

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 23 February 2010 at the Ballymena Campus, Northern Regional College.

Present Mr S Davidson (Chairperson), Mr T Neilands (Director),
Mrs U O'Kane and Ms L Wallis.

Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee,
Mrs K Collins, and Mr P McCudden for reserved business.

In Attendance Mrs B Crotty, Mr I Houston, Mrs B Laverty, Mrs C Moore and
Mr J Hunter.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

12.1 Apologies

An apology was received from Mrs AM Campbell.

12.2 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

12.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The unreserved minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 30 November 2009 were approved.

12.4 Matters Arising

12.4.1 Lecturers' Pay Agreement (minute 10.4.1)

The Committee noted that the outstanding issues relating to the Lecturers' Pay Agreement had now been resolved and a final agreement had been reached.

12.4.2 Key Performance Indicators Human Resources (minute 11.7)

The Deputy Director Planning and Resources stated that she would be attending a sector meeting in March to discuss performance indicators and she would put forward the Committee's views on HR KPIs.

12.5 Chairperson's Communications

12.5.1 Acting Chair Governing Body

The Committee noted that the period of appointment of Mrs K Collins, as Acting Chair, has been extended through until 31 August 2010. A public competition has been launched to appoint a permanent chair with a view to taking up post on 1 September 2010. Advertisements will appear in the press during the week commencing 22 February 2010.

A Member stated that she was concerned that there would be no remuneration for the post. This, she said, would have an adverse effect on the quality of applicant. The Director advised that the Review of Governance was still extant and that this matter was technically still under review.

12.6 Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

12.7 Special Leave Provision

The Committee noted that the College has currently two different entitlements to special leave; the provision varies from location to location due to conditions of service from previous institutes still being used. For some campuses it also varies between academic and support staff due to different terms and conditions of service.

During the academic year 2008/2009 335 days were lost due to paid special leave.

It is proposed, in order to provide equity to all staff, to offer the best of the special leave provision until such time as an agreement is negotiated across the Further Education Sector.

Moving to this provision would have increased the number of paid days special leave by 18 during 2008/2009. There is a number of groups, however, that have currently no entitlement to special leave. Moving to best and equity of provision in respect of these groups would have resulted in a further increase of 47 days during 2008/2009. The potential increase resulting from this proposal would be 65 days, which equates to 0.1 days extra per year per employee.

The Chairperson commented that Staff might have unreasonable expectations and that difficulties could arise if the sector provision was not as good as the proposed College provision.

The Committee approved the proposal to offer the best of the special leave provision to all staff.

12.8 Statutory Retirement Procedure

The Secretary declared an interest in this issue and withdrew from the meeting.

The Committee noted that from October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 has banned age discrimination in the workplace. Employees are required to retire only if they reach the statutory retirement age of 65, or a retirement age below 65 if the employer can objectively justify it. The College has a normal retirement age of 65 for all employees. The new legislation provides employees, who reach the age of 65, with the right to request to remain in employment beyond that age.

Under current College procedures circumstances in which a retirement date may be extended are based solely on the business needs of the College and where there is no concern over the capability of the employee to fulfil the role in question. A temporary appointment is made each year.

It is proposed that circumstances in which a retirement date may be extended be based solely on the business needs of the College and that appointment will only be extended in exceptional circumstances for identified key posts. It is anticipated that the incidence of key posts will be extremely low.

It was noted that a current review being undertaken by Government is likely to make a normal retirement age of 65 unlawful by 2011. Enforced retirement would then be unlawful and unfair dismissal rights would attach to any such termination of contract of employment. This would mean that the above proposal would be implemented for two years at the most.

The Committee approved the proposal relating to the College's Statutory Retirement Procedure and agreed that it be implemented from 2009/2010 for retirements

12.9 Any Other Notified Business

There was no other notified business.

12.10 Next Meeting

The Chairperson reminded Members that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 5.30 pm on Tuesday 23 March 2010 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus.