

Northern Regional College

Education Committee

Minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 15 May 2021 on Microsoft Teams, commencing at 5.02pm.

Present: Mrs I Allison (Chair), Mr K Chambers, Ms A Close, Ms A Dynes, Dr P Graham, Dr K McCambridge, Mr T Montgomery, Prof T Scott

In Attendance: Mr A Ballantyne, Mr R Bolt, Mrs C Brown, Dr L Firth, Ms H Hampsey, Mr M Higgins, Mr M Murray, Ms J Small

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

53.1 Apologies

Ms Close (from 5.15pm).

53.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

53.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 were approved.

Proposer: Mr Chambers Seconder: Mr Montgomery

53.4 Matters Arising

Presentation of the curriculum plan had been deferred until the next Education Committee meeting in the new academic year.

Ms Small advised that no response was expected from Ulster University before early June, on the institutional reapproval for the College.

Information on in-year retention for 2020/21 was included under agenda item 9.

53.5 Chair's Communication / Correspondence

Mr Higgins summarised information provided on 'going live' with a lateral flow testing regime for FE colleges, which would commence on Monday 10 May 2021.

5.08pm Mr Ballantyne and Ms Hampsey joined the meeting.

53.6 FE Record of Outcome – NRC Quality Improvement Planning 2020-21

Members noted the successful outcome of the recent Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) scrutiny exercise by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Ms Small highlighted the extension

to the date for the 2021/22 submission until September 2022, whilst noting the possibility of an earlier inspection.

The Principal reported that ETI were currently seeking feedback from Colleges on the SER/QIP process with a view to streamlining requirements.

5.15pm Ms Close offered apologies and withdrew from the meeting.

53.7 Minutes from Teaching & Learning Committee

The minutes of the Teaching & Learning (T&L) Committee meeting on 23 April 2021 were taken as read.

53.8 Entrepreneurship Hub

Mrs Brown presented summary notes from the Entrepreneurship Hub meeting on 21 April 2021, noting that a number of actions were now in progress, including preparation of materials for inclusion in the induction programme and development of the OCN qualification.

In relation to the College innovation space, the Committee heard that plans for its development had drawn on lessons learned from the prior experiences of colleges in Northern Ireland and mainland Britain. Members noted that Dr Graham had circulated a model of operation for the space and had spoken with the Executive Director of QUBIS, who had offered the opportunity to visit their facility in Belfast.

The Principal welcomed this opportunity which would be picked up by colleagues once restrictions eased.

ACTION: Mrs Morrison and Mr Abrahams will liaise with Dr Graham on taking forward the offer made by QUBIS.

53.9 College Development Plan (CDP) Progress Report

Ms Small took members through the CDP, which had been submitted to the Department on 16 April 2021. Committee were advised that the data issues which had impacted on Report Card 3 was a sector wide issue and would be addressed in the coming year.

Ms Small highlighted a substantial increase in employer engagement over the past month.

53.10 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Status Report

Committee noted the contents of the Whole College QIP Tracker report, which had been part of the QIP submission to the Department. Ms Small drew attention to the significant progress being made on actions.

Dr Graham appreciated the clear presentation of the information contained in the report.

53.11 HE Return to DfE 2021-22

Consideration was given to the HE return. The Principal highlighted concern in relation to the performance and viability of higher education in HE provision. Members noted that this topic

would be considered at the Resources Committee meeting in June, when the impact on College finances and student experience would be reviewed. It was noted that a sector wide review of FE in HE was currently taking place.

Mr Montgomery thanked the Principal for the update and asked that the Governing Body be kept informed of developments on this topic.

Members noted information on promotional activity, including information sessions on campus, which would take place in May and June 2021.

53.12 Course Provision September 2021

Mr Bolt spoke to the interim report on new and extended provision for September 2021. Each Head of Department talked members through their proposed schedule of courses, many of which had been developed in response to employer feedback on required skills provision. Members also noted that combined class provision was being utilised to achieve viability for some courses.

Committee was assured on work being carried out to maximise enrolments and was content to approve the proposed changes to course provision for September 2021.

53.13 Safeguarding

Dr Firth presented the updated Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Policy with attached Covid Addendum, which had been developed by the Sector Safeguarding Group and reviewed by the Department.

It was noted that this policy would now be signed off by the Principal.

The interim Safeguarding Update report to March 2021 was considered. Dr Firth outlined changes to mirror how safeguarding was viewed across the sector, and current challenges. Members noted that Mrs Gillian McConnell, Safeguarding Governor, was content with the report and would be consulted on plans for the upcoming year.

53.14 Student Experience Report

Dr Firth summarised Ms Close's involvement in the compilation of the Student Experience Update to April 2021, and outlined key themes which had been identified as a result of student feedback. Committee heard that a pilot study on attitudinal testing would be carried out in the next academic year, to proactively assess student needs.

Services and materials aimed at informing and supporting students' mental health and maximising engagement were detailed. Liaison with the Student Union on categories for the student awards event, and the process for election of officers, were noted. Dr Graham thanked Dr Firth for the detailed reports.

The Chair recorded thanks to members and specifically to Ms Close for her contribution as Student Governor throughout the year.

53.15 Any Other Business

None.

53.16 Date of next meeting

To be arranged.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.30pm.

Mrs I Allison



Date: 13 September 2021

(Chair)

Mrs K Wallace



(Secretary)