

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday, 1 February 2017 at Farm Lodge, Ballymena, commencing at 5.00pm.

Present:

Mrs I Allison, Cllr J Brown, Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey, , Mr R Jay, Mr A Kennedy, Dr D Lennox, Ms Y Mallon, Dr K McCambridge, Mrs G McConnell, Ms C McKinney (Chair), Mr Nelson, Prof T Scott (Principal)

In Attendance:

Dr S Brankin, Mr M Higgins, Mr D Hewitt, Prof M McKinney
Mrs C Robinson, Secretary

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Governing Body members and SLT to the meeting.

74.1 Apologies

Mrs J Eve, Mr J Hannah, Cllr W Hutchinson and Mr B McCluggage.

74.2 Declaration of Interest

None.

74.3 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2016 were approved.

Proposed: Mr A Kennedy

Seconded: Mr J Brown

74.4 Matters Arising

The Chair advised that any matters arising would be dealt with in the substantive sections of the meeting agenda.

74.5 Amendment to June 2016 GB Minutes

The Governing Body accepted the amendments to the June 2106 minute which were outlined by Prof Scott.

Prof Scott advised that the Head of Student Support had met with the Student Governor in advance of the meeting. She expressed concern that he had forwarded apologies for the meeting.

Reference was made to the commitment of previous student governors and discussion on the responsibilities of the role, the importance of having student representative in attendance and options for non-attendance followed. Prof Scott undertook to monitor the situation and formalise a process to ensure the attendance of a student representative.

74.6 Chair's Communication

The Chair reported that the College had received confirmation of the annual inspection.

Prof Scott advised that a five day inspection would take place week beginning 27 February 2017. There would be a scrutiny inspection as well as a focussed inspection of Work Based Learning. She indicated that the timing was difficult as the inspection coincided with other key events scheduled however, SLT had already met to consider implications for non-critical events and commence planning for the inspection. Prof Scott would provide a brief for the Chairs of the Governing Body and Education Committee as they would be invited to meet with the inspection team. Mr John Kennedy would be leading the inspection.

The Chair reported that the Accountability meeting with the Department had been rescheduled twice. She would report back to the Governing Body once the meeting had taken place.

74.7 Correspondence

The Governing Body noted the correspondence received since the last meeting.

The Chair drew attention to DfE letter outlining changes to the Instrument for Government which the Department had requested. Members considered the revised document and highlighted a minor revision that would be brought to the attention of the Department.

The Governing Body approved the revised document.

Proposed: Mr R Jay Seconded: Mrs I Allen

In response to Mr Jay's enquiry the Secretary undertook to identify contact details for the QUB Graduate School Public Board Mentoring Scheme and circulate to members.

74.8 Principal's Report

Prof Scott spoke to her report highlighting pertinent items.

Strategic Improvement Plan – reporting requirements on the SIP had been discussed at the Departmental meeting on 26 January 2017 and the Department officials confirmed they were content with present format. Internal audit was currently carrying out a review on the SIP and subject to the necessary assurance it was proposed Departmental meetings would then be scheduled on a quarterly basis.

CDP Process – the College had been working on a template sent by the Department but had been advised that further guidance on changes to the CDP process was expected. Prof Scott confirmed that the Department was reverting to a bidding process and that the model differed to those previously used. Management concern about the process and ability to provide responses within timeframes expected was noted.

SER/QIP – there had been no concerns with the SER/QIP which had been submitted on time.

Finance Update – Prof Scott confirmed that the additional land for the Coleraine campus had been secured. The funds had been transferred back into the College budget and everything was on track. The associated risk had been discussed at the recent Resources Committee and New Build Project Board meetings and the Department had acknowledged that action taken in raising the risk was appropriate.

Empowering and Engaging Staff – the date of the next staff conference in February was noted. CPD days were also planned prior to the conference.

International Links – Prof Scott was travelling to South Africa as part of a Leadership programme funded through the British Council. Prof McKinney had also made a visit in August and the Vice Principal of the South African College had visited NRC in December.

Stakeholder Engagement – Dr Lennox raised the community planning process and a publication due to go out to consultation. Concern was noted about commitments and resource implications and an update for the Governing Body was requested.

Prof Scott outlined action previously undertaken and noted that work was ongoing in this area. She agreed to provide an update on the present position at the next Governing Body meeting.

ACTION: Provide update paper to GB on Community Planning engagement across the 4 council areas

74.9 Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

Mr Higgins reported that a presentation on the revised MSFM (December 2016) had been made at the Governing Body Workshop. Changes had been highlighted for discussion and the updated version had been uploaded to Minutepad.

The Governing Body noted the revised MSFM.

