

Northern Regional College

Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 12 November 2018 at Farm Lodge, Ballymena, commencing at 5.00pm.

Present: Mrs J Eve, Mr R Jay, Mr D Lennox (Chair) and Mr M Higgins.

In Attendance: Mr A Ballantyne (40.10), Dr S Brankin, Dr L Firth, Mr D Hewitt, Ms H Hagan, Mr S Lavery (40.10), Mr M Murray (40.10), Mr S Price (40.10) and Mr V Taggart

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

The Chair advised his intention to change the order of the agenda slightly to allow time to concentrate on the SER/QIP as the main focus of the meeting. It was, therefore, agreed to take item 40.10 at the beginning of the meeting.

40.1 Apologies

Ms A Duff, Ms A Dynes and Prof T Scott.

40.2 Declaration of Interests

Mr Jay declared an interest in item 40.6.

40.10 Achievement and Success

The four Heads of Department outlined their retention/success targets for 2018/19 and detailed pressures impacting on target setting and effects of market competition on course demand. Efforts to increase retention and success were highlighted and Committee were advised of an increased focus on exam preparation and study skills, and ensuring students were entered for exams when ready. Committee advised that they will monitor progress on retention and success throughout the year.

Mr Taggart presented the overall retention and success targets for 2018/19 and members noted reduced success targets for Essential Skills in part due to changes in assessment requirements.

HODs referred to a need for extra student support provision in addition to that provided since the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year. Mr Taggart advised the review of ASF completed by the DfE in June 2018 now allowed for ASF funding to be used for staff time, which it previously did not. This would allow for additional staff to be recruited within the area of ASF during the 2018-19 academic year. Members noted the necessity for College spending to support the curriculum and the requirement for additional funding bids to be evidence based, especially in light of the reduction in student numbers in the College over the past 5 years.

ACTION: Committee noted student support provision as an issue to be kept under review.

Messrs Ballantyne, Lavery, Murray and Price left the meeting at 5.55pm.

During a period of discussion Mr Higgins referred members to findings in the Tribal report and noted that if productivity were increased it would result in efficiency savings which could be redeployed to support the curriculum.

40.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2018 were approved.

Proposed: Mrs Eve

Seconded: Mr Jay

40.4 Matters Arising

The Chair requested an update on modelling of recruitment data and was advised that this was ongoing.

ACTION: Modelling of recruitment data to be progressed for future report.

40.5 Chair's Communication

None.

40.6 Correspondence

Having declared an interest in this item, Mr Jay recused himself and withdrew from the meeting at 6.08pm.

Committee noted DfE feedback on the College's submission for Enterprise Hub status. The proposal would be resubmitted before the end of November.

Mr Jay rejoined the meeting at 6.10pm.

40.7 Education Report Card

Mr Taggart summarised the College's 2018/19 enrolment projections, which were similar to the previous year and in line with expectations. No issues with recruiting for Essential Skills were expected.

Members noted that the College had been unable to achieve the HE target for full time HE programmes. This was a trend being experienced across the FE sector.

Committee noted difficulty with the presentation of Report Card data on MinutePad and agreed that single tables to be uploaded rather than multiple tables on a spreadsheet.

ACTION: Mr Hewitt would look at reconfiguring presentation of the spreadsheet data for Committee's information.

40.8 Whole College SER/QIP

Ms Hagan reminded Committee of the SER/QIP process which would result in seven pieces of summary assurance documentation being developed for submission to DfE by 3 December 2018. Ms Hagan updated Committee on actions taken since the previous meeting and outlined the documents which would be provided to the Governing Body for signing by the Chair.

Committee referred to the amount of summary documentation being provided to the Governing Body and whether this would provide an adequate level of assurance for the Chair to sign-off on statements to the Department. The 'bottom-up' process of staff and departmental involvement and reporting which provided evidence of progress, was noted, alongside assurance of monitoring and review by the Education Committee and the Principal.

Committee were advised that the information contained in the overall action plan spreadsheet could be filtered as needed to focus on monitoring and recording of departmental progress.

Committee was content that there was sufficient scrutiny and challenge within Departments and noted the improvement plan that was in place. The importance of all teams across the College actively addressing and monitoring actions in the action plan was highlighted by members.

ACTION: Committee agreed to recommend acceptance of the SER/QIP to the Governing Body.

Dr Firth and Ms Hagan would ensure that the role of TLAs was recorded.

40.9 Annual Provider Review

Committee noted the Annual Provider Review (APR) included at Chapter 4 of the SER/QIP.

40.11 Any Other Business

None.

40.12 Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 15 January 2019 in Newtownabbey campus, commencing at 5.00pm

The meeting concluded at 7.05pm.

David Lennox _____
(Chair)

Date _____
13 March 2019

Mrs T McMullan _____
(Secretary)