

## **Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting – November 4, 2020**

**Present:** David Holohan (Chairperson), David Smith (President), Marie Carroll, Kieron Connolly, Maeve McConnon, Fiona McLoughlin, Sorcha Nic Cormaic, Áine O’Sullivan, Joachim Pietsch, Jim Pipe, Somairle Quigley Brennan, Aoife Ruane, Rachael Sarsfield Ryan,

**Apologies:** Dr Fionnuala Anderson, Celine Blacow, John McDonnell, Cllr Barry Saul, Tom Taylor

**In Attendance:** Bernard Mullarkey, Elizabeth Stunell

This meeting took place using the MS Teams Platform – IADT Governing Body Group in accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders. Attendance for the meeting was monitored throughout the meeting by the Secretary to the Governing Body and the Recording Secretary to the Governing Body.

### **1. Adoption of Agenda**

The Agenda was adopted as circulated. The late addition of Item 8.4 was noted and agreed by the Governing Body.

Proposed: Marie Carroll  
Seconded: Sorcha Nic Cormaic

### **2. Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were reported regarding items for discussion on the agenda for this meeting.

### **3. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of October 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 (including Internal Publication)**

The Minutes of the Meeting of October 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 were approved (including approval for internal publication).

Proposed: Sorcha Nic Cormaic  
Seconded: Marie Carroll

### **4. Matters Arising**

- **Governing Body to take office on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021** – the Secretary/Financial Controller has contacted the organisations recommended by Academic Council, and subsequently approved by Governing Body, to request them to provide nominations to the Governing Body to take office on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. IADT’s contact has been positively received and it is hoped that each of the

recommended organisations will provide nominees to the Governing Body. The President put on record, the immense and positive contribution members of the current Governing Body have made to IADT, and noted that changes in the nominating organisations put forward by Academic Council, is in no way a reflection on the performance of the current Governing Body. The President took the opportunity to extend his personal gratitude to members of the Governing Body for their continued support for IADT.

**5. Correspondence**

No Correspondence.

**6. Technical Approvals**

**6.1 Bank Accounts**

No changes to Institute bank accounts.

**6.2 Property Rentals**

No new property rentals.

**6.3 HR Appointments**

**Completed Interview Board Recommendations**

Permission is sought from Governing Body for the President, subject to the satisfactory completion of the verification processes, to offer appointments on foot of the competitions, which were advertised during the summer.

**Head of Department of Film & Media**

**Progression**

The following staff members have applied for Progression from AL to L, Progression Panel has met and approved the progression for the below and the President has approved the outcome. We are now seeking ratification from Governing Body for the staff members making application:

Proposed: Marie Carroll

Seconded: Fiona McLoughlin

**7. Governing Body Committees and Academic Council**

**7.1 Minutes of the Academic Council Meetings of June 4<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 2020**

The Minutes of the Academic Council meetings of June 4<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 2020 were noted by the Governing Body. An update regarding matters considered by the Academic Council during this period was given by the President.

**8. Governing Body Resolutions**

**8.1 The Governing Body amends the previously approved regulations for the holding of Governing Body elections to provide for electronic processes arising from COVID-19 (26/2020)**

The Secretary/Financial Controller noted to the Governing Body, that should more than one nomination be received for any of the staff memberships of the Governing Body, an election for that membership will need to take place. However, due to physical distancing restrictions in place due to the COVID pandemic, it will not be possible to organise an election in the traditional manner. Therefore, an electronic voting system has been sourced and tested and has been found to meet IADT's needs for this purpose. The necessary

amendments to regulations required to put the eVoting system in place were presented to the Governing Body for approval. Resolution 26/2020 was adopted by the Governing Body.

