

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 16 April 2008 at the Ballymena Campus, Trostan Avenue.

Present Professor W Clarke (Chairperson), Mr T Neilands (Director),
Mrs A M Campbell, Mrs K Collins, Mr S Davidson, Ms J Fullerton,
Mr A Henderson, Rev T Jamison, Alderman P J McAvoy, Mr P McCudden,
Mrs U O'Kane, Ms C O'Neill, Mrs L Wallis, Mr A Watt

In Attendance Mrs B Crotty, Mr I Houston, Mrs C Moore, Dr C O'Mullan,
Miss T Brannigan

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

8.1 Membership of Governing Body

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mrs Una O'Kane and Rev Trevor Jamison, NEELB representatives. Dr Lesley Caul had also been appointed by the Department but was unable to attend the meeting.

The new members and recently appointed members were allocated to the following sub-committees of the Governing Body.

Audit Committee	Rev Jamison, Clare O'Neill
Finance and General Purposes	Alan Henderson, Andrew Watt
Staffing	Dr Lesley Caul, Una O'Kane

8.2 Apologies

An apology was received from Mrs Alison Rankin.

8.3 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests

8.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body held on 5 March 2008 were approved subject to the following amendment:- page 2 item 7.7 (b) this should read **Workforce** Development Forum.

8.5 Matters Arising

8.5.1 The Director reported that the lecturers' industrial action remained unresolved. Chairs and Directors of the six colleges continued to meet to try to resolve the situation. UCU had conducted a ballot on 12 March 2008, which voted in favour of continuing industrial action. There was now an urgency to push for a settlement.

8.5.2 Internal Communications Programme

Following Dr Hanna's presentation at the last meeting of the Governing Body the Internal Communications Programme paper had been further developed. This communications initiative will be taken forward in Senior Management Briefing Sessions, which will take place in various campuses in late April.

It was noted that the Focus Groups had created a sense of collegiality across the college and it was thought that it was important for teams from across the college to get to know each other. It was suggested that one approach would be to invite teams of staff along to meet Governors at meetings to be held at each campus.

It was recognised that the Staff Newsletter was a good way to communicate to staff as it promoted staff ownership and involvement and it was a platform to highlight staff successes.

The Governing Body fully endorsed the development of an effective internal communications programme and would set an example in terms of good communication in a number of ways by: the development of a governance website; rotation of Governing Body meetings around campuses; tours of facilities; attendance at College events; and the receipt of regular briefings from the Senior Management Team.

It was noted that the ICP Action Plan had identified problems, but it was recognised that the Plan would move forward once all of the senior managers were in place. The Governing Body endorsed the ICP Action Plan, in line with culture and openness. The Chair stated that he wished to establish a corporate ethos with staff.

8.5.3 Students Union Constitution (minute 7.14)

Dr O'Mullan had met with Mr J Pillar, Student Services Co-ordinator to progress the document. Significant work had been done and Dr O'Mullan congratulated Mr Pillar for his work in tailoring the document to NRC.

8.6 Chairperson's Communications

The Chairperson had no communications.

8.7 Director's Report

a) Restructuring The 3rd Tier appointments process has been completed with the exception of two posts which were not filled following the internal trawl. These posts, Head of Faculty Social Care, Early Years, Hair and Beauty, Therapies, Access and Community and Head of MIS have been publicly advertised. Both posts would also be open to internal candidates.

The Deputy Directors and Director of Finance are currently working with the new appointees to finalise the next stage of the management structure. It is envisaged that the next internal trawl would begin within two weeks.

b) CDP The Director informed members that The timing of the appointments process had affected the CDP planning process. The Deputy Director, Curriculum had been working with the Heads of School in the former structure in the development of the Phase 1 submission to DEL which covers the curriculum plan, however, it will be the new Heads of Faculty who will have responsibility for delivering this plan.

Full-time and part-time numbers have been checked with former Heads of School and their prediction remained the same as last year.

