

## **Northern Regional College**

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

#### **Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 29 January 2020 in Farm Lodge campus, commencing at 5.20pm.**

**Present:** Mrs I Allison, Mr K Chambers, Mr R Cochrane, Ms A Dynes, Mrs J Eve, Mr W Hutchinson, Dr D Lennox, Ms Y Mallon, Dr K McCambridge, Mr B McCann (Chair), Mr W McCluggage, Mrs G McConnell, Mr I Murphy and Prof T Scott.

**In Attendance:** Mrs M Donnelly (by Skype), Mr M Higgins, Mr P O'Neill and Mrs K Wallace, Secretary.

#### **92.1 Apologies**

No apologies.

#### **92.2 Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **92.3 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2019 were approved.

Proposed: Mr McCluggage                      Seconded: Ms Dynes

#### **92.4 Matters Arising**

Vice Chair appointment: Dr Lennox has agreed to take up the position of Vice Chair.

Safeguarding governor: Mrs McConnell has agreed to act as safeguarding governor and specific training for the role is being arranged.

Self-assessment survey: Included under Resources Committee.

GB member recruitment: Appointments for SERC have been advertised; NRC recruitment to follow. The Chair confirmed that a panel being convened by the Department would meet to agree the criteria early in February.

SER/QIP: Covered under Education Committee.

#### **92.5 Chair's Communication**

The Chair reported the College graduation ceremony on 12 December 2019 to be an excellent event, thoroughly enjoyed by the students, family members and friends who he had spoken with.

The Chair gave an update of his attendance at meeting of the independent commission on the 'College of the Future', with the focus on adapting to future needs of communities and the impact on colleges and demographics.

An update on the annual accountability meeting attended by the Chair, Prof Scott and Mr Higgins,

would be covered in the Principal's report.

## **92.6 Correspondence**

Members noted the letter advising that Mike Brennan had taken up appointment as the DfE Permanent Secretary.

## **92.7 Principal's Report**

The Principal's Report was taken as read. Prof Scott summarised the key points discussed at the Accountability meeting. The meeting was Chaired by Heather Cousins (Deputy Secretary) who commented on the positive performance for 2018/19 with budget on target and no issues arising from internal and external audit. The Department referred to good performance of enrolments at Level 0 - Level 3 noting NRC had exceeded targets set in the CDP. NRC is the only college with no compliance issues in TfS requiring action and follow up in the past year.

Mr Higgins provided an update on governance matters discussed at the Accountability meeting. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee reported that NIAO had been very impressed with cooperation from the College during the year.

Mr Murphy referred to the financial position to the end of March. Mr Higgins confirmed that the emergency efficiency plan was in place and that additional funding was being sought to the end of March to remain within the budget. He advised the College was in liaison with the Department to secure the additional funding to cover commitments.

In response to request for clarification on sickness levels, Mr Higgins advised that measures were in place with proactive action being taken to address same, and was being monitored by the Resources Committee.

**ACTION:** Minutes of the Accountability meeting to be shared with the GB when available.

Mr Chambers joined the meeting at 5.47pm.

Members welcomed the College's partnership with Crusaders Football Club and the benefits to students.

Mr McCluggage noted approval for the property management procurement framework and expressed disappointment at the timeframe for moving from the current framework and the potential impact on College operations.

## **92.8 Resources Committee**

The draft minutes of the Resources Committee meeting on 20 January 2020 were noted. Mr Murphy highlighted the College's funding status and drew attention to responses from the governors' self-assessment survey and the resulting, recommended actions.

The Skype link with Mrs Donnelly failed at 5.55pm.

The Chair reported that the Department had been advised of the need to appoint a governor with an educational background in the forthcoming recruitment competition for the College.

## **92.9 Education Committee**

Members noted the draft minutes of the meetings on 11<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Dr Lennox commended the work done by staff on the SER/QIP in the interim, resulting in a much improved document and allowing submission to the Department within the stipulated timeframe.

## 92.10 Audit & Risk Committee

The draft minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 6 November 2019, were noted. Mr McCluggage extended thanks to Mr Leckey for his work on health and safety across campuses; drew attention to challenge made on important dates relating to student services; and highlighted very positive results from the external audit.

In noting the completion of an impressive Annual Report, the Chair recognised the effort involved in producing a high quality annual report. Prof Scott recorded special thanks to Mr Higgins, Mr Laverty and Mr Fairless for their work and the team effort to ensure the Annual Report was completed on target.

## 92.11 Financial Update

Mr Higgins presented the NDPB forecast and management accounts, considered at the January meeting of Resources Committee, and summarised the contents therein. Members noted that the College was on track to come in on budget to 31 March 2020.

## 92.12 Any Other Business

In response to Dr Lennox's request for update on plans for engagement with the newly formed Economy Committee at the NI Assembly following the loss of Colleges Northern Ireland, Prof Scott reported that although a shared secretariat had been appointed, the loss of a communications person was keenly felt in the sector. GB would be kept briefed on the impact during the year.

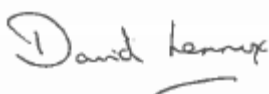
Prof Scott updated the GB on progress with the new build and decant and encouraged members to follow the College on Instagram for updates. Mr McCluggage queried the impact of decant on students and was advised that, although the term had been condensed to complete by the end of May in Ballymoney and Coleraine, provision had been made for students not to be disadvantaged.

Dr McCambridge and Ms Dynes noted some early challenges for staff from reduction of office spaces but no real issues. Mr O'Neill reported that operations to date had gone very smoothly. Mr Higgins noted that additional curriculum staff had been identified to work with the Estates Team to facilitate a smooth transition.

## 92.13 Date of Next Meeting

18 March 2020 in Farm Lodge, Ballymena.

The meeting ended at 6.32pm.



Dr D Lennox \_\_\_\_\_

(Vice Chair)

Date 18 March 2020

18 March 2020



Mrs K Wallace \_\_\_\_\_

(Secretary)