

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at 6.00 pm on 12 May 2014 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus, Northern Regional College

Present Mr G Gilpin (Chairperson), Mr T Neilands (Principal), Mrs I Allison, Mrs K Collins, Mr S Davidson, Mrs J Eve, Mr I Goldsworthy, Mr R Jay, Mr S Kelly, Mr A Kennedy, Dr D Lennox, Alderman PJ McAvoy, Mr S McCartney, Mrs G McConnell, Mr M Murray and Mrs A Rankin

In Attendance Mrs B Crotty, Mrs C Moore, Dr C O'Mullan and Mr JA Hunter

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

53.1 Apologies from Alderman J Brown and Mr K Nelson.

53.2 Declaration of Interests There were no declarations of interests.

53.3 Minutes of Last Meeting on 12 March 2014 were approved.

53.4 Matters Arising

53.4.1 End of Year Show (minute 52.6 b))

It was noted that there would be no pre-Theatre meal for Les Miserables on Friday 13 June 2014 and Members would simply attend the show.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

53.5 Chair's Communications

The Chair stated that he had attended a number of meetings associated with the recruitment of a new Chief Executive, two Tribal ITS meetings, a CNI Board meeting and a Bi-lateral meeting with representatives from DEL

53.6 Principal's Report

The Principal referred to the following developments since the last meeting:

a) STEM Centre at Newtownabbey. DEL has indicated that it is prepared to fund the development of a STEM Centre at the Newtownabbey Campus to parallel the successful centre established in Dungannon by South West College.

b) Worldskills UK Squad Selection at NRC, 23-27 June 2014. For the first time, Northern Ireland is playing host to the squad selection competition for the UK team which will compete in Worldskills to be next held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 2015. Some of the skills areas are being hosted by CAFRE at Greenmount and by Belfast Met at Titanic but the majority of the competitions will be hosted by NRC at the Newtownabbey and Farm Lodge campuses.

c) Student and Staff Successes. Staff and students of the College have had considerable success in a number of events including the annual Apprentice of the Year awards, the Irish TV awards, Learner of the Year awards, RSCni awards and the Virtual Library award. The Principal referred to Jordan Hunter, a student on the Engineering Career Academy, who had won the UK Careers Academy Student of the Year Award in London. The Governing Body congratulated the student and the staff of the Engineering Academy on this prestigious award.

d) Living and Learning Together Project. The Principal's Report also indicated that the Big Lottery funded Living and Learning Together Project had received a further year's extension to its original five year funding period. The project will now run until October 2015 and the additional funding is £150k. The project which operates in the Magherafelt and Antrim areas has involved some 21,000 learners since it was launched in 2010.

53.7 Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

53.8 Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard, as at 12 May 2014, provided details of the status of the following domain targets:

a) Student Experience. FLUs were 257 below target at 2 May 2014 and retention rates at 94.2% are above target. A Governor suggested that some form of colour coding should be devised to indicate areas which had not achieved targets;

b) Student Surveys. The overall mid-year satisfaction rate was below target. The matter was being analysed and would be reported to the next meeting of the Education Committee. Reference was also made to the significant increases in sample size, which have produced a more realistic overview of student satisfaction;

c) Business Development Activity. The income against a target of £380 for the eight months to 31 March 2014 was below target at £256k; the projected income to 31 July 2014 is £596k;

d) Staffing. The projected staff cost to income ratio at 31 July 2014 is on target at 72%. It was noted that the staff cost (less catering and cleaning) to student related income ratio at 31 July is projected to be 76.7%. It was suggested that the target date for the College to achieve the Sector average should be inserted.

e) College Operations. The OBC, submitted to DEL, is being formally processed.

f) Finance. The projected outturn for 31 July 2014 is on target; a £2k historical cost surplus is projected.

53.9 Management Accounts

The Committee received the Monthly Management Accounts for the period up to 31 March 2014 indicating that the College has an historic surplus of £1,950k, which is £127k ahead of budget. The bank balance at the 31 March 2014 was £1.9m

53.10 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2014, and said that the Governing Body had no action to take. The following issues were considered at the meeting:

a) Estates Issues. The Committee received an update regarding estates issues:

(i) Disposal of Antrim Campus. The sale of the land is being progressed by BTW Shiells

(ii) Disposal of Lands at Newtownabbey. A new economic appraisal for the appointment of a consultant for the disposal of the lands is being prepared

(iii) Disposal of Portrush Campus. There is a possibility that NEELB has ownership of the property. The College has requested a meeting with NEELB to clarify the issue.

b) Monthly Management Accounts. The Committee received the Monthly Management Accounts for the period up to 28 February 2014 indicating that the College has an historic surplus of £1,434k; £123k ahead of budget. It was noted that the projected historic surplus to the year end is £2k and the bank balance as at 28 February 2014 was £2.5m.

c) Corporate KPIs. The Committee received a Progress Report regarding the following Corporate KPIs as at 24 February 2014. It was noted that all milestones are complete in relation to the Outline Business Case; the Antrim sale is being progressed; ownership of the Portrush property remains unresolved and most Finance KPIs are in line with or better than targets.

d) Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) Submission. The Committee received a copy of the NDPB Forecast Expenditure Schedule forwarded on a monthly basis to the Department. It was noted that the Return had been reconciled with the Monthly Management Accounts and there was no variation between the Accounts and the NDPB Return for February 2014.

e) Report on Financial Monitoring. The Committee received an update regarding progress against the implementation of the recommendations identified as a result of events and process failures in relation to the financial out-turn 2012/2013. It was noted that all the recommendations had now been implemented.

f) Capital Expenditure. The Committee received an update on the 2013/2014 capital expenditure programme. It was noted that the College had been awarded a total of £1,143k and had successfully procured, received and paid for capital equipment to the value of £1,437k; the unused element of the allocation was c£5k. The equipment purchased will have a significant impact on the IT infrastructure of the College and its curriculum development.

