

# Northern Regional College

## Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday, 14 September 2016 at Farm Lodge Campus, Ballymena, **commencing at 5.30 pm and concluding at 7.25 pm.**

### Present:

Ms C McKinney (Chair), Professor T Scott (Principal), Mrs I Allison, Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey, Mrs J Eve, Mr A Kennedy, Dr K McCambridge, Mrs G McConnell, Mr B McCluggage, Dr D Lennox, Ms Y Mallon.

Mrs C Robinson, Secretary

### In Attendance:

Mr M Higgins, Dr S Brankin, Professor M McKinney, Mr D Hewitt, Mrs R Bell

## UNRESERVED BUSINESS

### 72.1 Welcome

The Chair gave a warm welcome to the newly-appointed Secretary, Mrs Claire Robinson.

Dr Karen McCambridge, the newly-elected lecturing staff representative was also welcomed to her first meeting.

### 72.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr R Jay, Mr K Nelson, Mrs K Reilly, Councillor J Brown and Cllr W Hutchinson.

### 72.3 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2016 were approved, on the proposal of Mr McCluggage, seconded by Mrs McConnell.

### 72.4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

### 72.5 Declaration of Interests

None.

### 72.6 Chair's Communication

72.6.1 The Chair offered condolences to Mrs Mallon on the recent death of her mother.

72.6.2 Congratulations were offered to Mrs Eve on her commission to be a Deputy Lieutenant of the County Borough of Belfast.

- 72.6.3 The Chair advised that she would be attending a DfE Working Dinner for Chairs, scheduled for 13 October 2016.
- 72.6.4 The Chair advised of a request from Mr Hutchinson to join the Education Committee. This request was noted.
- 72.6.5 The Chair reported that there were still 5 outstanding Governor Appraisals. Appointments have been scheduled to deal with the majority of these.

## **72.7 Correspondence**

- 72.7.1 DfE Governance Bulletin 2 – Whistleblowing Guidance for Stakeholders, circulated to Governors and content noted.
- 72.7.2 DfE Quality Related Assurances this correspondence provides an update on actions required relating to the provision of assurance statements from accountable officers on behalf of Governing Bodies as part of the new operating model for quality assessment of our Higher Education provision. The correspondence was circulated to Governors and the contents noted for follow up by the Education Sub Committee.

Mr McCluggage asked about the schedule for HEFEC visit. Professor Scott advised dates had not yet been confirmed although it was not likely to be imminent.

- 72.7.3 Revised pay scales for Support staff, circulated to all Governors and contents noted.
- 72.7.4 Official appointment of Dr McCambridge as the Lecturing Staff Representative for a four-year period. Governors unanimously agreed the co-option of Dr McCambridge to the Education Sub-committee.

## **72.8 Principal's Report**

The Principal's report was circulated to the Governors prior to the meeting.

Professor Scott highlighted a number of items as follows:

The positive dialogue and feedback from DfE regarding the Improvement Plan progress and the move to quarterly reporting.

The completion of the recruitment process to fill the new management structure had been completed on target with all posts now filled. She noted that the achievement of successfully filling 38 managements posts in a period of 9 months.

The new academic year commenced in Mid-August and a curriculum staff event was held in Newtownabbey during the first week back after the summer holidays. A workshop was held on 13 September 2016 for HODs and HOSs, the purpose of the session was to support managers to achieve targets relating to staff utilisation and effective use of resources.

A consultation exercise will soon be underway in relation to outsourcing facilities management.

The Principal noted the sector-wide STS Collaborative project was progressing, with approval now being sought from DFP. Advice has been sought on the most appropriate way

forward. The advice recommends that the most efficient solution is an SPV (ie a company limited by guarantee, with the 6 FE colleges as equal members) which will meet HMRC's conditions as a 'cost sharing group' for VAT, with CNI as the managing agent and with appropriate approvals and permissions in place. Governors agreed to proceed on this basis, Dr Lennox enquired about funding; the Principal advised that the budget for the project had been confirmed with DfE with all Colleges making a contribution.

The Chair acknowledged the phenomenal amount of work undertaken in the College in a relatively short space of time; she commended the Principal and SLT on the progress made and the distance travelled.

The Principal thanked the Chair and also acknowledged the work which Mr Hewitt and the HR team had undertaken to meet the tight recruitment schedule.

## **72.9 Financial Outturn 2015/16**

Mr Higgins reported on the provisional current financial position in relation to 2015/16 (subject to audit verification), highlighting influencing factors such as filling vacancies and VES, resulting in lower staff costs, offset by higher accelerated expenditure within estates.

The College is within 1% of its budget allocation, which meets the target set in the SIP for year ending July 2016.

