

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 7 MARCH 2023 AT 17.30 VIA TEAMS.

Present:

Mr Aidan McCormick (Chair)
Miss Daniela Sanches Egas
Mr Stuart Harper
Dr Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore
Prof. Gregory O'Hare
Mrs Hilary Singleton
Mrs Judith Thompson
Mr Matthew Turner

In Attendance:

Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum
Mrs Fiona Bradley, AD FE & Training
Mrs Elaine Nesbitt, Acting AD HE & Quality Improvement
Mr Gary Mackin, Head of Faculty BUTE
Mrs Carmel Murray, Head of Faculty HESC
Mr Stephen Rogan, Head of Faculty CDAC
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.33.

Mr McCormick thanked Members for accommodating the meeting's change of date.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Brian Doran, Mrs Carolyn Davison and Miss Clodagh Palmer.

A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting interests held in any matter to be discussed. No interests were declared.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 22 NOVEMBER 2022

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2022. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Dr Milner and seconded by Mrs Thompson, subject to an amendment to phrasing under A06 Policy Approval, Safeguarding.

Prof O'Hare arrived at the meeting at 17.38.

Dr Milner confirmed that she had meet with Mrs Keown and advised that suggested amendments are to be discussed and implemented at the next sector safeguarding meeting to ensure consistency with the sector policy.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

None to report.

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A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr McCormick commented on various promotional material on campuses to mark International Women's Day. He spoke to a well-received jobs fayre held at the Armagh campus on 16 February.

Mr McCormick congratulated Mr Turner and Mrs Nesbitt on their temporary promotions and reminded Members of the Open Days currently taking place across all campuses.

He spoke to the 2023/24 Full-time and Higher Education prospectus and informative accompanying parent/guardian guide advising on the College's linkage with 28 community learning out-centres and signposting campus services, student finance information, careers advice, learning support enquiries and counselling services.

The Chair advised Members that he had addressed the Irish Association of Cancer Research conference in Athlone and attended Leinster House, Dublin to make a presentation to the Joint Implementation Committee for the Good Friday Agreement as a committee member of the All-Island Cancer Research Institute. The Chair informed that he was able to mention the work of the College on both occasions. He advised on a heart-warming encounter with Paula Mallon who conveyed that she had a career as a bus driver before reskilling at SRC under the science HLA programme and is now working as a Next Generation Sequencing Scientist at Randox.

Mr McCormick advised on the success of the ICAS 23 'Walled Identities: Aesthetic Engagement with Public Spaces' event and informed on the HESC placement recently completed in Braga, Portugal.

A06. FACULTY ACTION PLANS (current enrolment position against planned activity)

- **Faculty of Building, Technology and Engineering (BUTE)**

Mr Mackin informed that FE FT recruited 133 against a target of 169. He stated that construction did not recruit at the Armagh campus, advising that achievement in enrolment at level 3 appears to be a sector issue. Mr Mackin confirmed that HE FT did not recruit to target, and HLA provision appears to be a more attractive option for students and employers. He informed that traineeships are transitioning to apprenticeships, and advised on good progress in HLA level 6 in engineering.

Mr Mackin advised on the development of the Open University L4/5 construction pathways in digital construction management, quantity surveying and civil engineering along with the L6 top up degree in construction. He informed on developments in the areas of robotics and the Internet of Things, and the introduction of L2 & 3 engineering apprenticeships in Newry. Mr Mackin informed of retrofit and carbon zero/negative courses under development and faculty success at the WorldSkills competition.

- **Faculty of Computing, Design and Academic Studies (CDAC)**

Mr Rogan provided a breakdown of enrolments against targets and advised on provision being developed. Ms Shackels spoke to a challenging environment and informed that the faculty are extremely agile and responding to societal needs.

In response to a query from Dr Moore, Ms Shackels advised that results once evaluated and apart from, for example, A levels/BTEC RQF, should be available to publish in July.

Prof O'Hare advised that he is heartened to see progression with retrofit and carbon zero provision and applauds the development of micro credentials and aggregation to qualification. He questioned the viability of planned enrolments with an average of 10 learners per class. Ms Shackels clarified the policy on class size.

- **Faculty of Health and Science (HESC)**

Mrs Murray reported that enrolments did not meet target, however advised on turnaround and growth within the faculty of HESC. She informed on plans to recruit to L3 adverse childhood experiences and renewed accreditation of L4 & 5 counselling qualifications. Mrs Murray advised on the delivery of L2 traineeships in health and social care and childcare and the development of micro credentials in childcare in a response to sector requests. She advised on planned student trips and the success of the forensic and criminal investigation L3 national extended diploma.