53.11 Staffing Committee

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2014, and said that the Governing Body is requested to take action in relation to the following topics:

a) Review of Industrial Relations. Several recommendations have been made including a recommendation that 'the Sector needs to take ownership of its employee relations by moving towards an employer led employee relations framework.

The Committee noted Recommendation 15, which recommended the appointment of a Task Force comprising Union representatives, College HR staff and DEL representatives, under the auspices of the College Employers Forum, to design a precise project brief, monitor progress, manage the communication process and set out the expected timescale for the projected industrial relations model. The first meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for 17 April 2014.

The Governing Body is asked to note that:

a) The Committee had endorsed the recommendations of the Industrial Review;

b) Progress in relation to the implementation of the recommendations of the Industrial Review should be a standing item on the agenda.

The Governing Body endorsed the views of the Committee

The following issues were also considered at the meeting:

a) Staff Survey. The Committee received a paper indicating responses by campus for selected Staff Survey questions. The Committee noted that there was a need for improved communications and greater EMT visibility.

b) Balanced Scorecard. The absence rate was higher than the previous year and if the trend continues it will be difficult for the College to achieve its target by the year-end.

53.12 Education Committee

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2014 and said that the Governing Body had no action to take in relation to the minutes. He highlighted the following issues considered at the meeting:

a) Curriculum Vision. The Committee received the draft NRC Curriculum Vision (2014/2015 to 2016/2017), which sets the direction of key curriculum and associated provision developments and related staffing and resource implications for the next three years.

b) Business Development NRC is involved in an extensive range of economic engagement activity and that the Three-Year Plan was being finalised by the Business Development Unit and would be available for the next meeting.

c) ETI Follow-Up Visit (minute 21.11). The Committee received a presentation regarding work undertaken for the ETI Follow-Up Inspection and a summary of progress against Inspection Action Plans as at April 2014.

d) Student Council Annual Report and Action Plan. The Committee received the Student Council Annual Report for 2013/2014 and Student Council Action Plan 2014/2015. The Student President indicated that the Action Plan had been prepared with an emphasis on further embedding the Student Council culture within the College.

d) Quality Improvement. Several documents were considered relating to: the Learning and Teaching Committee; Classroom Observations; the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan (2013/2014) Higher Education and Further Education; Learning and Teaching Panels; and Learning and Teaching Support Visits.

53.13 Strategic Workshop

It was noted that action was required in relation to:

a) Governing Body Self Assessment. Governors assessed and awarded the following grades to the Governing Body for the period March 2013 – March 2014 to: Leadership and Management (2); Quality of Provision for Learning (2); Achievement and Standards (3); Overall Grade (2)

Governors also assessed the key priorities set for the period February 2013 to February 2014 and set the following targets for the period March 2014 to March 2015:

- Provide opportunities for Governors to input items for Governing Body agendas.
- Provide information regarding Governors and Executive Management Team.
- Provide opportunities for Governors to meet with staff and students and to obtain information regarding college activities

The Chair suggested that the Governing Body should give consideration to the format of the Report at its mid-term review and that Chairs of Committees should monitor how committees can contribute to the achievement of SER objectives. It was confirmed that in future Governors would meet for a short time before Governing Body meetings for informal discussions over a cup of coffee.

The Governing Body considered and approved the Self Evaluation Report dated 12 March 2014, subject to a number of adjustments suggested by Governors.

b) Income Generation. The Governing Body examined, in groups how income could be maximised and noted that the overall place of income generation activities in the future development of the College and the degree of emphasis which it will be given will need to be

spelled out in the new vision for NRC. This will then be reflected in target-setting in the CDP and budget-setting processes.

It was suggested that the College needed smarter targets of what it wanted to achieve. A Governor stated that the College needed to address the loss of income due to failure to achieve FLU targets. It was noted that this issue would be addressed in the Tribal Report

53.14 Calendar of Meetings 2014/2015

It was noted that the Calendar had been circulated to and reflected the views of Chairs of Committees and Members of the Executive Management Team The Chairs of the Education Committee and the Staffing Committee stated that there may be difficulty with one or two of the dates but this could be resolved at forthcoming Committee meetings.

The Chair suggested that details of any documents should be deleted

The Governing Body approved the revised Calendar of Meetings 2014/2015 (see Appendix 1)

53.15 Any Other Notified Business

There was no other notified business

53.16 Next Meeting is scheduled for 5.30 pm on Wednesday 25 June 2014 at the Farm Lodge, Ballymena Campus.