

## **NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 1 March 2023 on MS Teams commencing at 4.00pm.**

**Present:** Mr K Chambers (Chair), Dr P Graham, Mr M Higgins, Mr G McAllister, Ms A Morrow, Mr S Shevlin

**In Attendance:** Mrs C Brown, Ms H Hampsey, Mr S Laverty, Mr S McCartney, Dr L Monteith, Mr P Wallace, Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

#### **61.1 Apologies/Welcome**

Apologies were noted for Ms Hemphill and Ms Small.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed best wishes for Ms Hemphill's speedy recovery from illness.

#### **61.2 Declaration of Interests**

None.

#### **61.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 were approved.

Proposed: Dr Graham                      Seconded: Mr McAllister

#### **61.4 Matters Arising**

- Development of draft NRC IP Policy is being progressed by HR and updates will be reported to Education Committee as they arise.

#### **61.5 Chair's Communications / Correspondence**

- HLA renewals are progressing internally for submission by 31 March 2023.
- Links to two public consultations were provided with closing date for submission of 9 March. Members noted Directorate and College responses had/would be submitted.
- Advanced Technicals Insight Gathering by CCEA noted as part of ongoing information gathering exercise from first cohort, with completion date of June 2023.
- Expressions of interest were invited for the position of HE Governor.

**Action: Dr Graham was proposed by Mr McAllister and appointed as HE Governor.**

#### **61.6 Traineeship Update**

Mr Wallace spoke to his report on the background and progress made on the implementation

of the Traineeship programme. Members noted information on new and completing programmes in 2023/24, cost to the College of sourcing/providing work placements for students, and development of transversal skills.

Committee noted concern at the cost involved in sourcing work placements and the need to determine how this could be best achieved. Mrs Brown reported that, as an essential component within the Level 2 Traineeship, this was a challenge for the sector.

The Principal thanked Mr Wallace for his update. He confirmed the commitment of the colleges to implementing the traineeship programme, which would allow FE to differentiate their product from post-primary and enhance the employability of students for employers.

### **61.7 Safeguarding – Mid-year Review**

Mr McCartney presented his first mid-year report and highlighted changes and updates on care and welfare.

The Principal thanked Mr McCartney for his report. Referencing referrals for cases of self-harm and threats/attempts at suicide, he queried action being taken to provide proactive, preventative measures to address increasing numbers. Mr McCartney reported low resilience of students as a result of Covid and confirmed that all of the College's pastoral care services were promoted to students. He reported surprise and gratitude expressed by parents at a recent meeting, for the level of support provided by the College.

In response to Mr Shevlin's suggestion on building students' coping skills, Mr McCartney advised that he would be happy to investigate additional provision.

**Action: Mr McCartney would make contact with local support agencies with a view to rolling out additional resilience and wellbeing programmes.**

### **61.8 Student Experience – Mid-year Update**

Mr McCartney presented his update on outcomes and resulting actions from the admissions review 2022/23 and cost of living crisis interventions. He reported extremely positive feedback from students and lecturing staff for support initiatives put in place.

The Principal noted a high uptake of attendance at College Open Days. Mr McCartney confirmed that, whilst online enrolments were available, parents particularly appreciated the opportunity for personal contact with staff.

Members recognised extensive efforts carried out to increase enrolment numbers.

Ms Morrow presented the Student President Mid-year Report on activities and initiatives to date during her term of office. She confirmed good engagement with College departments and appreciation voiced by students for the cost of living support initiatives provided, especially

the Breakfast Club. Ms Morrow outlined her intention to investigate implementation of designated spaces for student union use.

In relation to increasing NUS-USI contact and student representation of FE students, members heard that Chloe Ferguson, NUS-USI President, would be invited to a meeting with college Student Presidents in week commencing 6 March.

The Principal thanked Ms Morrow for her report and invited her to submit issues raised by students to Mr McCartney by email. These could then be used as evidence in business cases to the Department.

The Chair thanked Mr McCartney and acknowledged an excellent report by Ms Morrow.

**Action: A meeting between Ms Morrow and the Estates team to look at designated student spaces would be arranged.**

### **61.9 VP T&L Summary Report**

The report of the VP was taken as read. Mrs Brown highlighted a number of key areas from the report including: role of the Quality and Academic Standards Committee; lessons learned from handling of non-compliance issue including confirmation of no mal intent; internal performance review and the continued impact of Covid; levels of sickness absence; stakeholder engagement; and continuing work on Advanced Technicals.

