.

11.5.3 [redacted]

11.5.4 NOTED Briefing by the CFPO that the 2023 financial statements are still pending sign-off by the external auditors, PwC. All field work has been completed, there are no significant issues other than Rhebogue. PwC in Dublin have reviewed the file and now await UL's approval regarding (1) if there are any other matters that need to be addressed to ensure comprehensive assurance has been achieved [redacted]

11.5.5 NOTED The delay in signing off the financial statements has potentially serious implications for the US Federal Aid Scheme, which is a significant serious concern for the University. It is essential that these statements are approved as soon as possible noting the annual deadline is March 31.

11.5.6 AGREED To approve the Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference and Contract Signing Policy as presented.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Schedule of Meetings

12.1.1 NOTED Memorandum from the Corporate Secretary entitled "Proposed Schedule of Governing Authority Meetings 2025", dated 14 October 2024.

12.1.2 AGREED To approve the following dates with each meeting commencing at 13h00:

2025
Tuesday 28 January
Tuesday 25 February
Tuesday 25 March
Tuesday 29 April
Tuesday 27 May
Tuesday 24 June
Tuesday 30 September
Tuesday 28 October
Tuesday 25 Nov
Tuesday 16 December.

12.2 Self- Assessment Questionnaire

12.2.1 NOTED The Corporate Secretary provided an update on the Self-Assessment Questionnaire that in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, members had been requested to undertake. Following the distribution of links to each member, there has been a good response rate with a number still to be completed. Once the responses have been collated and reviewed the results will be brought to the next meeting in December to be considered further. A further reminder will be issued to members whose responses are still outstanding.

12.3 Workshop with Executive Committee

12.3.1 NOTED The Chancellor informed members that a workshop with the Executive Committee is scheduled to take place after the next scheduled meeting on 16 December. This will be followed by dinner in the East Room, Plassey House.

12.4 Chancellors Lectures – Town and Gown

12.4.1 NOTED The Chancellor informed members of her plan to initiate a Town and Gown event, where each faculty will nominate one individual to deliver a lecture after the Governing Authority meeting. Additional details will be communicated in due course. Members expressed support for such an initiative.

12.5. Committee Training

12.5.1 NOTED The Corporate Secretary briefed members on a training event for Governing Authority members as well as external members of committees on the 17 December on campus. Details will be circulated in due course.