

Northern Regional College

Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 26 May 2016 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus **commencing at 3.30 pm**

Present Mr R Jay (Chairperson), Mr K Nelson, Mr B McCluggage, Mrs Carmel McKinney and Professor T Scott (Principal).

In Attendance Dr S Brankin, Mr M Higgins, Mr M McKinney, Mr V Taggart and Mrs R Bell (Secretary)

The Chair welcomed Mr McKinney, Mrs McKinney, Mr Taggart and Mrs Bell to the meeting.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

30.1 Membership and Apologies

An apology was received from Mr M Murray.

30.2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

30.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Under 29.9 c), the omission of the word 'of' was noted.

The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting held on 17 February 2016.

30.4 Matters Arising

The Committee was advised that ETi had not yet released a Report following their last Inspection in the College.

TES Awards: The College, whilst shortlisted for 3 awards, was not successful in progressing any further. The achievement of being shortlisted was commended by the Committee.

30.5 Chair's Communications

Nothing to report.

30.6 Correspondence

Nothing to report.

30.7 Presentation on Essential Skills

Majella O'Boyle, AHOD for Essential Skills, was welcomed to the meeting.

Majella presented a comprehensive overview of the College's current position with regard to Essential Skills. The progress made over the last 5 months was detailed, in all areas, including FE, Adult/Community, Training and SLDD provision. Details of KPIs were presented, including

retention and achievement. The Committee was informed of planned provision, including fast track courses and courses for local businesses, whose workforces are being upskilled. Feedback from ETi and External Verifiers has been positive. There will be an emphasis on GCSEs going forward.

The Chair enquired about the embedding of Essential Skills within Departments; Mrs O'Boyle advised this was progressing well, with staff taking ownership of Essential Skills.

Mrs O'Boyle was thanked for her refreshing and clear presentation; she left the meeting at this stage.

30.8 Strategic Improvement Plan

The SIP update was presented to the Committee.

Mr McKinney addressed the key issues in relation to the Curriculum within KPI1, highlighting issues such as the desire to improve the student experience and the introduction of common induction for all students.

Under KPI9, there was discussion on the classification of courses into Priority Skills Areas, providing an improved position for the College in this respect.

30.9 Update on MaSN provision for 2016/17

Members were circulated with the letter from DEL, giving notification of increased MaSN and an internal report, detailing the allocation of the MaSN.

It was noted that, within the sector, the College is disadvantaged by a smaller allocation, compared with other Colleges.

30.10 Curriculum Plan

The Committee had been provided with the Draft Curriculum Plan.

Mr McKinney addressed the plan, highlighting key issues, such as new course provision.

There followed discussion on the contents of the plan, including a desire to increase Level 4 provision; Cost Recovery provision and the conduct of Cost Benefit Analysis in respect of this; and Business Engagement provision.

The Chair commended the Plan as being well written and containing useful data.

The Committee unanimously approved the plan.

30.11 Corporate Challenge Report

Members had been provided with an update on the progress to date of the Corporate Challenge Unit. Mr Taggart addressed the key issues within the report, highlighting the staffing complement for the new team and work carried out to date, including ETi Inspections, on-line surveys and Focus Groups, monitoring the quality of the curriculum.

There was acknowledgement of progress by Mr Taggart and Mrs Hagan in establishing the Unit and embedding the QA process..

Mr Taggart referred to Challenge sessions, to identify areas for improvement and timetabling issues, which would be addressed by the implementation of Centralised Timetabling.

There was discussion on the generally poor response from students in relation to completing surveys, including the possibility of incentivising students to participate in these key feedback mechanisms.

Mr Taggart was thanked for the report and progress to date.

30.12 Student Council

In relation to issues regarding the current out-dated Constitution of the Student Council, Mr McKinney asked to defer this item to a later meeting.

The Committee were in agreement.

30.13 Digital Learning Strategy

Dr Brankin addressed the tabled Strategy document. Imminent recruitment of key staff to support the Strategy was discussed, in line with the Strategic Improvement Plan. Reference was made to the Digital Learning Operating Model and the components in respect of impact on CPD for Staff; External Connections; and Digital Learning Audits.

Mr McCluggage enquired about the inclusion of copyrighted material at section 5.1. Dr Brankin agreed to amend accordingly.

Members commended the Paper and unanimously approved it.

Dr Brankin to provide a verbal update to the next meeting.

30.14 Any Other Notified Business

There was no further Notified Business.

30.15 Date of next meeting

The schedule of meetings is to be agreed with the Chair.

As there was no other notified business to consider, the meeting concluded at 5.20pm.



Mr R Jay (Chair)

Date 9 Nov 2016
9 November 2016



Mrs C Robinson (Secretary)

ANNEX 1

EDUCATION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Constitution

The Governing Body has established, in accordance with the provisions of its Instrument and Articles, a committee known as the Education Committee.

Remit

The Education Committee oversees the College's curricular provision, with a focus on its quality and appropriateness for the community served by the College. Its role is to advise the Principal and Chief Executive on: the general oversight of the academic work of the College, such as the admission, assessment and examination of students; curriculum development; continuous quality improvement; the efficiency of learning and teaching; the student experience; and provisions for the suspension and expulsion of students.

Membership

The Committee shall consist of at least four members of the Governing body including the Chief Executive and Principal. The Committee should also include a Staff and a Student Governor. The Senior Leadership Team will also attend all meetings. A quorum shall be three members. In addition non-members may be co-opted by the Governing Body to provide specialist expertise. The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Governing Body and the Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the Committee. In the absence of the Chairperson the Vice-Chairperson will assume the role.

Duties

The responsibilities of the Education Committee are:

1. To oversee curriculum strategy and plans in order to support the Senior Leadership Team in delivering the College's mission and strategic priorities in relation to students as detailed in the Strategic Improvement Plan.
2. To ensure the development and review of an evolving curriculum and associated provisions in response to regional social and economic needs, employer engagement and government policies, particularly in relation to priority skills areas.
3. To oversee arrangements for delivering and monitoring the student experience; to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment; to receive reports on the provision of services to students, and on the suspension and expulsion of students for academic or safeguarding reasons; and to provide a forum for engaging with the Student Council.
4. To agree annual targets for college performance in relation to student recruitment, enrolment, achievement and success; to monitor performance against targets and external benchmarks; and to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address actual or potential shortfalls.
5. To ensure that the college works with stakeholders to improve continuously the quality of its teaching and learning provision with the aim of achieving recognised excellence in all areas of activity; and to support the development and maintenance of local, national and international relationships to enhance the quality of the College's provision.
6. To monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of curriculum provision through the rational allocation of teaching resources and the innovative use of technologies.