

Northern Regional College

Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 8 May 2019 at Farm Lodge, Ballymena, commencing at 5:05pm

Present: Dr D Lennox (Chair), Ms A Dynes, Mr R Jay and Professor T Scott

In Attendance: Dr S Brankin, Ms H Hagan, Quality Manager (42.6), Mr M Higgins, Ms A Morrison, AHOD BCCI (42.5) and Mr V Taggart

Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

42.1 Apologies

Apologies were received for Mrs Eve. Concern was expressed at the potential impact on Committee quorum. Members noted the continued absence of the student governor, Ms A Duff.

ACTION: The Secretary would notify the Governing Body Vice-Chair of attendance issues.

42.2 Declaration of Interest

None.

It was agreed that presentations by staff be brought forward.

42.5 Entrepreneurship Hub

Ms Morrison presented an outline of the 5 strands of the Entrepreneurship Hub Action Plan for 2018-2021 and associated goals, before providing a detailed update on curriculum hub activities to date and future plans. Mr Higgins highlighted the funding awarded with hub status and the requirement to embed enterprise competencies into the curriculum was discussed.

A high level of internal support and interest from curriculum staff was noted and members were advised that Invest NI had appointed a member of staff to support the hub project.

Committee welcomed the project, noting the comprehensive action plan and looked forward to reviewing progress in due course. The Chair thanked Ms Morrison for giving the presentation.

ACTION: A report of progress against the action plan to be brought to the Education Committee on a 6-monthly basis.

5.25pm Ms Morrison left the meeting.

42.6 Quality Unit Presentation

Ms Hagan presented an update on the activities of the Quality Unit and the work of TLAs over the 6-month period October 2018 – March 2019. A number of areas for improvement had been identified from this work and plans to address these were outlined. Committee noted the range of audits, quality assessment and external verification which the College was subject to, outcomes of student focus groups to date and the schedule of work until June 2019.

Ms Hagan answered members' queries on a number of issues including implementation and delivery of the TAQA qualification, sessions for course teams and the development of a learning resource. Mr Taggart reported on a review of curriculum work projects and future actions being undertaken in the coming weeks with the support of external professionals selected from a Quality Improvement Panel. It was noted that DfE support the work of the Quality Unit through provision of a quality managers' forum.

The Chair acknowledged the range of work being carried out and thanked Ms Hagan for giving the presentation.

6.00pm Ms Hagan left the meeting.

42.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2019 were approved.

42.4 Matters Arising

Members noted that Mr Jay would be ending his term on 30 June and no replacement safeguarding governor had yet been designated.

ACTION: The Principal would consult with Mr Crossey on the issue of a safeguarding governor.

It was noted that, whilst the updated QIP had been circulated to members, it had not been possible to do so in advance of submission to the Department due to time commitments arising from the need to ensure data accuracy in the light of current HOD absenteeism. Members were invited to notify Mr Taggart in the event of any issues with the revised QIP.

In response to queries around prioritisation of issues, given the demands of the QIP, Mr Taggart highlighted the efficacy of the Committee Structure within the College in tracking actions through to senior management level.

The Chair referred to previous discussion around the possibility of modelling recruitment data to predict end of year performance. Dr Brankin highlighted that a dashboard showing current curriculum status had been produced and it was noted that the key issue for the College was to understand the reasons behind the attrition rate which would allow appropriate action to be taken in a timely way.

42.7 Chair's communication

None.

42.8 Correspondence

Committee noted the outcome of the APR 2018/19 that NRC meets requirements for quality and standards. Committee also noted that a widening access & participation plan (WAPP) for HE is to be submitted to the Department by 24 May 2019.

42.9 CDP and Education Report Card

Mr Taggart presented an update on the CDP noting the main variances from target for qualifications, businesses and social inclusion and highlighted some of the potential implications of the reduced MaSN which had been allocated to the College for the coming year.

Mr Higgins briefly outlined the background to the Department's request for the CDP to be resubmitted based on 2 scenarios and actions being considered to allow the College to adhere to budget. Further detail would be presented to GB.

Members noted the CDP would be submitted to the Department.

42.10 Teaching & Learning Committee

Committee were referred to the minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee meetings held on 18 April 2019 and key points were noted including scheduling of the QIP at team meetings with planned cascading of information, and the development of an annual report of key achievements and work by forums.

ACTION: Forum annual reports to be circulated to the Education Committee.

42.11 Essential Skills Review & TLA Review

Mr Taggart referred Committee to the breakdown of ES targets provided for 2017/18 and 2019/20.

Committee noted that overall achievement at 46% represented an important area for improvement and one area in particular was noted. Mr Taggart appraised members of the ongoing actions to address important areas, however this could not be assured until 18/19 results were available.

ACTION: Mr Taggart will ask the ES AHOD coordinator to provide an updated paper, with identified actions, for review by SLT before the end of June and submission to the Committee thereafter.

42.12 Any Other Business

Committee noted that the appointment of a new Chair was being progressed by the Department.

The Chair thanked Mr Jay, on his last meeting of Committee, for his tremendous contribution both as former Committee Chair for a number of years and latterly as a member. Members

voiced concern at the loss of Mr Jay's extensive HE experience and knowledge and the risk to discharging governance responsibilities which this represented.

40.13 Date of next meeting

This being the last meeting of the Education Committee for the academic year, the date of the next meeting to be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 7:10pm.

David Lennox: David Lennox

(Chair)

Date: 23/10/19

Mrs K Wallace: K Wallace

(Secretary)