

# Northern Regional College

## Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 25 October 2017 at the Farm Lodge, Ballymena Campus commencing at 4.00pm

**Present** Mrs J Eve, Mr R Jay (Chair), Dr K McCambridge and Mr K Nelson.

**In Attendance** Dr S Brankin, Ms L Firth, Mr D Hewitt, Mr M Higgins, Mr S McCartney, Mr M Murray and Mr V Taggart

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

### 34.1 Apologies

Prof T Scott and Ms K Linden.

### 34.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

### 34.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minute of the meeting held on 24 May 2017 was approved.

### 34.4 Matters Arising

Committee noted the following information on actions arising from item 33.4 of the previous minutes:

Meeting with Lord Dunlop: the request for a meeting has been put on hold due to the resignation of Lord Dunlop and the current situation with the NI Executive.

Safeguarding training for GB members: a number of members have availed of this mandatory training, which continues to be available online.

**Action:** Ms Firth will circulate the Student Framework Experience document to the Education Committee following the meeting.

### 34.5 Chair's Communication

None.

### 34.6 Correspondence

Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- i) DfE letter for SER 1 Dec 2017 – completed return to be with the DfE by 1 December 2017.
- ii) QAA visit 13 April 2018 – assurance sought re QA by 1 December 2017. The whole College SER would come to the Education Committee on 16 November 2017.
- iii) Request for AAR 2017/18 – completed return to be with the DfE by 1 December 2017.

**Action:** A meeting of the Education Committee will be convened prior to the GB meeting on 16 November 2017.

At the request of the Chair and following discussion, it was agreed that Governors be given the opportunity to meet staff as meetings circulated around campuses.

**Action:** SLT to follow up to facilitate GB meeting with staff prior to meetings at the various campuses.

### 34.7 Whole College SER/QIP

Mr Taggart presented this update report based on the new Inspection and Self Evaluation Framework (ISEF) issued by ETi in January 2017. He highlighted the focus on safeguarding, the requirement for all actions to be SMART and the timetable for implementation of activity.

Committee noted that the SER and QIP process was a 'bottom-up' process, designed to give a holistic picture of actions which needed to be undertaken.

Mr Nelson entered the meeting.

The Chair referred to a disconnect in previous years between actions identified and how they were dealt with in the SER. Mr Taggart advised that the SER was being completed in June this year rather than October, as in previous years, to allow changes to be incorporated.

Committee were content with the timetable and would review prior to presentation at the GB meeting in November.

**Action:** Mr Taggart to circulate the SER/QIP in advance of the November meeting.

#### **34.8 Quality Review Visit for HE**

Mr Taggart presented an outline of requirements and timetable for this review, which would take place across all 6 colleges. A key part of this in-depth inspection would be student feedback and that an induction survey was currently in process. Members noted the College would be visited in April 2018 with an anticipated visit duration of 2 days. Ms Firth had been nominated as the College facilitator and a pre-meeting would be held prior to the visit.

Mr Taggart responded to members' questions on the level of input which would be required from staff and the need for comprehensive evidence packs.

Committee noted the preparation involved in this visit and the role of Governors.

The Chair considered the visit would be a demanding process and thanked staff in advance for their contribution and effort.

#### **34.9 KPI Report for October 2017**

Mr Taggart took members through the KPI report highlighting KPI 1 and KPI 2. He reported the focus for the year as retaining students and the expectation that enrolment numbers would increase as students registered for additionality courses and post-Christmas registration. Mr Taggart referred to employers being slow to become involved with HLA courses and reported on steps being taken to re-engage support for the coming year. These would include implementation of the career ready academy and expansion of engineering and computing sites to other campuses.

Mr Nelson commented that PwC had taken on 15 HE students this year and suggested that this be used in marketing communication. Members noted the popularity of HLA support by employers on the mainland and viewed it as a way to provide talent flow for business.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr Taggart advised that additionality was being integrated into existing programmes more widely this year. He advised that 35-40 FLUs would be involved.

Committee noted the contents of this report.

#### **34.10 Committee Structures and Terms of Reference**

Consideration was given to the structure for Teaching and Learning Committee and the Terms of Reference (TOR) for T&LC, forum for WBL, HE and Schools Engagement and Student Recruitment. Members were advised that each forum will feed into the T&L Committee, which will be chaired by the Principal and Chief Executive. This structure will provide a mechanism to monitor attendance across sections, with meetings scheduled quarterly and 2 weeks in advance of T&L Committee meetings. The Chairs of each Forum will be members of TLC.

