

## **Northern Regional College**

### **Governing Body – Unreserved Business**

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 25 September 2019 in Newtownabbey campus, commencing at 5.15pm.

**Present:** Mrs I Allison, Mr H Crossey (Chair), Mr K Chambers, Ms A Dynes, Mrs J Eve, Mr W Hutchinson, Mr R Jay, Dr Lennox, Ms Y Mallon, Dr K McCambridge, Mr W McCluggage, Mrs G McConnell, Mr I Murphy, and Prof T Scott.

**In Attendance:** Mr M Higgins and Mr V Taggart.

Mrs K Wallace, Secretary.

Mr Reece Cochrane, Student President

#### **90.1 Welcome and Apologies**

Mr Reece Cochrane was welcomed to the meeting as an observer.

Apologies were received for Dr Lennox, who would be late to the meeting and for Mrs Donnelly.

#### **90.2 Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **90.3 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019 were approved.

Proposed: Mr Hutchinson

Seconded: Mrs McConnell

#### **90.4 Matters Arising**

The Governing Body noted that GDPR training would be held prior to the November meeting, from 4.00-5.30pm, with the meeting starting directly afterwards.

#### **90.5 Chair's Communication**

The Governing Body noted that Mr Reece Cochrane would take up his position as Student Governor from 1 October 2019 or as appointed by the Department.

Members were advised that the Department would issue a public announcement on 1 October, that Mr Robert (Bob) McCann had been appointed as NRC Chairman from that date. It was noted that Mr McCann had requested to meet with members of each Committee 30 minutes prior to the start of their next meetings.

Mr Crossey announced that the current meeting would be his last as Governing Body Chair and thanked governors and management for their support during what had been a challenging period for the College. Mr Crossey also reported that he had been in communication with the Department in relation to the reduction in the baseline budget position.

Members thanked Mr Crossey for his contribution and commitment on taking on the interim role for an extended period of time. Governors placed on record their appreciation, noting the benefits accruing from his stewardship.

## **90.6 Correspondence**

Members noted correspondence including notification of the Permanent Secretary's upcoming retirement; update on charity status; internal audit report on the procurement and management of contracts; and the FE Colleges NI Accounts Direction.

A letter from the Permanent Secretary outlining the status of Departmental funding for the sector in relation to salary and pension contributions for lecturers and confirming that the previous baseline budget would not be reinstated, was also noted and concern was raised by members in relation to the disadvantage to students which this represented.

Mrs Mallon joined the meeting at 5.35pm.

## **90.7 Principal's Report**

The Principal's Report was taken as read. Prof Scott referred to the status of enrolments and highlighted the large number of student achievements including UK apprentice of the year and the award of 2 JP McManus scholarships.

The Governing Body extended warm congratulations to all of the students on their impressive achievements.

Dr Lennox joined the meeting at 5.45pm.

Prof Scott reported on implications for the College from the news that Wrightbus had served termination notices and the expected impact on the supply chain companies. Members noted that 31 NRC students were employed under contract with Wrightbus and the College was currently working to reposition the students to allow them to finish their apprenticeships. A suite of practical courses was also being developed by the College which would be put forward to the Department for the Economy to support company employees. The College was proactively engaging with the Council, Invest NI, DfE and DfC as part of a multi-agency response.

The Chair congratulated the College on their speedy response and expressed the hope alternative programmes can be developed to support the workers.

A number of issues relating to risk associated with Campus 21 and Brexit were identified and mitigating actions being taken by the College moving forward, were noted.

## **90.8 Resources Committee**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the Resources Committee meeting on 19 August 2019. Members noted the financial position and that draft annual accounts completed for audit verification would come to the Resources Committee for approval.

The Chair noted that Mr Murphy would take on the role of Resources Committee Chair going forward.

## **90.9 Audit & Risk Committee**

Members noted the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019.

Mr McCluggage gave a verbal update of the meeting held on 19 September, outlining satisfactory assurance from internal audit and summarised the 3 status red risks, including a new risk relating to workplace skills.

Mr Cochrane left the meeting at 6.15pm.

Mr Higgins explained new arrangements for audit at both Department year end and College year end.

#### 90.10 Report Card 2019/20

The College Development Plan 2018/19 was taken as read. Status of Report Cards enrolments, employers and social inclusion were noted and had been incorporated into the Annual Report and Accounts. Mr Higgins referred to the reformatting of report card to exclude essential skills from the target as requested by the Department.

Members noted that enrolments for FE (<19) ES would be reconsidered as a result of the changing complement of L2 and L3 courses.

Ms Dynes left the meeting at 6.20pm.

#### 90.11 Student Enrolments 2019/20

Mr Taggart updated members on enrolment numbers at 20 September 2019 noting that the recruitment process was still ongoing. Significant growth of numbers in Care & Access courses were welcomed, however, the effects of competition from post primary schools continued to impact on L2 courses. The competitive nature of University relationships along with the extra places provided to Universities from the Department in August was also a cause of concern for FE Colleges which had all reported challenges meeting enrolment targets.

Dr Lennox joined the meeting at 6.45pm.

Members noted that work was underway with the Heads of Department, AHODs and curriculum teams on the extensive documentation required for the SER/QIP.

#### 90.12 Committee Meeting Dates

The Governing Body noted revised 2019/20 dates for meetings.

#### 90.13 Any Other Business

None.


#### 90.14 Date of Next Meeting

13 November 2019 in Farm Lodge, Ballymena. Training to take place from 4.00pm with the Governing Body meeting commencing at 5.30pm.

The meeting ended at 6.50pm.

Mr R McCann   
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(Chair)

Date 13/11/19  
13 November 2019

Mrs K Wallace   
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Secretary)

