

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 14 November 2018 at Farm Lodge campus, commencing at 5.30 pm.

Present: Mrs I Allison, Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey (Chair), Ms A Duff, Ms Dynes, Mr M Higgins, Mr W Hutchinson, Mr R Jay, Mr D Lennox, Ms Y Mallon, Dr K McCambridge, Mr W McCluggage, Mrs G McConnell and Mr I Murphy.

In Attendance: Dr S Brankin, Mr D Hewitt and Mr V Taggart.

Mrs K Wallace, Secretary.

85.1 Apologies

Mrs Eve and Prof Scott.

The Chair welcomed Ms Duff and Mr Murphy to their first meeting of the Governing Body and thanked Mr Jay for agreeing to extend his term of governorship, subject to agreement by the Permanent Secretary.

85.2 Declarations of Interest

None.

85.3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2018 were approved.

Proposed: Mr McCluggage Seconded: Mr Hutchinson

85.4 Matters Arising

Mr Murphy updated members on the recent meeting of the New Build Project Board (NBPB) and progress being made and outlined pressing issues.

Members noted the link to Campus 21 New Build designs on the website at <http://www.nrc.ac.uk/campus-redevelopment>. A problem with pop-ups appearing via the link was identified by members.

ACTION: The web link would be reviewed and amended.

85.5 Chair's Communication

The Chair advised members that Prof Scott's term of absence would likely be extended and that Mr Higgins had been appointed as Acting Principal and Acting Accounting Officer in the interim. Members extended their best wishes to Prof Scott.

The Chair updated members on the key issues discussed at the CEF meeting on 29 October 2018 including lecturers' pay awards and union issues. Mr Higgins highlighted that accounting treatment for this issue had been agreed across the sector as a contingent liability and was reflected as such in the accounts.

It was noted that the update on budget would be reviewed under the Principal's Report.

Mrs McConnell joined the meeting at 5.35pm.

The Chair reported on the Capital Steering Group meeting on 7 November 2018 where the College's new buildings presentation had been well received. The Chair wished to record his thanks to Mr Higgins and Mr Mooney for the excellent presentation they had prepared for the meeting. The Department had indicated their contentment with progress and positive support for the project to move ahead subject to funding clearance.

Mrs Allison joined the meeting at 5.40pm.

85.6 Correspondence

Members noted 3 items of correspondence in relation to the appointment of the student governor; change of name for the FE Department; and new FE division structure.

The Chair would be meeting with the Permanent Secretary at the accountability meeting potentially in January 2019, when the reporting regime across colleges would be discussed. The Chair would also raise NIAO's clean set of accounts for the College with no additional audit report.

85.7 Principal's Report

The Principal's Report was taken as read.

Mr Higgins drew members' attention to the letter from the Department providing an update on the budget position and outlined the current situation. The Governing Body expressed concern that the budget position could lead to performance issues for the College especially in the areas of IT. While members welcomed the proposed in-year funding they requested that Mr Higgins advise the Department of the necessity to restore the College's baseline budget to last year's level to avoid ongoing difficulties.

Members noted the positive response to the Campus 21 consultation events and recorded their congratulations to all students achieving external recognition.

ACTION: The Chair to write to individuals achieving external recognition on behalf of the Governing Body, acknowledging their achievements

85.8 MSFM

Consideration was given to the updated Management Statement/Financial Memorandum (MSFM) and the role of the Governing Body members was noted.

The Governing Body were content with the updated MSFM.

85.9 Self-Assessment and Board Effectiveness

Mr Hewitt advised that the Departmental summary assessment had just been received and would be considered along with the College summary at the next meeting of the Governing Body.

The Chair drew attention to the low response rate to the College's internal assessment and a general downward trend in results, and proposed that this issue be reviewed by himself and Committee Chairs.

ACTIONS: Members' ideas on improvement actions moving forward to be notified to the Chair or Secretary.

The Secretary to circulate the DfE summary to all GB members.

85.10 Enrolment Numbers

Mr Taggart took members through retention/success targets for 2018/19 and summarised the rationale for relatively modest targets set by Heads of Department. He outlined issues impacting on recruitment, retention and success and members noted that the Department would be reviewing provision across 14-19 year olds.

Mr Taggart responded to a number of questions raised by members. He assured members that good progress was being made in all areas and, that while this was still work in progress, the objective was to improve quality across all areas of service delivery. He also reassured members that best practice was being shared across all departments.

