

## **Northern Regional College**

### **Education Committee**

Minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 18 March 2021 on Microsoft Teams, commencing at 5.00pm.

**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 R Bolt, Mrs C Brown, Ms H Hampsey, Mr B McGahan, Mr M Higgins, Ms M Quinn (52.10), Ms J Small, Mr P Wallace (52.11)

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

#### **52.1 Apologies**

No apologies.

#### **52.2 Declaration of Interests**

None.

#### **52.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2021 were approved.

Proposer: Dr McCambridge Seconder: Ms Dynes

#### **52.4 Matters Arising**

Members noted that the SER/QIP documents had been signed off and submitted as agreed.

Ms Small advised that an advance moderation meeting had taken place with ETi week commencing 8 March, with the formal meeting scheduled for 23 March. Feedback to date had been very positive with the submission noted as having improved over previous years.

#### **52.5 Chair's Communication / Correspondence**

One item of correspondence had been received and would be considered under Curriculum Policy and Planning.

## **52.9 Curriculum Policy and Planning**

Members noted information from the Department on the College Development Plan (CDP) 2021/22. Ms Small highlighted the extended timeline for submission for 2020/21 to September. A draft of the plan would be prepared for the end of the academic year and fine-tuned before September submission.

**ACTION:** Mrs Brown advised that the annual operational plan document would be submitted to Committee in May.

## **52.6 Minutes from Teaching & Learning Committee**

Committee noted the minutes of the Teaching & Learning (T&L) Committee meeting on 5 March 2021.

## **52.7 Covid-19: Student Impact, Risks and Response**

Mr Bolt spoke to the report which outlined the response to online challenges experienced by students during lockdown and initiatives in place to mitigate through support for staff and students. Mrs Brown highlighted the fluidity of risk levels in relation to ongoing issues, with particular emphasis on issues involving awarding organisations.

Members welcomed the range of online training available for staff, and noted that completion of CPD was captured in annual staff reviews.

## **52.8 In-Year Retention 2020/21**

Ms Small presented an interim update on retention rates to end of February 2021, noting levels of 95.1% as the highest to date at this period of the year. She advised a slight note of caution as verification of figures and processing of withdrawals were still taking place, but anticipated that end of year CDP target for retention would be achieved.

**ACTION:** A full, draft report on retention would be submitted to Resources Committee on 14 April and to Education Committee in May.

Committee members commended the proactive contact work being carried out by staff to encourage engagement by students and provide additional support where needed. Development of additional initiatives which could continue to be utilised after return to College, eg a virtual group workspace, were also welcomed.

5.35pm Ms Quinn joined the meeting.

## **52.10 Essential Skills QIP**

Ms Hampsey drew members' attention to the ES QIP 2020/21, report outlining ES staff roles and responsibilities and summary report on progress against the College's strategic priorities. Ms Hampsey reported positive engagement by staff and highlighted the incremental nature of the associated workload.

Ms Hampsey introduced Ms Quinn, Curriculum Area Manager (CAM), who outlined support available for ES students, priorities to the end of the academic year and the work undertaken to improve the culture of ES in the College.

Members noted the substantial amount of work being put into ES and congratulated staff, especially for the support being provided to students in the current situation.

Prof Scott thanked Ms Hampsey and Ms Quinn for the progress and work being delivered. She noted that the College was keen to contribute to the Departmental review on ES and would keep governors apprised of sector wide progress.

In response to members' questions, Mrs Brown reported that any student who had applied for a laptop had received one but highlighted that requests were still ongoing. Mr Higgins confirmed that the laptops being distributed were the property of the College, procured with funding provided by the Department.

5.52pm Mr Wallace joined the meeting.

## **52.11 Level 2 Traineeship 2021**

Mrs Brown outlined the context for launch of the Level 2 Traineeships phase 1 and introduced Mr Wallace, Principal Lecturer and manager of the project. Members noted that Mr Wallace is involved with NI Apprenticeship Week and that Ryobi had been nominated for the Large Employer Award for its partnership with the College.

5.59 Ms Quinn left the meeting.

Mr Wallace spoke to the Traineeship report and highlighted key areas of progress including work on operational guidance, identification of suitable qualifications and development of a blueprint for the programme, due to commence in September 2021.

6.00pm Ms Close left the meeting.

Members noted that whilst the College can recruit directly for the Traineeship programme, it will attract fewer enrolments than its precursor. Modelling work to identify and mitigate the effects had begun.

Ms Small advised that more clarification on figures and impact would be available when the CDP commissioning report was published.

6.15pm Mr Wallace left the meeting.

### **52.12 Complaints Report**

Ms Small took members through the summary report covering 2019/20 academic year and the 2020/21 year to the end February 2021. She highlighted the low number of complaints which were being addressed in a timely manner.

Members noted no cause for concern in the report.

### **52.13 Ulster Institutional Reapproval**

Mrs Brown reported that the submission to re-establish the relationship with the Ulster University for a further 5-year period had been completed but feedback had not yet been received.

**ACTION:** Feedback from Ulster University would be brought to Committee when available.

### **52.14 Any Other Business**

Members were reminded that the Entrepreneurship Hub meeting will take place on 21 April. Governing Body members will be informed at the 24 March meeting.

### **52.15 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 5 May 2021.

### **52.16 Minutes of last Reserved Meeting**

The minutes of the reserved meeting on 16 February 2021 were approved.

Proposer: Mr Montgomery      Seconder: Mr Chambers

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.32pm

Mrs I Allison



Date: 5 May 2021

(Chair)

Mrs K Wallace



(Secretary)