

## **NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

### **GOVERNING BODY**

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at 5.30 pm on 27 May 2015 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus, Northern Regional College

Present Mrs C McKinney (Chair), Professor T Scott (Principal), Mrs I Allison, Alderman J Brown, Mr C Chan, Mrs K Collins, Mr S Davidson, Mrs J Eve, Mr R Jay, Dr D Lennox, Mr S McCartney, Alderman PJ McAvoy, Mr M Murray and Mrs A Rankin. Mr D Jones (KPMG), Mr C Marshall, Ms B Munro (NRC) and Ms J Small (Deloitte) attended for minute 61.15.

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

### **UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

#### **61.1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr A Kennedy, Mrs G McConnell and Mr K Nelson

#### **60.2 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### **61.3 Minutes of Last Meeting**

The unreserved minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body held on 29 April 2015 were approved

#### **61.4 Matters Arising**

##### **61.4.1 HE Provision (minute 60,12b))**

DEL has confirmed that no additional MaSN places will be available for NRC and as a consequence the Director of Curriculum and the CMT have reallocated the MaSN to the planned HE provision for 2015/2016. As a result the HND Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families at the Ballymena Campus will not proceed. This provision will be offered at Newtownabbey and in Ballymena on a Part-Time basis.

##### **61.4.2 Monthly Management Accounts (minute 60.21)**

The Chairperson thanked Mrs Moore for the redistribution of the Accounts from the last meeting in April and invited comments from Governors.

The Chair asked whether the College would be penalised financially for failing to achieve its FLU target for 2014/2015. Claire Moore advised that the College would not be penalised during 2014/2015 but had been allocated a reduced FLU target for 2015/2016.

The Chair sought clarification regarding overtime payments, which had distorted the Financial Accounts in the past. Claire Moore assured governors that the situation was being closely monitored and that the Finance Manager held monthly review meetings with budget holders.

The Chair asked Governors if they considered that the presentation of the Accounts facilitated them to have a narrative and understanding of the technical aspects. She was of the view that perhaps there was a need to look at the presentation to ensure that it was user friendly for all governors and provided the information needed to confirm assurances. The Chair of the Audit Committee, expressed the view that the Monthly Management Accounts could be presented in a more user friendly manner with key information presented against targets.

Mrs Moore informed the Governing Body that she was very happy to look at new ways of presenting the Accounts to ensure that all governors were au fait with the technical aspect of them. She also agreed to provide some in house training for Governors in the autumn if this was needed. The Chair thanked Mrs Moore for this offer.

Following a discussion it was agreed that the full accounts should be received by Finance & General Purposes Committee.

### **61.5 Chairperson's Communications**

The Chair reported on a number of issues:

a) Governor Interviews. The Chair stated that interviews for new Governors had been a lengthy process but had now concluded. She advised that there would be no announcement as to appointments until mid-June as the outcome from all Colleges had to be forwarded to the Minister at the same time.

b) Meetings and Events. The Chair reported that she had provided the Secretary with an extensive list of meetings and events, which she had attended since the last meeting. She also attended a meeting of Chairs and Chief Executives with the Minister and DEL officials on 11 May 2015. All events are circulated to Governors by the Chair through Mr Hunter. .

c) Governor Training. The Chair stated that she, Mrs Allison and Mr Jay were attending the Public Accountability & Governance Seminar at Malone House on 17 June 2015. She would report back on the Seminar to the next meeting of the Governing Body. She advised that she was currently developing a governance action plan and training programme commencing in the autumn term that would hopefully lead to an accredited Qualification in Governance. She would work with the Principal to finalise the Plan. She indicated that she would provide details of this after the summer recess. The Chair also confirmed her intention to move to a paperless Board and use of Tablets. She would provide further details in due course.

d) Note of Thanks. The Chair expressed her thanks to Mr Darryl Nesbitt, who deputised for Ms Brannigan in the administrative function assisting the Chair for two days of interviews in Farm Lodge

### **61.6 Principal's Report**

The Principal reported on the following developments since the last meeting:

a) Voluntary Exit Scheme. Further to the issue of conditional offers to the first group of staff identified as suitable for voluntary exit across the sector, 26 offers (20.87 FTE) have accepted VES with a confirmed exit at 31 August 2015. Should funding be made available for VES, the reduction will result in an annual staff salary saving of £805k. The outcome of the Stormont House Agreement would have implications for the implementation of the Scheme.

