

## **Northern Regional College**

### **Governing Body – Unreserved Business**

#### **Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 5 October 2022 in Farm Lodge, Ballymena commencing at 5.00pm.**

**Present:** Mr K Nelson (Chair), Mr K Chambers, Mrs L Crilly, Dr P Graham, Ms J Hemphill, Mr M Higgins, Ms Y Mallon (on Teams), Mrs P Martin, Mr G McAllister, Mr W McCluggage (on Teams), Mrs D McIlwaine, Mr R McKernan, Mr I Murphy, Mr S Shevlin and Mr D Small

**In Attendance:** Mrs C Brown, Mr S Laverty, Ms J Small  
Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

**Re-appointment:** Members ratified the re-appointment of Mr Ian Murphy to the Governing Body, as unanimously agreed by email on 21 September 2022.

#### **110.1 Apologies**

The Chair welcomed Ms Hemphill, newly appointed staff governor, to the meeting.

An apology was received for Mr MacAuley. It was noted that Mr MacAuley had now moved to Resources Committee and Ms Hemphill had taken up position on the Education Committee.

#### **110.2 Declaration of Interests**

None.

#### **110.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 June 2022 were approved.

Proposed: Mr Chambers                      Seconded: Dr Graham

5.07pm Mr Murphy joined the meeting.

The Chair expressed sincere condolences to the Royal Family on the recent passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He would send a letter of sympathy to His Majesty King Charles III on behalf of the Governing Body.

Members noted that a note of College condolences had been issued to all staff and recorded in SLT minutes.

#### **110.4 Matters Arising**

Ms Small gave an update about ongoing work on progression pathways for the Bytes Programme including: discussions with DfE on including progression qualifications in the Skill Up Programme; and a proposal for an overall programme for digital literacy through the Principal's Group to QUB.

All other matters arising had been completed or were included under agenda items.

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

Key actions have been captured from governor assessment meetings and will be progressed going forward. These include: deep dives; consideration of dashboard; aiming at "no surprises" with advance notice of matters requiring detailed responses; papers for noting taken as read unless a clear and pressing reason otherwise, to include recognition of detailed work done at committees; substantive discussion to focus on strategic and urgent matters. Governing Body meetings to be held within a 90 minute timeframe, with additional time available if required and continuation of engagements with College staff in advance of GB meetings.

**ACTION:** GB will focus on New Build Campus Developments at November meeting

Chair referred to the list of monthly Chair's engagements over the summer period, with meetings now having taken place with all NI FE college Chairs, was noted. The Chair paid tribute to the work done by the Principal on the CEF in relation to pay negotiations.

Members noted the WorldSkills photoshoot held earlier in the day, with Adam Kirkpatrick and Cameron Middleton progressing to the finals in Luxembourg.

### **110.6 Principal's Report**

The Principal spoke to his report. He particularly emphasised the achievements of students due to compete in the WorldSkills UK National Finals and the international finals in Luxembourg; and the importance of developing staff, highlighted by the appointment of lecturer Karla Kosch as Deputy Chief expert in robotics for EuroSkills 2023.

The Principal reported on a very successful staff conference in August and reminded members that the College graduation ceremony would be held on 8 December in the Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena. The Chair encouraged all members to attend the ceremony.

The Principal's report was noted.

### **110.7 Education Committee**

Mr Chambers provided a verbal update of the meeting on 3 October, which had been rescheduled from 14 September, minutes of which would be brought to the November meeting. Mr Chambers referred to the recent appointments within Teaching & Learning, the presentation on enrolments, the SER/QIP process, noted the safeguard report and reviewed the complaints register. Members noted that the Student President, Ms Amy Morrow, would be put forward for appointment by the Department.

Mrs Brown presented the enrolment update to 30 September 2022, College broadly in line with targets, steady position from last year with growth in HLAs. Following discussion on

enrolment numbers and contributing factors, a request for comparison of FE and University dynamics was noted.

**ACTION:** The Education Committee will do a deep dive on comparison of the FE sectoral position.

If possible, information on university outcomes will also be provided.

The update on enrolments was noted.

#### **110.8 Resources Committee**

Mr Murphy presented the draft minutes of meeting on 22 August 2022, additional meeting due to budget confirmation received over summer 2022. He was content with the College's additional funding and resources but expressed concern at shortage of skills in colleges and across the economy and the current cost of living crisis. Mr Murphy referred to the additional in-year funding and the challenges to secure the same level of funding for next year against the backdrop of the current economic climate.

Mr Murphy congratulated the Principal and New Build team on securing the support of the Department for the 2 new builds.

The Governing Body endorsed the draft minutes.

#### **110.9 Audit & Risk Committee**

Mr McCluggage gave a verbal update of meeting held on 28 September and reported that the competition to recruit a financial specialist would be re-run.

Mr McCluggage recounted work carried out to required timeframes, positive relationship with NIAO and future challenges due to changes in audit arrangements (additional audit 31 March to align to DfE year-end) and funding not being baselined in College accounts. He noted a red risk on the LMS which he attributed to inadequate service by the Department's IT Assist programme. He confirmed the Committee reviewed the mid-year assurance and advised on the non-compliance matter.

Mr McCluggage congratulated Mr Lavery and the finance team for work carried out on the accounts, supported by Mr Small and Mr Murphy who commended the Satisfactory audit opinion from Internal Audit. The Governing Body noted the update and a good uptake for the upcoming Departmental Audit and Risk training.

#### **110.10 Finance Update**

Members heard information on the financial budget for 2022/23 and resource pressure due to rising energy costs, a new facilities contract and pay pressures. Mr Lavery reported that the College deficit for the year was one of the lowest across the sector and the possibility of future reduction of funding, which would result in additional pressures, was acknowledged.

The Governing Body endorsed the financial budget as presented.

### **110.11 New Build Update**

Mr Laverty updated on developments with the new build programme including the confirmed capital budget allocation for 2022/23; revised timescale for Ballymena campus to December 2024; and the ‘topping out’ event to take place late October 2022 in Coleraine.

Members were advised that a draft Business Case Addendum had been submitted to the Department, prior to taking forward a request for an additional 10% funding due to inflationary pressures not anticipated on both projects.

Mr McCluggage highlighted the good relationship between the New Build team, the Department and CPD.

The Governing Body approved the request for an additional 10% funding to be put forward to the Department.

The Principal informed members that, following on from feedback from the member questionnaires, a deep dive of the capital programme would be held at the next meeting.

**ACTION:** Mr Kieran Mooney would attend the November meeting to present on key milestones of the capital project.

### **110.12 College Development Plan**

Ms Small presented the Progress report to July 2022, as submitted to the Department on 12 August 2022, having gone through Resources Committee with no unexpected changes.

Members considered the Draft CDP 2022-23, first draft of which had been submitted to the Department on 9 September and the second on 28 September. The Department would carry out a final review shortly, following which the final copy would be presented to members.

Members congratulated Ms Small on an excellent report in difficult circumstances.

The Governing Body approved the CDP as submitted on 28 September 2022.

The Chair encouraged members to complete the Department’s Safe Resumption Survey for staff.

**ACTION:** The Safe Resumption Survey would be recirculated to members.

### **110.13 Any Other Business**

None.

### **110.14 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on 23 November in Newtownabbey campus.

The meeting ended at 6.12pm.

Mr K Nelson



Date 23 November 2022

Chair

Mrs K Wallace



Secretary