The meeting of the Chair and Director with DEL, which will discuss the college's submission, would take place on 1 May 2008.

c) Centres of Excellence The Director reported that The working group established by DEL to review Centres of Excellence has appointed consultants to examine future options for the development and branding of specialist provision within the six regional colleges.

In taking forward curriculum planning within the new Faculty structure the policy of NRC will be to retain the use of the Centre of Excellence designation until such times as this is replaced by a new system. The college will seek to maintain and develop its two Centres of Excellence while at the same time looking to develop other appropriate specialisms within its provision. This will be reflected in the structures with the appropriate faculties.

The college is still awaiting the formal letter of offer in relation to the award of 3.9m euros for the KITE project developed by the Engineering Centre of Excellence which was reported at the last meeting. The latest project of the Engineering Centre of Excellence involves the provision of training for the Schlumberger company both at its local plant in Monkstown, Newtownabbey but also at its factory in Houston, Texas. The Director congratulated the members of staff for their work on this new project. This was seen as an international recognition for the College. The Chair said it sent out a very powerful message of the excellence of staff and he congratulated the team.

d) City and Guilds Awards Mr Tom Heaney, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Built Environment and Design, has been awarded the prestigious LION award by City and Guilds. The Director stated that this award recognises Tom's outstanding contribution to his vocational area through his achievements in the Lecturers into Industry Scheme and C & G Senior Awards. The Chair congratulated Tom Heaney on receiving this award and stated that this was further evidence of teaching excellence within the College.

8.8 **Correspondence**

The Chair asked members to note the DEL correspondence Circular FE 04/087, which provided details of the proposed assessment process for Chairs and members of College Governing Bodies.

8.9 **Minutes of Staffing Committee**

Mr S Davidson, the Chair of the Staffing Committee referred to the 3rd Tier Appointments process and reported that 11 appointments had been made. He expressed his thanks to the Head of Human Resources and the HR team for their efforts in preparing for all of the interviews. It was thought that the next tier would be in place before the summer break.

The Governing Body endorsed the 3rd tier appointments.

8.10 **Monthly Management Accounts**

The Governing Body noted the situation in relation to the Monthly Management Accounts for the period up to 29 February 2008. The Accounts show a surplus of £639k on continuing operations and an historic surplus of £1,425k (£330k behind budget). The College predicts meeting its original targets. The Cash at Bank position was £7.7 million.

It was noted that Estates Ear Marked Funding had not yet been received.

8.11 Schedule of Fees

Dr O'Mullan talked members through the amended 1st draft of the Fees Document. The paper indicated the criteria, which have been taken into consideration in the formulation of fees such as the need to raise sufficient revenue to meet the College's requirements and the need to widen access to College programmes.

It was reported that the six College Directors and Chairs along with ANIC have been discussing the way forward in relation to implementing a sector agreement on concessionary fees. The agreement had still to be reached.

8.12 Education and Training Inspectorate – Inspection Reports

Two Education Training Inspectorate Survey Reports have been received recently: one in respect of Information and Learning Technology and the other regarding an inspection on College Development Planning. The ILT Report indicates that the NRC has important strengths in most of its educational and training provision. The CDP report indicates that good progress has been made by the Director and interim Senior Management Team in the production of an appropriate strategic overview document on the way forward for the NRC.

Dr O'Mullan reported that a focussed inspection in Jobskills had taken place in the former East Antrim Institute in November 2006 and February 2007. A recent monitoring visit had revealed a low grade and a lack of progress in certain areas. NRC had inherited this report and would now address the issues of concern.

A response by the Governing Body, in the form of an action plan, was to be submitted to the Education and Training Inspectorate. Dr O'Mullan reported that she had met with all cross-college TfS staff and key managers and she advised that significant progress had been made to address the concerns identified within the ETI report.

The follow-up inspection would take place in May. It was hoped that the grade would be raised significantly.

The Governing Body approved and endorsed the self-evaluation report and the action plan.

The Chair thanked Dr O'Mullan.

8.13 Any Other Business

It was agreed that Dr Catherine O'Mullan's name would be added to the College list of bank signatories.