A Governor sought clarification as to procedures for determining voluntary exit and the process for dealing with any challenges arising. The Principal advised that a decision tree had been devised for selection that was being carried out by EMT. The Principal gave a detailed description of how the process was managed

b) Management Accounts. The Monthly Management Accounts up to 30 April 2015 will be presented at the June Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting. The Accounts show a historic cost surplus of £2,328k, £657k ahead of budget for this period. Following a review of projections to year-end, £292k will be released to meet pressures relating to CPD and IT requirements.

c) Curriculum Planning. As a result of a Curriculum Review Process a number of FLU funded courses have been withdrawn from the portfolio for 2015/16 and effective measures implemented in a range of others under review.

d) Staff and student achievements were noted. NRC obtained 3rd place in the Career Academies UK awards sponsored by Santander and presented to schools or colleges that have best demonstrated

excellence in employer engagement and improving students' career prospects. The best local construction apprentices tested their skills in 11 different construction trades at Skillbuild NI 2015, with a NRC apprentice winning Gold in Cabinet Making. NRC was runner-up in the Innovation Partnership Award category alongside Caterpillar at the DEL Apprentice of the Year Awards 2015. The College had recently achieved two awards at the BEST Awards ceremony.

f) ETI Work Based Learning Inspection. Confirmation has been received from ETI that a team of inspectors will be on site 8-10 June 2015 to carry out a follow-up visit for the Work Based Learning provision. Mr Jay had kindly agreed to meet the ETI team.

The Principal's Report was noted. The Chair and Governors thanked Professor Scott for the work she was doing to take the college forward.

### **61.7 Balanced Scorecard**

The Governing Body received a copy of the Balanced Scorecard, which provides details of progress against targets as at 27 May 2015. Mrs Moore highlighted a number of issues arising from the following domains:

a) Student Experience. The predicted FLU total is 6,183, which is 419 less than target. Mrs Collins sought clarification as to why the projected FLU total at the year-end was lower than the current FLU total. She expressed concern at reduction in enrolments at this late stage of the year. Dr O Mullan explained that the adjustment was a consequence of reconciling records rather than students withdrawing.

b) Staffing. The target ratio staff costs to income are projected to be achieved by the year-end. An attempt is being made to reach the challenging target for absenteeism by the year end (2.5%). The lecturer staff utilisation, currently 94.13%, is less than target, 97%.

c) College Operations. Mrs Crotty stated that the Deloitte had commenced work to update the OBC for the new campus developments in Coleraine and Ballymena. The Team will review the implications of the revised curriculum plan, demographic changes, including costs and options of alternative and adjacent sites.

d) Relationships. All targets have been met with the exception of the target for the Learner Access & Engagement; the LAE programme has been terminated by DEL. It was noted that there would be no income from this source during 2015/2016.

e) Finance. Ms Moore noted that targets are projected to be met by the year-end.

### **61.8 Audit & Risk Committee**

Mrs Rankin presented the minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 28 April 2015. She highlighted the following issues:

a) Audit Strategy. The Committee received a copy of the Audit Strategy, which indicates how the Northern Ireland Audit Office plans to audit the financial statements for the year ending 31 July 2015. The College is required to comply with the DEL timetable for producing and laying audited accounts. Key target dates include:

- The production of draft financial statements to NIAO for audit by 18 September 2015
- The provision of signed Financial Statements and Letter of Representation by 17 November 2015
- Final Report to those Charged with Governance issued on 27 November 2015.

b) Value For Money Review. The Committee agreed that the seven days earmarked for a Value for Money Review during the current year should be deferred to next year's Audit Plan, given the current development of the Strategic Improvement Plan.

### **61.9 Education Committee**

Mr Jay presented the minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 19 May 2015. He highlighted the following issues:

a) Balanced Scorecard. The Director of Curriculum provided an update regarding the Student Experience domain of the Balanced Scorecard as at 8 May 2015. The Committee considered and approved the proposed targets for 2015/2016 subject to any adjustments resulting from the Strategic Improvement Plan.

b) Annual Report Education Committee. Members received a copy of the Education Committee Annual Report, which provides a summary of the activities of the Education Committee during the academic year 2014/2015.

#### **61.10 Any Other Notified Business**

There was no other notified business.

#### **61.11 Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled for 5.30 pm Wednesday 24 June 2015 at the Dunadry, Templepatrick. The Chair advised that the meeting (5.30pm – 7.00pm) would be followed by a dinner to thank four retiring members for their contribution to the work of the College. Therese Brannigan and Jim Hunter would co ordinate the communication to governors with regards to the evening's arrangement. The Chair hoped that everyone would be able to attend the event.

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C McKinney, Chair

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Date

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JA Hunter, Secretary