Committee were content with the proposed Committee structures and TORs.

#### **34.11 Inspection Action Plans**

i) Mr Lavery updated Committee on the action plan for ES and highlighted a number of issues including: the effect of new external assessments on numeracy achievement rates,

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### **34.11 Inspection Action Plans**

i) Mr Lavery updated Committee on the action plan for ES and highlighted a number of issues including: the effect of new external assessments on numeracy achievement rates, which had been experienced sector-wide; difficulties posed in the timeframes for booking exam resits; proposals for shadowing of GCSE lecturers by ES lecturers, to increase skills; and anticipated decline in applications from 16-18 years next year, when a functional component will be incorporated into GCSEs. Committee noted that a key focus for the year would be on delivering training in exam technique to aid students in achieving exams and thereby reduce the need for resits.

In response to members' queries, Mr Lavery advised that the College had a recognition of prior learning policy; City & Guilds had carried out the external assessment for essential skills; and the timeframe for the action plan was one year.

Mrs Eve referred to the possibility of NI students being disadvantaged when applying for HE places on the mainland as a result of the different grading systems used.

ii) Mr Murray presented an update on WBL, highlighting plans to develop new strategies to engage students both online and in the classroom and increase support for students. It was anticipated that these strategies would impact favourably on retention statistics, especially over the summer period.

Committee noted difficulties with monitoring and tracking of progress which should improve when new Learner Management Systems are introduced under STS.

The Chair referred to concerns previously raised from the inspection in 2013/14 and queried the timeframe to see progress in outcomes. Mr Murray clarified the longer term nature of culture change and Mr Taggart reported that staff were engaging well on the new strategies which had been introduced.

Committee noted improvements to date as very positive.

### **34.12 Student Union Engagement and Appointment of Student Representatives**

Ms Firth updated Committee on the engagement of students following the updating of the Student Union Constitution. Increased participation has resulted in growth of class student representatives, democratic election of Officers and requests for training by Class Representatives. Some difficulties were reported in filling new Campus HE Officer positions.

Ms Firth highlighted the main issues raised from Class Rep meetings which included lack of carparking facilities, cleanliness and a delay in the issue of student ID cards. All matters were being taken forward and Ms Firth advised that the ID cards issue had been due to a problem with IT software, which had now been resolved.

**Action:** The Secretary will upload to MinutePad all presentations delivered to the Committee.

### **34.13 DfE Health Check 2016/17 issue 3**

Attention was drawn to the report circulated which had been discussed in detail at the last Governing Body meeting.

The third quarter report was noted.

### **34.14 Committee Meeting Dates 2017/18**

Consideration was given to the schedule of meetings. Dates and times for meetings of the Education Committee were approved.

**Action:** A further meeting of the Education Committee would be scheduled to take place before the GB meeting on 16 November 2017.

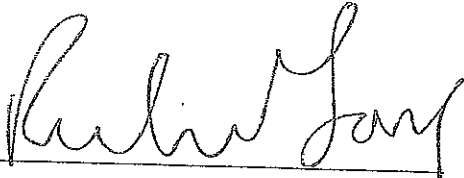
**34.13 Any Other Business**

The Chair referred to the impact on students of the unscheduled closure of colleges and schools on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Mr Taggart advised that students would not be disadvantaged as a result of the closures, which had been designated as authorised absence days. Students would, therefore, receive payments as appropriate and evening classes would be rescheduled at a later date. This message had been communicated to all staff.

**34.14 Date of next meeting**

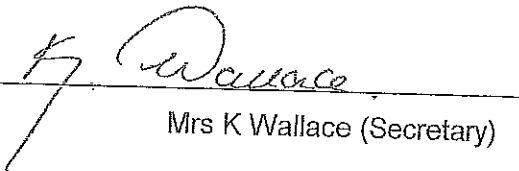
It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 16 November 2017 in Newtownabbey campus, to commence at 4.00pm, prior to GB meeting.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 17.50pm.



Mr R Jay (Chair)

Date 16/11/2017  
16 November 2017



Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)