

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 29 AUGUST 2023 AT 18.30 IN THE BOARDROOM, ARMAGH CAMPUS.

PRESENT:

Dr Thomas Moore (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (CEO)
Mrs Geraldine Campbell
Mr Nick Harkness
Mr Stuart Harper
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
Mr Gary McMurray
Dr Laura Milner
Mrs Hilary Singleton
Dr Eileen Stewart
Mrs Tracy Strachan (via TEAMS)
Mr Kieran Swail
Mr Matthew Turner
Mrs Angela Whiteside

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Lee Campbell, Director of Finance and Planning
Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services
Mrs Ann Maire Hughes, AD Human Resources and Development
Mrs Sinead Lavery, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 18.30.

A record of discussions held between 18.30 and 19.04 are contained within the confidential minutes. A change to the agenda items was facilitated to allow for a presenter's exit from the meeting.

Members returned to the standard agenda items at 19.12.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Monica Kelly and Mr Sean Fitzsimons due to prior annual leave commitments.

A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interest held in matters to be discussed. No interests were disclosed.

A03. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 20 JUNE 2023

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting of 20 June 2023 were reviewed for accuracy and were unanimously approved as an accurate record.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

None to report.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Dr Moore advised that following the call for expressions of interest, the following Governor appointments have been confirmed.

- Vice Chair – Mrs Hilary Singleton
- Chair of the Staffing Committee – Dr Eileen Stewart
- Chair of the Education Committee – Mr Stuart Harper
- Hardship Governor – Mr Gary McMurray
- Safeguarding Governor – Dr Laura Milner
- Estates Project Board – Mr Nick Harkness

**ACTION
By whom**

Dr Moore welcomed new Members and advised on the following Committee membership.

- Angela Whiteside – Education Committee
- Patricia McCaffrey – Audit and Risk Committee & Staffing Committee
- Geraldine Campbell – Audit and Risk Committee
- Monica Kelly – Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Sean Fitzsimons – Finance and General Purposes Committee

Dr Moore informed that he has been appointed to the Board of the Youth Justice Agency as of the beginning of April 2023.

He welcomed Mrs Sinead Lavery as the new Boardroom Apprentice 2023-2024.

Miss Armstrong advised that Mr Chris Evans, who secured the most votes in the Lecturing Staff Governor election, has since resigned from the College. Members decided that for reasons of transparency, expressions of interest should again be sought.

Dr Moore advised that co-option proposals will be re-engaged following the resignation of Mrs Carla Shields.

Dr Moore thanked Mr Doran for support during his period on the Governing Body and commented that he has been a tremendous servant to the further education sector throughout his career.

Dr Moore congratulated Mrs Hughes on her recent appointment as Interim Director of Client Services; following Mr Sloan taking up the position of Interim Principal and Chief Executive Officer.

Members were advised that the appraisal process is on track. Governors were informed that the relevant documentation to support the appraisal process was received after several Governors who had served two terms, had left the College.

Dr Moore confirmed his attendance at the upcoming DfE Partnership Engagement Event on 11 September. He informed Members that the Permanent Secretary, Mr Mike Brennan will retire from his position in early 2024. He also reminded Members of the HE Graduation on 1 September at Armagh City Hotel and Strategic Risk workshop on 6 September. He restated the invite to Governors for both events.

A06. COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2023 – close out

Mr Sloan referred Members to the paper and spoke to a strong performance overall. He advised on items rated red that had not met target and remarked on the significant amount of work undertaken to launch the new College website.

For the benefit of new Members, Dr Moore informed that SRC adopts a self-critical approach in line with best practice, in respect of performance review and evaluation.

Mrs Campbell advised on the monitoring process. Mr Doran commented that the report is underpinned by relevant departmental operational plans.

Members noted the reports.

A07. ENROLMENT UPDATE 2023-2024

Ms Shackels advised on enrolments and achievements to date, commenting on a fluid position following the release of A level results on 17 August and GCSE on 24 August. She confirmed that further detail will be provided to the Education Committee on 19 September.

Ms Shackels informed on ongoing work to assess viable curriculum provision and concern that Ulster University has dropped their entry criteria, and the potential impact this may have on College recruitment for 2023-2024.

She advised on strong performance in the Subject areas of media, games and electrical and commented that no students will be turned away or disadvantaged at SRC and reiterated the College policy to 'recruit with integrity'.

Mr Turner commented that the Banbridge campus will be utilised for appropriate curriculum provision.

Governors noted the report.

A08. GIFTS & HOSPITALITY REGISTER

Members noted the Gifts & Hospitality Register. Mrs Campbell advised on proper documentation and approval processes being in place and complied with.

A09. FE CIRCULAR 10/23 ACCOUNTS DIRECTION 2022-2023

Mr Sloan referred Members to the circular setting out the requirements for FE colleges to prepare their 2022-2023 Annual Report and Financial Statements.

A10. DAO (DoF) 03/23 GUIDANCE ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – EMPLOYMENT RELATED LEGAL CASES

Mr Sloan referred Members to the updated conflicts of interest guidance amended to include guidance on identifying and managing conflicts of interest in relation to employment-related legal cases and in response to the findings and recommendations raised following the independent external review of the DAERA whistleblowing case.

Members noted the guidance.

A11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Moore remarked that he is delighted with the skillset of new Members and advised that information on the historical issues with the estates projects will be made available should Members require same in due course. Members were informed that previous estates papers are available with the dedicated Governance SharePoint site.

Mr Sloan advised that he will make the appropriate introductions to Governors taking on new roles in hardship and safeguarding and stressed the sensitivity around estates considerations.

A12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Governing Body meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 24 October 2023 at 18.30 in the Newry West campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.54.

signature redacted

CHAIR

DATE

24/10/23