

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at Farm Lodge Campus, Ballymena commencing at 5.30pm.

Present:

Mrs I Allison, Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey (Temporary Chair), Mr R Jay, Mr D Lennox, Ms Y Mallon, Dr K McCambridge, Mr B McCluggage, Mrs G McConnell, Mr K Nelson, Mrs K Reilly, Prof T Scott (Principal)

In Attendance:

Dr S Brankin, Mr M Higgins, Mr D Hewitt, Mr V Taggart
Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Governing Body members and SLT to the meeting and introduced Mrs Karen Wallace as the new Secretary to the Governing Body.

78.1 Apologies

Mrs J Eve

Non Attendance: Mr W Hutchinson

78.2 Declarations of Interest

None.

The Register of Interests summary 2017/18 was noted.

78.3 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2017 were approved.

Proposed: Mr B McCluggage

Seconded: Mr K Nelson

78.4 Matters Arising

78.5 Chair's Communication

The Chair clarified the membership for Committees, as follows:

Resources: Mr Chambers (Chair); Mrs Mallon; Mrs McConnell; Prof Scott; external finance advisor (to be appointed).

Education: Mr Jay; Mr Nelson; Mrs McCambridge; Mrs Eve; Prof Scott; Student President.

Audit: Mr Lennox; Mrs Allison; Mr McCluggage Mr Hutchinson; Mrs Reilly.

Mr Lennox queried the membership of the Audit Committee and agreed to discuss with the Chair.

ACTION: Prof Scott would seek clarification on appointment of staff governors on committees.

78.6 Appointment of Vice Chairs

The Chair will take forward the appointment of a Vice Chair for the Governing Body.

ACTION: Sub-committees to decide on Vice Chairs at first Committee meetings.

78.7 Community Engagement

Mr Brankin reported that Ms O'Neill's follow up with Mr Hutchinson in relation to engagement with Belfast City Council was ongoing.

78.8 Staff Development

The Chair referred to Prof Scott's proposal for relevant senior staff members to attend Governing Body and Committee meetings as observers. Prof Scott would advise any planned observer attendance to the Chair of the appropriate meeting in advance.

Members confirmed their agreement with this arrangement.

78.9 Correspondence

The Governing Body noted the correspondence received since the last meeting:

- i) Replacement of EA vacancies – noted.
- ii) Effective governance training – members were encouraged to avail of appropriate training.
- iii) Election of Student Governors – Prof Scott advised that the new Student President, Ms Kate Linden, would take up her position with the Governing Body from 1 October. Student Services staff were supporting induction of the Student President.

ACTION: In response to Mr Chambers' query on the possibility of temporary governor appointments, Mr Crossey advised that Governing Body Chairs would collectively respond to the Department on this subject.

- iv) Revised Governor Remuneration Circular – noted.

78.10 CEO Report

The Principal's report was taken as read.

Prof Scott highlighted the successful handover of the external facilities management to Mount Charles and thanked the Estate team for their efforts.

With reference to Campus 21, Prof Scott confirmed that agreement in principle had been reached with respect to the location of the access road in Ballymena. In response to Mr Chambers' query in relation to arrangements for the overflow carpark, it was advised that 150 spaces were planned, which would be made available to the Council at evenings and weekends. The College would also have its own carpark with 250 spaces.

In relation to IT investment, Prof Scott advised that plans were at an advanced stage for issuing laptops to full-time academic staff.

The Chair commended the introduction of the staff and student awards which had received good responses. Prof Scott expressed her appreciation of the uptake and turnout at the four student awards ceremonies, especially the attendance of parents and guardians. Prof Scott acknowledged the contribution and direction provided by the Head of Student Experience, Ms Laura Firth. In relation to staff awards presented at the Curriculum conference on 15th August, congratulations were extended to staff on their achievements. Enhancements to the scheme were planned for the coming year when Governors and School Principals would also be invited.

Mr McCluggage noted that he had attended the Coleraine site for a recent Campus 21 Project Board meeting and commented on the poor state of the buildings and facilities. Prof Scott noted that some remedial estates repairs were being prioritised and paid credit to the motivation and dedication of staff to deliver high quality provision.

78.11 Health Check

Mr Higgins spoke to the Health Check Report for August 2017 and highlighted a number of key issues, including initial finance position, risk register and FLU position.

Governing body members made reference to a number of issues where targets could be made more meaningful including a need for consistency across colleges on the method of summarising

student numbers; target range of 0.5% on recurrent spend; and the unhelpful presentation of some of the FLU data which was recorded in 3 to 4 different ways

ACTION: The Chair to communicate the Governing Body's comments on improving the report to the Department.

78.12 Financial Outturn 2016/17

Mr Higgins presented the draft Finance and Budget reports, which had been shown separately on the agenda. He summarised the draft accounts to the end of the financial year 31st July 2017 and the significant steps taken to reduce costs during the year to work towards a balanced budget. He indicated the reason for variances within income, salaries and non-pay costs specifically an inability to progress some procurements as quickly as anticipated.

