

Higher Education Authority

Report of special meeting held 22nd June 2016

Present Dr. Mary Canning (via teleconference)
Ms Siobhan Harkin (via teleconference)
Dr. Stephen Kinsella, Acting Chair (via teleconference)
Dr. Jim Mountjoy (via teleconference)
Dr. Brian Thornes (via teleconference)

Apologies Mr. Bahram Bekhradnia
Mr. Kevin Donoghue
Mr. Gordon Ryan
Mr. Declan Walsh

In attendance: Mr. Tom Boland¹
Mr. Padraic Mellett

1. Purpose of the meeting

1.1 The purpose of the meeting was to (1) approve the extension of Mr. Tom Boland's contract to 31st July 2016 and (2) to appoint Dr. Anne Looney as interim CEO for a period of up to nine months.

2. Interim CEO arrangements

2.1 The Acting Chair at the start of the meeting indicated he had already received the consent of Mr. Bekhradnia and Mr. Ryan who were unable to participate at today's meeting for the two proposals.

2.2 The acting Chair briefed members on developments since the Board meetings of 17th and 24th May. Following the meetings, and having regard to the criteria for interim CEO agreed by members, a number of possible candidates were identified. These were discussed at a senior level with the Department of Education and Skills. Arising from these discussions Dr. Anne Looney emerged as an eminently credible and available candidate. All members present agreed that she was a very suitable candidate and endorsed her appointment as interim CEO.

2.3 Members also agreed to the extension of Mr. Tom Boland's contract and thanked him for agreeing to stay on for the additional month.

2.4 Members considered the process for filling the post on a substantive basis. The CEO indicated that he will have a preliminary discussion with Ms. Tierney of PAS with a view to having a review of the recent recruitment competition. This process

¹ Mr. Boland absented himself from discussions outlined in par. 2.2 and 2.3 above.

would need to be completed by early to mid-September so as to allow a new competition get underway in late September/early October.

2.5 Members considered whether PAS should be engaged to undertake the next recruitment campaign. A particular issue was whether PAS had the network required for an extensive international search. For instance, it was the norm for the HEA to use recruitment agencies when recruiting section heads. Members suggested Mr. Mellett compile the names of suitable recruitment agencies. Members were advised that there was no decision on the salary for the post. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform would need to be convinced that a higher salary is necessary. At the very minimum the advertisement should state that appointment above the first point of the scale is possible. The importance of securing Ministerial agreement to a higher salary before discussions commence with D/PER was noted.

2.6 Members were advised that a press release will issue on the interim arrangements after the Board of NCCA have been notified on 23rd June.

Padraic Mellett
29th June 2016