Committee welcomed a number of College good news stories including success in being shortlisted in the Apprenticeship Awards 2023, upcoming College presentation at the DfE Peer Support and Development event on 9 March and footballing success by the College team.

**Action: The Chair and members placed on record their congratulations to the College football team for their tremendous achievement in making the finals of the CUFL Challenge Cup.**

Committee confirmed their support for engagement with Larne Football Club on delivery of the Foundation Degree in Sports Studies for College students

### **61.10 Quality & Academic Standards Committee Minutes**

Committee noted minutes of the meetings on 7 December 2022 and 25 January 2023, key points from which were included in the T&L Excellence mid-year update.

Dr Monteith emphasised the group's focus on quality measurement and preparation for the OU validation and ETI inspection. She thanked Dr Graham for taking up the position of HE Governor and he confirmed he was happy to work with her on this.

### **61.11 T&L Excellence – Mid-Year Update**

Dr Monteith presented an outline of work to date on programmes and drew attention to a number of key areas including digital learning and digital rebranding; entrepreneurship and innovation, details of which will be fed into DfE and internal action plans; and the ETI L3 review, in particular management of resources during the current Trade Union action

Dr Graham commended the work which had taken place on the entrepreneurship action plan as a potential model of excellence for the sector. Mrs Brown shared details of a recent Tour Guiding practice sharing event as an example of the College supporting second-career entrepreneurs, with such activity to be embedded in the Entrepreneurship action plan going forward.

**Action: An update on entrepreneurship would be provided at the Governing Body meeting on 26 April.**

Ms Morrow expressed enthusiasm for her involvement with work on digital rebranding and welcomed the opportunity to input to the entrepreneurship club and planned programme of activities.

The Chair thanked Mr McCartney and Ms Morrow for their contribution to the report.

5.10pm Mr McCartney and Ms Morrow left the meeting.

Committee noted details on the background and review basis of the upcoming ETI L3 inspection, which will take place week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> March.

### **61.12 Annual HE Quality Assessment Return**

Members considered this Annual Return and noted that all relevant steps had been followed in order to provide assurance on scrutiny carried out. Members heard that the quality of HE provision had been considered within the SER/QIP return in November 2022 and that a copy had also been provided to the GB Chair for review and to enable submission by 3 March.

Committee were content that all processes requested by DfE had been followed.

**Action: Committee approved the AQA Return and recommended it to the GB Chair for signature on behalf of the GB. The Secretary would advise the GB Chair.**

The Chair thanked Dr Monteith and her staff for the work carried out on this submission.

### **61.13 Essential Skills Action Plan and Report**

Ms Hampsey's report was taken as read and she updated members on work being carried out to address amber actions detailed. Members were advised that the final action plan would be

taken forward by the sectoral Essential Skills Working Group, on which the College would be represented by Majella Quinn, CAM Essential Skills, in partnership with Tribal.

The Chair noted a cautious approach to forecasted green actions and Ms Hampsey confirmed positive feedback on retention and results from the January exam series, with good practice being implemented across the sector.

Mr Laverty thanked Ms Hampsey and her team for achievement on this issue and for progress on the lost learning audit. The Chair endorsed these remarks and extended his congratulations to the team.

#### **61.14 Research: Impact Analysis**

Committee discussed a proposal for development and inclusion of an impact statement in course documentation.

Dr Graham detailed the background to the proposal which was envisaged as an impact measurement tool and to provide evidence to support decisions.

**Action: Dr Graham will help to develop a proposal brief and the Principal will progress to the GB meeting on 22 March.**

#### **61.15 Any Other Business**

Members noted list of courses cancelled for 2023/24, requested by Mr McAllister. In response to the member's question, Mrs Brown outlined work with the Business Engagement team to identify opportunities for any vocational sampling programmes to deliver elements of cancelled non-accredited courses.

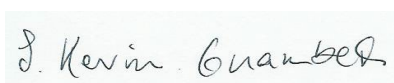
The Chair noted a sectoral trend to reduce leisure provision due to reduction in funding.

#### **61.16 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on 10 May 2023.

The meeting concluded at 5.50pm.

Mr K Chambers



Date 10 May 2023

(Chair)

Mrs K Wallace



(Secretary)