
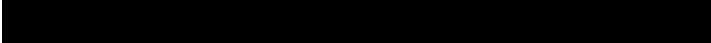


I write in my personal capacity as an academic leader with more than 17 years' experience in academic leadership roles 


I wish to comment on the proposed composition of Governing Authorities, which the report proposes be:

- an independent Chairperson,
- the Chief Officer,
- 4 independent external members.
- 2 students.
- no more than 4 members from academic staff, non-academic staff, ex-officio.

Two of the features of the GA are indicated to be:

- A majority of external members to ensure there is credibility in the accountability role (students included in external members for this purpose)
- All members appointed based on competency (experience or expertise in matters connected to the functions of the institution or organisational governance and management),

My comments are as follows:

1. I completely agree that the GA should have a majority of external members. However, in no country in the world would student members be considered external. If the student representatives are sabbatical officers of the Student Union, even their salaries are effectively paid by the University. The students are deeply internal to the university and cannot provide the voice of 'detached reason' that is expected from external members. Furthermore, SU officers only serve for a year, and having 2 members who change yearly is disruptive.
2. I completely agree that members should be appointed on the basis of competency. However, this is incompatible with having members who are elected. Employees who are union representatives or have union connections often win these elections, independent of their competency. Similarly, the SU officers are not elected on their competency to serve on a GA.

My suggestions are:

1. Chief officer and deputy (ex officio).
2. External chair appointed by GA
3. One student representative – the SU President ex officio.
4. All other membership of the GA is determined by a Nominations Committee of the GA.
5. Membership terms are of 5 years in length but expiry dates are staggered so that there is continuity.

6. Two places for employees – selected on the basis of competency following a call for expressions of interest, terms staggered.
7. Four places for externals - selected on the basis of competency following a call for expressions of interest, terms staggered.
8. Two Minister’s nominees (external) – selected on the basis of competency following a call for expressions of interest, terms staggered..
9. Alternatively the student representative could also be selected on the basis of competency following a call for expressions of interest, perhaps for a three year term.

This would give a total of 12 with a genuine 7 external and 5 internal.

Based on my experience in Ireland and elsewhere, this configuration would provide far sounder governance than the one currently suggested.

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