Proposed: Áine O'Sullivan  
Seconded: Sorcha Nic Cormaic

### **8.2 The Governing Body Approves the Acceptable and Appropriate Use of ICT Policy (27/2020)**

Circulation of the updated Acceptable/Appropriate Use of ICT Policy was noted. A number of key updates to the policy were highlighted including encryption protocols, timelines for closure of e-mail accounts following a staff member resigning/retiring from the Institute and multifactor authentication. Resolution 27/2020 was adopted by the Governing Body.

Proposed: Chairperson  
Seconded: Kieron Connolly

### **8.3 The Governing Body Approves an extension to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2014-2021 (28/2020)**

The IADT Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy was due to be reviewed during 2020. However due to the work involved in changes to academic delivery methodologies arising from the COVID emergency and closure of the campus, this review has not as yet taken place. Therefore, it has been proposed to extend the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy to 2021. Resolution 28/2020 was adopted by the Governing Body.

Proposed: Chairperson  
Seconded: Marie Carroll

### **8.4 The Governing Body authorises the Secretary/Financial Controller to approve recommendations from the Board of Directors of NDRC Ltd and to sign the relevant documents including but not limited to: Change of Name; Appointment of a Liquidator under a Members Voluntary Liquidation (29/2020)**

The Secretary/Financial Controller noted that the National Digital Research Centre comprises a consortium of IADT, NCAD, UCD, DCU and TCD, and was formed in 2006. Following a recent Government tender process for digital research services, the NDRC was unsuccessful in securing a renewal of the contract. At a meeting of the Board of NDRC on October 29<sup>th</sup> last, the Board took the decision that the company would be wound up. The Secretary / Financial Controller, provided an overview for the Governing Body of the processes that must be undertaken. Assets approaching €5m are held by the NDRC and will be disposed of. However as per the contract in place, it is not permitted for the assets to be distributed amongst members. A number of ideas have been proposed and will be considered by the Board of NDRC, including the establishment of a charitable foundation to fund research in minority areas. The Secretary/Financial Controller also noted a requirement for NDRC to change its name, as the newly appointed digital research contractors will be required to use the 'National Digital Research Centre' title. Resolution 29/2020 was adopted by the Governing Body.

Proposed: Chairperson  
Seconded: Kieron Connolly

## 9. President's Briefing

### 9.1 President's Briefing

The President updated the Governing Body regarding a number of national and strategic matters relevant to the Institute.

- **HCI Funding – Modular Programmes** – IADT has been successful in securing funding of €167k to offer 140 places through the HCI Modular Programmes funding initiative.
- **Devolved Grant** – additional funding of approx. €400k has been allocated to IADT through the Devolved Grant, bringing Devolved Grant funding of €1m provided to IADT for 2020. It is intended to allocate this additional Devolved Grant funding to projects that will directly enhance the student experience on campus.
- **TU Transformation Funding** – following the announcement of funding awarded to IADT to scope the establishment of a University of the Creative Arts for Ireland, TUI representatives within IADT (accompanied by their regional representatives) have requested a meeting with the President. The President has agreed to meet with the TUI officials on November 9<sup>th</sup> next. Work to finalise the scope of the project is underway with the HEA.
- **IADT Strategic Plan** – the education and national landscape has changed considerably since the publication of IADT's Strategic Plan. It has therefore been decided that a re-prioritisation of the aims and goals articulated in the Strategic Plan is now necessary. It is felt that meetings of this nature are most beneficial when undertaken corporally rather than via online platforms, and a number of meetings of the Executive had been planned to undertake this work. However due to increased COVID restrictions, these meetings have not been possible. A meeting date of December 3<sup>rd</sup> has now been set for the re-prioritisation of the Strategic Plan by the Executive. The President also noted that a recruitment process is underway to fill the vacant Executive post, which will be important for IADT in delivering on the Strategic Plan.
- **Strategic Academic Leadership Initiative** – a call for submissions for funded posts through the Strategic Academic Leadership Initiative has been issued. IADT has identified a number of posts in areas of under-representation, and will make a submission in relation to these.
- **Athena SWAN** – notification has been received from Athena SWAN that evaluation of Athena SWAN accreditation applications received from Higher Education Institutions in Ireland, will be tailored to reflect the Irish Higher Education sector. IADT intends to re-submit for Athena SWAN Bronze level accreditation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021.
- **COVID Level 5** – COVID Level 5 restrictions came into effect on October 21<sup>st</sup> last, resulting in the already limited on-campus activity being significantly further reduced. In addition, the level of staff on-campus activity is at a minimum. The student experience has also been significantly impacted during this time. The flexibility of staff in positively adapting to supporting student learning at this time is noted, and it is expected that there will be significant anxiety and uncertainty as the second term commences. Library services, student counselling and medical services have been retained on campus for students in a carefully managed way, however the significant proportion of delivery of these services remains online.

- **Laptops for Students** – applications from students for the laptops/desktops that have been made available through the HEA and DELL schemes have been processed, and the first of the laptops allocated to eligible students have been distributed.
- **Calculated Grade Error** – as a result of the error in the Calculated Grade Algorithm, 3 additional CAO places were offered on IADT programmes – these offers were accepted by the applicants.
- **Conferring** – IADT’s conferring ceremony will be an online live-streamed event hosted at the National Film School. Students from IADT’s Film programme are working on supporting the event, and a number of rehearsals have been organised. There will be two ceremonies – one for each Faculty. Links to the live stream will be forwarded to the Governing Body.
- **Higher Options** – the annual Higher Options is taking place at present. The event has moved to an online format.
- **Technical Demands** – the President noted that there are increasing technical demands and challenges being placed on staff – academic and professional, management and support staff alike – in moving day-to-day activities online. Increasing technical and administrative resources and expertise is required to support these operations.

**Complaint to the Health and Safety Authority** – IADT has received notification of a second complaint to the Health and Safety Authority regarding IADT’s handling of the COVID crisis, alleging that IADT has not complied with the Level 5 restrictions with regard to staff and students. The President outlined that the allegations made are untrue, and that in relation to the work undertaken by the COVID Committee and the dedication of staff to ensuring the safety of all campus users, the allegations made within the complaint are regrettable and disappointing. The President outlined to the Governing Body that to date, no confirmed cases of COVID among the student or staff populations have been linked to on-campus transmissions. It was further noted that complaints of this nature where unfounded, bring the work and efforts made by the Institute in managing the COVID emergency into disrepute. An investigation has been initiated by the HSA and IADT will work with the HSA in their investigation of the complaint. The significant amount of time and resources that will be required to respond to this complaint were noted. Although the identity of the complainant is not released by the HSA, from the substance of the complaint it is thought that the complaint was made by an IADT staff member.

In relation to the complaint to the HSA, a query was raised as to whether the complaint could have arisen due to a lack of communication or unsettlement amongst staff. The President outlined to the Governing Body that IADT’s Executive Team has met weekly since the onset of the COVID crisis. In addition, meetings of the THEA Council have been taking place on a weekly basis with the President providing full briefings to the Executive on these. IADT’s COVID-19 Steering Group is also meeting frequently. A Priority Communications item has been introduced as a standing item for Executive meetings, at which issues of priority communication to staff/Managers are identified. The possibility that there may be a conflict in the interpretation of what is expected of and applicable to staff working within the Education sector (which is now designated as an essential service), rather than a ‘misunderstanding’ was noted. The President further noted that following a similar complaint raised during the summer with the HSA and subsequent investigation, the issue was closed by the HSA with no findings against IADT.

**Lead Worker Representatives:** The President noted that in July of this year, as per recommendations from Government, two Lead Worker Representatives were appointed. The Lead Worker Representatives are staff with wide ranging experience across the Institute and work independently of managers and in direct communication with staff who have concerns that they wish to raise. In addition, the Lead Worker Representatives are members of the COVID-19 Steering Group, bringing concerns raised by staff to the COVID-19 Steering Group or directly to Functional Area Managers, and seek to have issues raised by staff addressed. Lead Worker Representatives provide a representative and supportive role for staff.