The Governing Body noted that draft figures were now subject to audit verification.

78.13 Final KPI Report

The Final KPI Report was presented by Mr Taggart who advised minimal change since the previous Report in respect of student numbers. Retention data was still being monitored and challenge sessions would be carried out to review this data.

Prof Scott drew attention to a previous lack of staff awareness in relation to student attendance as a result of e-registers not being marked. One of the primary barriers had been identified as accessibility issues and this was being addressed by the acquisition of staff laptops. Dr McCambridge supported the recent developments and highlighted the importance of timely updating of e-registers in recording withdrawals, although it was often difficult to establish the reason for same.

ACTION: This item to be included in the Education Committee agenda.

In relation to KPI 5, Mr Higgins updated on the budget position for 2017/18.

In relation to KPI 6, Prof Scott highlighted the positive transformation and progress made from 2015/16.

In response to Mrs McConnell's query on further VES take-up, Mr Higgins advised that this would be available until the end of March 2018 although there was not currently a big demand.

78.14 KPIs 2017/18

The Chair summarised the correspondence between the College and the Department on the new KPIs and indicated further dialogue will take place over the next few weeks to finalise the targets and metrics for the current planning period (up to March 2018).

Prof Scott took members through the presentation and extended thanks to Ms Mallon, Mr Crossey and Mr McCluggage for the Committee's helpful feedback in respect of the revised KPIs and associated metrics. Mr Crossey noted that DfE had confirmed that key reporting milestones for the next period would be as follows:

- Mid-year assurance meeting in October (all colleges).
- End of year accounts meeting (all colleges).
- Quarterly improvement meeting in January 2018.
- Annual accountability meeting with the Permanent Secretary in March 2018.

It was noted that DfE had confirmed that all colleges would move to an annual planning cycle commencing in April 2018. Governors noted that the proposed arrangements would straddle 2 academic years.

It was proposed that a report focusing on the 5 new KPIs would be made to the Governing Body at the end of the year with detailed report on KPIs 1 and 2 going to the Education Committee and a report on KPIs 3, 4 and 5 to the Resources Committee.

Mr Nelson referred to the interest in Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) by both employers and students. Prof Scott advised that the future of HLAs was uncertain due to a lack of clarity around

the rules of the scheme and eligibility for funding. It was noted that a review of HLAs was being undertaken.

Mr Jay observed that there was no metric on peer review and asked that consideration be given to this matter.

ACTION: Mr Taggart to examine possibility of establishing a metric for the peer review item.

In relation to KPI 4, Mr Jay questioned whether any meaningful measures had been identified to show contributions being made externally. Whilst it was noted that this was an interim report showing a 6-month period, a number of outcomes were identified by various members.

78.15 Student numbers for 2017/18

Mr Taggart took members through this presentation on the current student numbers as at 12th September 2017.

Prof Scott noted that Heads of Department had been tasked to consider proposals for a January intake and the possibility of a fast track opportunities for HE courses. She noted that discussions were underway with Ulster University to discuss possible collaboration opportunities across a number of programmes and also discuss the impact of recent changes to entry tariffs.

Prof Scott outlined a number of steps which had been introduced this year to enable timely decision making on programmes being run, based on daily monitoring of enrolments. Governors were shown a real-time demonstration of how the power BI dashboard was being used to improve management information.

It was noted that trainees that had transferred from ETT had moved to their second year at the College.

Dr Brankin reported on the difference in uptake as a result of targeted marketing on social media, based on postcode.

Mr McCluggage left the meeting.

78.16 Staff Survey Update

The Governing Body noted the contents of this presentation which would be presented to the SMT on 15 September with the highlights being presented to staff at the upcoming campus roadshows.

ACTION: In response to a request from Mrs Mallon, Mr Hewitt would provide data relative to improvement results.

78.17 Draft Timetable for Meetings

The draft timetable for meetings was adopted. Noted that it was intended to alternate meetings and hold meetings on different campuses with locations for sub-committee meetings to be agreed, the first meeting to be held in Farm Lodge.


ACTION: Sub-committees to confirm meeting locations and start times and report back.

78.18 Any Other Business

Colleges NI (CNI): Noted that the CEO of CNI, Mr Campbell, would be leaving to take up another position this week. A review of CNI was planned with all stakeholders to be represented by Principals/Chairs. An interim arrangement had been proposed and would be finalised subject to agreement by members at a meeting on 14th Sept.

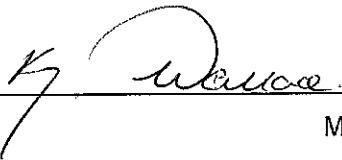
ACTION: Update to be provided at next meeting of the Governing Body.

The unreserved business meeting ended at 7.20pm.



Mr Hugh Crossey (Temporary Chair)

Date 16/11/2017
16 November 2017



Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

