

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 27 April 2015 at 5.30 pm at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus, Northern Regional College.

Present Mr S Davidson (Chairperson), Mrs I Allison, Mr R Jay and Professor T Scott (Principal)

In Attendance Mrs B Laverty, Mrs C Moore, Mrs S Kennedy (for minute 38.7) and Mr J Hunter

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

38.1 Apologies

There were no apologies

38.2 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

38.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The unreserved minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 1 December 2014 were approved.

38.4 Matters Arising

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

38.5 Chairperson's Communications

There were no communications from the Chair

38.6 Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

38.7 Presentation Continuing Professional Development

Mrs Kennedy, Head of Quality Improvement, provided a presentation on Continuous Professional Development. At the outset she detailed the seven key CDP priorities, which are articulated in the CPD Policy and reviewed annually. She explained the various drivers contributing to the CPD plan such as appraisals, ETI inspections, external verifiers and technology development. During 2013/2014 the College provided some 13,500 hours of CPD activity (9,500 internal and 4,000 external). She added that there was a considerable amount of training undertaken in the College that staff had not recorded as CPD. There was a need to raise awareness of this omission. The overall cost of CPD amounted to £450k during 2013/2014; PGCE courses delivered by the University of Ulster accounted for 50% of the outlay. Academic staff accounted for 75% of the attendance at internal CPD training and 88% in respect of external training such as PGCE courses and industrial visits.

Mrs Kennedy highlighted the key CPD activities during 2014/2015 making mention of the ETI scrutiny visit when the College achieved a 'Good' grading. She referred to mandatory staff induction courses, which had been well received. She also indicated that mandatory safeguarding training had been provided for all staff either in person or online. Online training is also being provided by 'Pluralsight', which supplies a creative and technical library of over

3000 on-line courses for all members of staff. Referring to the future Mrs Kennedy made mention of the Strategic Improvement Plan, which would involve a close alignment between the Curriculum Plan and CPD. She also stated that there would be greater use of online CPD.

During discussion members stressed the need for an evaluation mechanism to measure the impact and cascading of CPD.,

The Chair thanked Mrs Kennedy for an interesting presentation and thanked all staff involved in the ETI scrutiny inspection.

38.8 Staffing Committee KPIs & Health Check Issue 1 2014/2015

The Governing Body received two documents:

a) Staffing KPIs. Governors noted progress in relation to the following Staffing KPIs for 2014/15:

(i) Cost of Staff. The staff cost to income ratio as at 31 March 2015 was 60% against a target of 71%. The end of year projection is 69%, which is better than target. The staff cost (less catering and cleaning) to student related income was 65% against a target of 75%. The end of year projection is 76%, which is slightly higher than target due to additional staff requirement to support preparation of the SIP.

(ii) Absenteeism. The number of days absent for the year to 31 January 2015 was 3.57% against a target of 2.5%. The target is challenging but achievable by the end of year. It was suggested that this KPI should be subdivided into two categories: long-term absenteeism and short-term absenteeism

(iii) Staff Utilisation. The net staff utilisation as at 31 January 2015 was 94.31% against a target of 97%. 7.04 FTE redundant lecturing posts and 0.8 FTE support posts have been identified as a result of under-utilisation. This efficiency will be effected in 2015/16.

(iv) Appraisal. It is anticipated that the 100% completion of the appraisal target will be achieved by the end of year. It was noted that the Appraisal system has a number of weaknesses and that scope existed to revise the pro forma while keeping within the sector wide agreements.

Action: HR Manager to review and update Staffing Committee on proposals.

b) Health Check. Governors noted the following key items referred to in the Health Check Issue 1 2014/2015:

(i) Staff costs as a percentage of total income for 2013/2014 are 1% higher than the DEL suggested range. This is projected to remain static for 2014/2015; the 2014/2015 projection includes approximately £100k of staff substitution costs to support the SIP development process. It also includes a 1% cost of living assumption. Actions will be taken as a result of the implementation of the SIP to reduce this ratio from 2015/2016 onwards.

(ii) Staff costs as a percentage of student related income for 2013/2014 are 4% higher than the sector average. This is projected to remain static for 2014/2015. The Principal stated that it would be difficult to reduce staffing costs. She said that the College required a cadre of staff, with a low teaching commitment, to access funding throughout the academic year. KPMG had identified Progress Tutors, a category of staff in English FE colleges, who fulfilled this requirement. She stated that the College would be exploring this issue.

(iii) Support staff as a % of total staff (full time equivalent) is 2% below the sector average in 2013/2014, but is projected to increase to 1% below the sector average in 2014/2015.

(iv) Absentee rates are the second lowest in the sector in 2013/2014 and projected to be the lowest in the sector in 2014/2015.

38.9 Fair Employment Monitoring Return

The Governing Body received a copy of the Fair Employment Monitoring Return 2014/2015. It was noted that the composition of the workforce had not altered dramatically from 2014 to 2015: 69% Male Protestant and 27% Male Roman Catholic; and 64% Female Protestant and 31 % Female Roman Catholic. The Community Background composition of the workforce is not disproportionate based on catchment areas for different posts and the location of campuses. Numbers have decreased in both male and female employees but the proportion of gender breakdown remains largely unchanged with 61% female employees (62% in 2014).

38.10 Internal Communication

The Principal informed the Committee that Ms Brenda Munroe has been appointed as the Communications Officer and would act as Secretary to the Change Team. Ms Munroe would be providing regular briefings as to activities taking place in the College.

38.11 Salisbury Report

It was noted that the Task Force had had its seventh meeting. Mrs Laverty informed the Committee that a sub-group had been established to develop a draft constitution for the new industrial relations framework.

38.12 Any Other Notified Business

There was no other notified business

38.13 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Staffing Committee has been rearranged for Monday 1 June 2015 at 5.30 pm.

I Allison, Chairperson

J A Hunter, Secretary