The Governing Body was notified by a member of the Governing Body, regarding a request made to the President by the Unions (through the Joint Forum), for the appointment of a third Lead Worker Representative. It was further stated that the third Lead Worker Representative has been precluded from full membership of the COVID-19 Steering Group. It was further noted that the complaint to the HSA may have arisen from a concerned staff member feeling that they had no other mechanism to be heard.

A background to the appointment of Lead Worker Representatives was provided for the Governing Body by the President and the Secretary/Financial Controller. On original recommendation, the appointment of Lead Worker Representative's was made by the President. Lead Worker Representatives operate independently of the social partners (Unions). Following the proposal to the Joint Forum, although IADT was fully compliant with recommendations and had no obligation to do so, a concession was made and the request from Unions to appoint a third Lead Worker Representative was conditionally accepted. The Lead Worker Representative nominated by our Social Partners is currently undergoing the necessary training, which when complete, will enable the nominated staff member to contribute to COVID-19 Steering Group directly or through consultation with the existing LWRs on this group. However – and following remarks made by a member of Governing Body – the President did state, that if there was any perception or truth in the inference, that "frustrations" since the appointment of the third Lead Worker Representative were contributory factors for the individual concerned in making a direct complaint to the HSA, and ultimately disrupting and seeking to bypass the mechanisms and work of this committee, the concession would be withdrawn.

## **9.2 IADT: Financial Update**

Circulation of the Management Report for September 2020 along with the supporting briefing from the Secretary/Financial Controller was noted by the Governing Body. A briefing regarding a number of key figures within the report was also given by the Secretary/Financial Controller. IADT's accounts show a positive variance of €0.75m, down from a positive variance in excess of €1m from in August. IADT's functional area budget holders have been very cautious in relation to expenditure over the course of the year, which has contributed significantly to the positive variance. A submission of €1.6m was made to the HEA in relation to expenditure incurred specifically in relation to making the campus safe for the return of staff and students to working and studying on campus. It is understood that the HEA has received submissions of very substantial levels of expenditure from Higher Education Institutions.

The positive variance reported in relation to the payroll budget has arisen due to a number of current vacancies – recruitment processes for these are underway. A recent pay increase for staff as part of the Stability Agreement is now taking affect.

In relation to IADT's income earned from external sources, bank interest is now offered on a 'negative' basis. Due to the reduction in student activity on campus, income from the student print system is not being achieved. Income from Media Cube rentals was not achieved over the summer; however, Media Cube rental income is starting to recover as companies are returning to paying rents and, in some cases, repaying their 'rent holidays'. Income from rentals to external service providers has not been possible this year, however, IADT's playing pitch is being rented (at reduced rates) by local clubs permitted to hold practice sessions under physical distancing guidelines. The Secretary/Financial Controller noted that due to the additional funding that has been provided for the sector along with a better than forecast student recruitment outcome for the current academic year, the cash flow shortfalls projected earlier in the year have not come to pass. The diligence of the HEA in distributing financial allocations during the COVID crisis was acknowledged by the Secretary/Financial Controller, and has been of great assistance to Higher Education Institutions.

#### **10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications**

The wellbeing of students on campus is a high priority for IADT. Whilst students have been provided with a full range of online services, access to the on-campus library has been retained, along with emergency health and counselling support for students arriving on campus in distress. In addition, the first laptops made available through the HEA and DELL technology supports initiative have now been distributed to students. IADT's application for both the latest Strategic Academic Leadership Initiative is being developed at present, and work in preparation for a submission for Bronze level accreditation through Athena SWAN is in progress. Additional Devolved Grant funding of €400K was noted, and it is hoped to allocate this funding to projects that will enhance the student experience on campus.

The next meeting of the Governing Body will take place on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
David Holohan  
Chairperson

Date: \_\_\_\_\_