74.10 Strategic Improvement Plan

Prof Scott drew attention to the most recent report circulated. She stated that discussion at the Governing Body workshop earlier in the day had been valuable and that the feedback would be taken on board. Prof Scott referred to the review being undertaken by internal audit and advised that KPMG was focussing on key KPIs 1, 5 and 11. The initial fieldwork had been completed but the report was not yet completed.

In response to the Chair's query about the timeline for the review Dr Lennox reported that the Audit and Risk Committee was scheduled to meet on 9 March 2017 to discuss the final report. Management confirmed that at this stage no significant issues had been raised by Internal Audit. Noted by members.

The Governing Body unanimously approved the updated Strategic Improvement Plan.

74.11 Committee Membership

The Chair referred to outcomes from the Governing Body Self Assessment mentioned at the workshop earlier in the day and confirmed that one of the outcomes had been to undertake a review the committee membership. The Chair indicated that she would liaise with the Committee Chairs on taking this forward and would include this on the agenda for the March Governing Body meeting.

74.12 Audit & Risk Committee

Dr Lennox summarised the business addressed at the January meeting.

He referred to the C&AG comments on the SIP in the NIAO Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG); the subsequent meeting he and the GB Chair had with the NIAO; the NIAO review scheduled for March and the additional Internal Audit review of the SIP agreed by the Audit and Risk Committee. Dr Lennox stated that there had been a lot of work undertaken in relation to the SIP and noted the importance of the Governing Body and Audit and Risk Committee having assurances in advance of the NIAO review later in the year.

An update on the Training for Skills programme had been provided. Mr Higgins confirmed that the matter was discussed at a recent meeting with the Department and he awaited written confirmation that the College operated within tolerance levels.

Dr Lennox reported that the internal audit update had been very positive with the annual review of core financial services receiving a satisfactory assurance rating.

The draft minutes of the meetings on 9 November 2016 and 18 January 2017 were noted and the date of the additional meeting on 9 March 2017 was approved by the Governing Body.

74.13 Resources Committee

Mr Crossey summarised the business addressed at the most recent meeting in January. He reported that discussion had touched on the risk associated with the capital funding for the new build project; the cost controls put in place as a result of revenue being below budget; and the implications of the situation with the shared services business case.

Dr Brankin provided an update on the STS project. Members noted the significance of the shared services project, the difficulties arising from the delay in approval of business cases and stressed the importance of having contingency plans in place.

The draft minute of the Resources Committee held on 16 January 2017 was noted by the Governing Body.

74.14 Strategic Improvement Committee

The Chair drew attention to the draft minutes of the last Strategic Improvement Committee meeting held on 6 January 2017 and advised that the next two committee meetings would be held on 12 April 2017 and 28 June 2017. The timing of the meetings would be confirmed at the earliest convenience.

The Governing Body noted the minute and approved the meeting dates.

74.15 Education Committee

Mr Jay advised that a verbal report on the last Education Committee had been given at the November Governing Body meeting. The draft minute of the meeting had been circulated. He drew attention to changes to the dates of the next two Committee meetings.

The meetings scheduled for 5pm on the 22 February 2017 and 24 May 2017 were approved by the Governing Body.

74.16 Corporate Risk Register

Mr Higgins reported that the Corporate Risk Register had been reviewed recently by both the Audit and Risk and Resources Committees. In light of the new risk associated with the Systems, Technology and Services Project the risk register had been brought to the Governing Body. Details on the current position of the project were highlighted. The Governing Body noted the risk was red and that contingency plans were being developed.

74.17 Any Other Business

Mr Jay sought clarification on the dates highlighted within the risk register that referred to the completion dates for the implementation of the STS project. Dr Lennox suggested that contingency measures should be included in the risk register.

ACTION: Mr Higgins to update risk register accordingly.

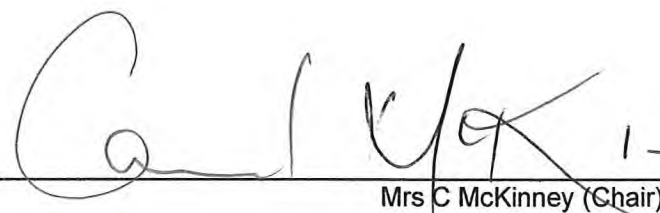
Mrs Mallon advised that as mentor to the student governor, she had tried unsuccessfully to make contact with Mr Hannah. She was advised of discussion on student representation at GB meetings at the start of the meeting.

74.18 Date of Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed the next meeting of the Governing Body would be held at the Newtownabbey Campus on Wednesday 22 March 2017 and would be preceded by a training workshop. The workshop would commence at 2.30pm and the GB meeting at 5pm.


The Secretary undertook to ensure meeting dates could be viewed by members on minutepad.

The unreserved business meeting ended at 6.50pm



Mrs C McKinney (Chair)

Date 22/3/2017
22 March 2017



Mrs C Robinson (Secretary)