

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 18.30 VIA TEAMS.

Present:

Mr Stuart Harper (Chair)
Mr Raymond Sloan (Interim Chief Executive)
Dr Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore
Mrs Hilary Singleton
Mr Matthew Turner
Mrs Angela Whiteside

In Attendance:

Mrs Geraldine Campbell, Governing Body Member
Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum
Mrs Carolyn Davison, AD HE & FE Quality Improvement
Mrs Elaine Nesbitt, AD Apprenticeships & Essential Skills
Mr Gary Mackin, Head of Faculty BUTE
Mrs Carmel Murray, Head of Faculty HESC
Mr Stephen Rogan, Head of Faculty CDAC
Mrs Sinead Lavery, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 18.31.

Mr Harper welcomed new Committee Member Angela Whiteside to her first meeting of SRC's Education Committee and advised that she brings a wealth of educational experience to the Governing Body. He introduced Mrs Geraldine Campbell as a new Board Member and advised that she is attending the evening meeting as an observer. Mr Harper welcomed Mrs Sinead Lavery to her first meeting of SRC's Education Committee.

Mr Harper paid tribute to the outgoing Education Committee Chair, Mr Aidan McCormick advising he had served the Governing Body and Education Committee with distinction.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Fiona Bradley.

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 30 MAY 2023

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2023. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mrs Singleton, subject to correction of a minor spelling error.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members were advised that recommendations to the Safeguarding policy are to be referred to the sector meeting scheduled for 25 September 2023.

ACTION BY WHOM

Committee Members were informed that microwaves will be installed in the Armagh campus by the end of the month.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr Harper gauged Members preference on the timing of meetings and advised on his preference to alternate online and in person meetings going forward. Members agreed to a 17.30 start online and 18.30 start in person to allow attendees travel time. The Committee agreed to monitor the situation.

Mr Harper advised that Miss Evie Martin, Student Governor 2023-2024 will be welcomed to attend the November meeting of the Education Committee.

A06. EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Mr Harper referred Members to the Annual Education Committee report detailing membership, items monitored and approved throughout the academic year and additional areas of work. He referred to notification of the launch of the Assured Skills Academy, success of the WorldSkills competitions and attendance at the Annual Corporate and Wellbeing Day and HE Graduation.

Mr Harper advised that the previous Education Committee Chair and Governing Body Chair had held a panel discussion with a group of learners to discuss their experience at the College.

Members were referred to the collated self-assessment returns and commentary on training needs, quality assurance and performance management.

Mr Harper proposed convening a half-day workshop to provide Governors with an overview on quality assurance and performance management. Members were informed that the workshop would focus on teaching and learning, subject areas delivered by each Faculty, curriculum performance and detail on enrolment and retention.

Miss Armstrong

Members noted the conclusion of the Annual Report advising that Members agreed that the Committee is operating effectively, that the Governing Body can take assurance that the Committee is functioning in accordance with its Terms of Reference, and that matters are monitored and reviewed to the satisfaction of Education Committee Members.

The Annual Committee report was adopted without dissent.

A07. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr Harper referred Members to the Committee Terms of Reference, remarked on the importance of such and advised that they are located and referenced within the agendas.

Members were referred to a recommended amendment to ToR 3 which was unanimously endorsed. The amended Committee Terms of Reference were approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mrs Singleton.

A08. FACULTY ACTION PLAN CLOSE OUT

Ms Shackels referred Members to the close out of the faculty action plans 2022-2023, informing that the four plans follow a standard format and advising on regular reviews of same.

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

Mr Mackin informed that the BUTE Faculty offers provision from Level 1 to 6 in areas such as Engineering, Electrical, Plumbing, Painting and Decorating and Essential Skills. He advised that enrolments are generally healthy in all areas, however informed that Advanced Technicals have slowed recruitment within the Faculty. Members were informed that HE part-time is an area of progress.

Mr Mackin advised of ongoing developments in L2 Traineeship and Apprenticeships and advised on transition progression on the employed route in Advanced Technicals having highlighted a keen employer base. He informed that L6 validation in Construction is now in place and remarked on the popularity of the Quantity Surveying provision.

Members were reminded of the BUTE success in the WorldSkills competition and Mr Mackin advised that successful participants in the SkillsBuild competition are progressing to the nationals.

Members were informed that workshop expansion on the Greenbank site has enabled increased capacity under the Schools Partnership Programme (SPP).

Ms Shackels provided clarity on the acronyms used and meaning of Deep Reform of Traineeship programmes.

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

Mr Rogan advised that the CDAC Faculty provide curriculum provision in A levels, Art and Design, Performing Arts, Music, Computing and recreational subjects. He informed that full-time FE enrolments met target, however expressed concern in part-time FE enrolments. Mr Rogan clarified that the move to transfer recreational subjects into accredited programmes has negatively impacted enrolments.

Mr Rogan informed on sixteen standalone modules developed in part-time HE, advised on a focus on industry and confirmed the appointment of ICT staff as Specialist Lecturers to promote the interface between the College and Industry. Members were informed that SPP underrecruited and a particular focus is directed to the Lurgan site.

Mr Rogan informed that L2 Traineeship in Computing is working in conjunction with the IT sector HUB and advised on a slight issue securing work placements in second year Advanced Technicals. He informed on reviews to align to the 10X Strategy, validation of a Foundation Degree in Music and progression pathways in Computing and Music.

Mr Rogan advised that A level enrolment has grown in strength and informed on the silver award accredited to the Cyber Security Academy.

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

Mrs Murray advised on the breadth of curriculum subjects within the HESC Faculty. She informed that the majority of the action plan had been met, however cautioned that enrolments had not met target.