Mr Taggart noted a need to ensure full awareness of HE provision being offered by the College, in particular in relation to the foundation degree.

85.11 Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017/18

Consideration was given to the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements which had been audited by NIAO.

Mr McCluggage drew attention to the contingent liability statement in relation to pay awards, which had been accepted across the sector, and advised the Audit & Risk Committee's recommendation to the Board for approval.

The Accounts would be forwarded to the Comptroller and Auditor General before being laid in the Assembly on 10 December 2018.

The Governing Body accepted the Committee recommendation and were content to approve the 2017/18 Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Members thanked the NIAO and College finance team for their work on the accounts.

85.12 Audit & Risk Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2018 were noted and Mr McCluggage summarised the key issues discussed at the Audit & Risk meeting held on 26 September 2018. Members noted that NIFON had used the Internal Audit report on Property Division to produce a draft business case for Departmental review.

The Governing Body noted that a data breach register would be considered at each meeting of Audit & Risk and members were assured that all College staff would receive cyber-security training during the current year.

ACTION: Audit & Risk Committee to review the data breach register and escalate serious issues to the Governing Body.

Mr McCluggage advised that a meeting of the Departmental Audit & Risk Committee was to be organised; he would keep members updated.

The Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report for 2017/18 was noted.

85.13 Education Committee

Mr Lennox drew attention to the draft minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 3 October 2018 and provided a verbal update on the meeting held on 12 November 2018.

Members noted the SER/QIP documents and were invited to forward any comments on the documents to Mr Taggart by 21 November 2018, for incorporation. The Chair would sign the

finalised SER/QIP documentation on 23 November 2018 and they would be submitted to the Department by 3 December 2018.

Members noted that presentation of the information was as dictated by the Department.

Mr McCluggage advised that the QIP should have a RAG status and consideration should be given to present the actions and targets on a strategic basis with clear linkages to the performance outcome.

Mr Hewitt reported that a new Head of Performance and Planning was now in place and the suggestion will be incorporated for in-year reporting.

85.14 Resources Committee

Mr Chambers presented the draft minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 15 October 2018 and members noted that a Resources Committee Annual Report would be drawn up.

ACTION: The property report would be brought to the Governing Body once signed-off by all Audit & Risk Committees across the sector.

85.15 Draft Fees & Charges Policy 2019/20

Mr Higgins advised that the student base for the College was now in place and, in order to sustain current student numbers, no increase to fees and charges was proposed.

The Governing Body was content with the proposal to maintain fees and charges at 2018/19 prices.

85.16 Scorecard 2018/19

Mr Hewitt presented the 2018/19 report and members noted that FE part-time enrolments were expected to achieve target. Mr Hewitt highlighted the targets that were unlikely to be achieved within HE recruitment. Mr Hewitt advised that a new template format had been provided for future reports and that some realignment of meetings might be required to achieve proposed submission dates.

Members would be advised of any significant variance prior to the Scorecard being submitted to the Department and an updated report would be circulated.

85.17 Any Other Business

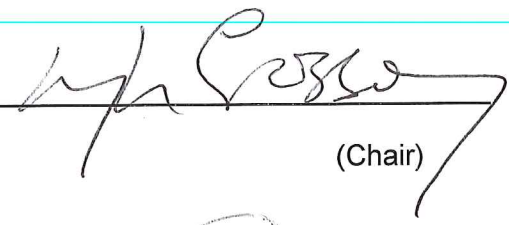
None.

85.18 Dates and Times of Meetings

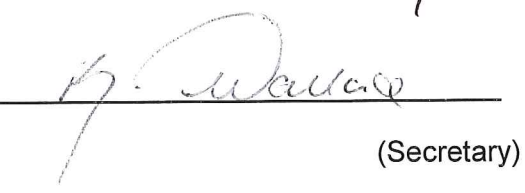
The next meeting of the Governing Body will take place on 23 January 2019 in Newtownabbey campus, commencing at 5.15pm.

Members noted dates for the Staff Recognition Awards on 23 November in the Lamont Building, Ballymena and the 2018 Graduations on 13 December 2018 in Galgorm Resort and Spa.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm.

Mr H Crossey 
(Chair)

Date 30/01/2019
30 January 2019

Mrs K Wallace 
(Secretary)