- **Faculty of Professional Services (PRSE)**

Mr Turner reported on enrolment achievement against targets, advising on hair, beauty and barbering withdrawals. He informed on successful validation for L5 fintech and planned validation in L6 digital marketing, advertising and communication. Mr Turner advised on the L3 sports academy and success at sports competitions and WorldSkills UK.

Mr McCormick thanked the Heads of Faculty for their presentations, commenting on a lot of work being undertaken.

In response to a query from Mrs Thompson, Ms Shackels advised on conversations to future proof provision, considering both sustainability, quality of teaching and student feedback.

Mrs Bradley advised that the growth in HLAs tends to disintegrate FT HE enrolment data. She informed that the Big Apprenticeship Event was well received with over 1300 people in attendance.

In response to a recommendation from Dr Moore, Ms Shackels committed to arranging an event for Governors to get direct feedback from students on their learning experiences.

Members were advised that SRC has the highest provision of SPP, approximately 38% of the sector.

Mr Mackin, Mr Rogan, Mrs Murray and Miss Sanches Egas left the meeting at 18.58.

A07. POLICY APPROVAL

- **CSR Quality Procedure Manual**
- **CRS Quality Policy Manual**
- **Assessment Malpractice**
- **Learning Support**
- **Learning Resources Centre & Library Loans**
- **Examinations Support**

Members noted no or minimal amendments to the six policies considered in line with their cyclical review. Dr Moore enquired if policies with no or minimal changes could be agreed with Committee Chairs offline and reported at the meeting.

Ms Shackels

- **Young Adult Carers**

Members noted the new policy. Mr Harper remarked on the benefit of carer champions. He questioned why the definition of a young adult carer has been limited at 25 years and enquired whether dispensations could be made to those carers falling within an older age bracket. Ms Shackels committed to relaying the enquiry to the appropriate directorate. Mrs Bradley advised that special exemption could be made in extenuating circumstances.

Ms Shackels

In response to a query from Mrs Singleton on the learning support policy, Ms Shackels clarified that students are requested to make disclosures on disability as part of the application process. Mrs Bradley advised on the standard operating practice of disclosure requests, identification of any cause of concern and reasonable adjustments.

The seven policies were approved without dissent.

A08. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

Ms Shackels informed that the NSS survey for HE students is live and the response rate to date is 30%.

Members noted the report.

A09. WHOLE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN update

Ms Shackels referred Members to the WCQIP action plan and advised on submission to the DfE Quality Improvement branch, benchmarking and moderating exercises undertaken.

She confirmed that on 10 February, the Head of Pedagogy and Quality and the Director of Curriculum met with ETI to receive verbal feedback on the SRC WCSER / QIP December submission.

She informed that feedback was very positive, with ETI indicating that the submission was well received and confirmation that the College would be graded as Outcome A. Ms Shackels relayed that based on the information provided, "there is sufficient evidence that the organisation is planning effectively for learning and quality improvement, including planning for sustainability and progression of participants."

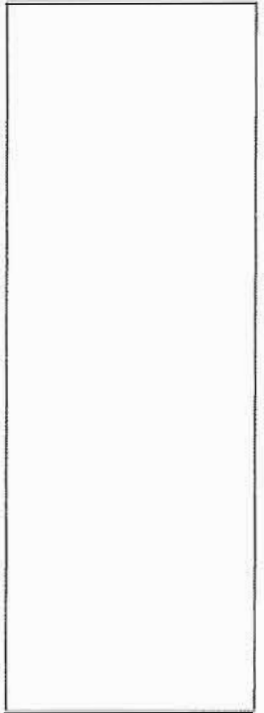
Members noted the report.

A10. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP

- **Consultation on Level 4 and 5 provision and Higher Education in Further Education**
- **Consultation on the Principles for Vocational Qualifications in Northern Ireland**

Ms Shackels referred Members to the two consultations and advised on the collective response. She commented that it is important to keep in mind the dual mandate of the further education colleges to deliver skills needs to support economic growth and to tackle disadvantage by providing viable pathways to education and employment.

Ms Shackels informed on significant benefits in obtaining qualifications through colleges of further and higher education. She spoke to smaller class sizes and higher levels of pastoral care creating a learning environment for students to develop increased maturity.



A11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None to report.

A12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 30 May 2023 at 18.30 in the Portadown campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.41.

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20/6/2023
DATE

Certified as a true copy of minutes approved by Members of the Education Committee at their meeting of 30 May 2023 by the Secretary, Miss Lindsay Armstrong.

signature redacted

1 June 2023.
DATE