Mr Higgins advised that the College was comfortable with the allocation for 2016/17. Colleges have been requested to look at 3-year plans to consider fixed and variable costs in the event of any budget reduction.

Mr McCluggage, referred to the Healthcheck Issue 3 and queried the 'red' status against failure to deliver financial stability. Mr Higgins advised that this relates to the position in March 2016, which was worst case scenario; he also noted that the DfE's year end is March.

Dr Lennox noted that the current position is amber; he also noted that in the Health check report that 4 out of 6 colleges were red.

## **72.10 SIP Report**

Professor Scott referred to the circulated minutes of the SIP Committee Meeting on 27 June 2016, highlighting that 80% of targets had been achieved at that point and further progress was made before the summer break. The Principal acknowledged the role of Mr Kennedy, Mrs Allison and the Chair on working through with the extensive documentation for the year-end. The SIP committee will be re-convened in October.

KPI 1: student enrolments up to June 2016.

Professor McKinney summarised the position and advised that the college had almost met FLU targets, overall, it was a positive picture.

He also provided a verbal update on September 2016 enrolments so far noting that admissions are reduced; and indications are that this is a similar picture across other colleges; local schools are retaining students for sixth form provision. It was noted that some of the feeder schools have received financial support from DE to extend sixth form provision and this was having a direct impact on numbers.



The Chair enquired about what areas in particular are struggling due to schools offering vocational courses. Professor McKinney reported that health, beauty, sport, travel and tourism are areas in which schools can get involved easily.

The Principal noted that this specific concern has been highlighted with the Director of FE in DfE and was also discussed at the Principals' Away day in September. DfE have undertaken to approach DE to seek agreement on addressing 14-19 provision.

Mr Kennedy referred to the newly formed Education committee within the Council and noted that Mrs Clare O'Neill was appointed Chair of the Group.

Professor McKinney advised that more work was required to review the provision for adults and part-time provision across all levels. The Principal noted that there is scope to introduce new p/t courses later in the year. It was also noted that all Heads of Departments will be required to deliver on revised additionally targets.

Mr Crossey enquired what was the implication of missing the FLU target. The Principal reported that, as the College is in a period of improvement, there has been no penalty to date.

KPI 5 financial sustainability, status identified as green

KPI 11 diversifying income; staff utilisation being closely examined to ensure targets are met.

Mr Crossey asked why costs have increased in relation to support staff. Mr Higgins advised that this was due in part to timing of the VES and also due to a larger number of management posts are now classified as support, which would previously have been academic contracts. It was agreed to include an explanatory to this effect.

### **72.11 New Build Project Board Update**

The Principal provided feedback following first meeting of New Build Project Board, held earlier in the day. Mr Mooney, the Project Director, is now in post and working with CPD to progress the tender to appoint a design team. The Governor's supported the Project Board assessment to focus on the existing site within Coleraine. The issue regarding the extended site of the new build in Coleraine is to be negotiated and agreed by the end of October 2016.

It was reported that the input from DfE and CPD to date had been positive and helpful. The Schedule of Accommodation will be reviewed as per the project plan.

Mr Chambers enquired about minutes from the meeting; the Chair noted these will be shared with Governors in due course; he also enquired about risk assessment, it was confirmed that this had been carried out and the risk potential assessment has assessed the project as medium risk. The College is now proceeding to Gateway 2, delivery strategy. A gateway assessment has been scheduled with the gateway team administrator. Mr Chambers made reference to LPS valuations.

Dr Lennox enquired if the same level of support was received from DfE as from DEL. Mr Higgins confirmed that DfE are committed.

### **72.12 DfE Healthcheck Issue 3**

This healthcheck relates to the position at June 2016; contents noted.

### 72.13 Revised Articles of Government – for approval

Mr Higgins highlighted the main changes to the Articles - to reflect charitable status and remuneration issues. The revised Articles were approved unanimously.

### 72.14 FE Sector Complaints and Compliments Policy

The Policy was approved.

### 72.15 Schedule of Meetings 2016/17

Noted.


### 72.16 Any Other Notified Business

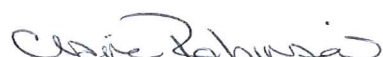
Curriculum Staff Conference, August 2016, noted that the presentations had been circulated for information.

Northern Voice, the college ezine, will be uploaded to MinutePad going forward

Further to the TNA carried out at the Governors' Workshop on 30 June 2016, the Principal advised that refresher sessions would be organised just prior to each Governing Body meeting from November.

An application for a career break had been received from a full-time lecturer; this was unanimously approved.

  
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Mrs C McKinney (Chair) (Date 16/11/16)  
16 November 2016

  
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Mrs C Robinson (Secretary)