Mrs Murray informed on a retention issue within science provision, however advised enrolment for the 2023-2024 year has been the best to date. She said that the biggest gap in enrolments is within the part-time FE area and advised that the decline in Health and Social Care has resulted in consolidating provision in Banbridge and Newry.

Mrs Murray advised that L3 Early Years provision is holding, though there is a slight decline in L2. She informed that evening Adult Access has collapsed as there has been no commitment.

Mrs Murray informed of good growth in Forensic curriculum provision.

Mrs Murray advised on the intention to open a conference call for Early Years in May 2024 following the success of the last conference. She confirmed that students had participated in overseas trips to Finland and Portugal.

Ms Shackels spoke to the challenge in further education due to competition with schools and universities.

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

Mr Turner provided an overview of the curriculum provision within the PRSE Faculty. He informed that the Faculty had met its enrolment target overall due to the considerable boost in part-time FE, however cautioned on failed enrolment in a number of specific areas.

Mr Turner advised on success in L2 Hairdressing Traineeship and informed on the progression of L3 into Apprenticeship. He informed that the Football Academy did not recruit and advised of a three-year plan focusing on sports in Lurgan, Armagh and Newry.

Mr Turner spoke to success in L5 OU validation and L6 Accounting Technologist provision which is the first all-Ireland higher education qualification. He stated that there have been good strides in enhancing health and safety in the Faculty and spoke to WorldSkills success and lecturer awards.

Mrs Singleton commended the BUTE Faculty for proactively building sustainability into their action plan and advised on the NIAO requirement to report on economic, social and governance advancements within the governance statement.

She commented on the enrolment position and advised that she would appreciate if Governors could be provided with a thematic analysis report advising on the trend of withdrawals, identifying where learners are progressing to and considerations to social inclusion. Mrs Singleton commented that Members may benefit from a short presentation detailing qualitative analysis on the enrolment and retention position and allowing for questions and answers.

Ms Shackels

Mr Sloan informed on an upgrade on the 4Risk software and inhouse training. He advised that Curriculum Area Managers are updating actions required and contingency details on the system.

Ms Shackels advised that SRC encompasses fifteen of the most socially deprived areas within its region. She informed that 50% of learners fall within quintiles 1 and 2 and informed that social inclusion is on the curriculum agenda with newly funded programmes such as Step Up and Employ Me. Members were informed of new programmes in partnership with Clanrye and the 'First in Family' in higher education initiative.

Ms Shackels advised that enrolments are in a good space in this moment in time.

Mr Sloan commended the Heads of Faculty for their thorough presentations.

The Committee noted the reports.

A09. ENROLMENT POSITION

Ms Shackels provided an update to the previously distributed enrolment figures and advised on Traineeships as the new L2 flagship programme. She advised that all curriculum areas have gone through deep reform with the exception of Health and Social Care and Early Years.

Members were informed on the transition to the VET model which provides opportunities for learners to articulate between Vocational and Apprenticeship programmes.

Ms Shackels spoke of a resurgence in L3 Advanced Technicals and advised that the CDAC Faculty was particularly impacted by Covid. She advised that L2 Hairdressing has been impacted due to competition with private training organisations.

Members were informed of a boost of approximately 200 enrolments in A Level provision.

Ms Shackels advised that the allocation of full-time MaSN for 2023-2024 has been capped at 294. She spoke of a decline year on year as a result of competition and advised that SRC are in a good enrolment position at present. Members were advised on challenges due to universities dropping entry requirements and informed on the success of Higher Level Apprenticeships uptake.

Members noted the report.

A10. WHOLE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN progress report

Mrs Davison provided an overview to the Whole College Quality Improve Plan (WCQIP) action plan and spoke to an interim report detailing eight areas of business and encompassing the period 2022-2024. She advised that the district inspector had awarded a Grade A to SRC on the basis that there is sufficient evidence that the College is planning effectively for learning and quality improvement, including planning for sustainability and progression of participants.

Mrs Davison informed Members that a submission of consolidated data will be provided to the sponsor Department mid-October. She further advised that she will be seeking the Committee's approval and Governing Body Chair's sign off on the College Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan at the November meeting.

Mrs Davison informed that a focus on L2 provision will be undertaken in the New Year and subject to formal ETI evaluation.

The Committee noted the report.

A11. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP

Ms Shackels confirmed that the CDWG meet fortnightly and advised on a focus on Traineeship. Members noted the report and formal evaluations to take place in 2024.

A12. POLICY REVIEW

- **Student Criminal Convictions Disclosure**

Mr Harper referred Members to the new policy and advised that certain courses will require an enhanced disclosure.

The policy was unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Dr Milner.

A13. CIRCULARS

- **Sector FT MaSN position**

Members noted the Departmental letter of 8 June 2023 detailing the HE in FE Maximum Student Number allocations for 2023-2024.

Ms Shackels advised that the process of awarding MaSN is currently under review.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Moore thanked all parties and advised that recommendations will be further developed to allow the Governing Body thematic oversight on curriculum delivery.

Mr Sloan commented that as part of the self-evaluation review, a corporate presentation can be provided to advise on the levels of assurance in place.

Mr Harper commented on a constructive approach and advised that the educational workshop will provide a user friendly and substantive insight into faculty output. He thanked all parties for their reports highlighting success and challenges.

Mr Harper noted that it is Mr Turner's last meeting as Education Committee Member and expressed his appreciation.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 28 November 2023 at 18.30. Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 20.02.

signature redacted

28th November 2023
DATE

Ms Shackels