

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 17.30 VIA TEAMS.

Present:

Mr Aidan McCormick (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (CEO)
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, Assistant Director FE & Training
Mrs Carolyn Davison, Assistant Director HE & Quality Improvement
Mrs Carmel Murray, Head of Faculty HESC
Mr Stephen Rogan, Head of Faculty CDAC
Mr Gary Mackin, Head of Faculty BUTE
Mrs Elaine Nesbitt, Head of Faculty PRSE
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.31.

ACTION BY WHOM

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Miss Clodagh Palmer, Boardroom Apprentice.

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 24 MAY 2022

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2022. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mrs Singleton.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members were advised that the action arising from the previous meeting was addressed at a meeting of the full Board on 30 August.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr McCormick welcomed Ms Shackels to her first meeting of SRC's Education Committee. He remarked that he is confident Ms Shackels will engage with any challenges that arise and wished her well in the role.

Mr McCormick commented on a successful Graduation ceremony and stated he is pleased with the learners who have worked hard to achieve their success. He asked that the Heads of Faculty relay his congratulations to staff.

Mr McCormick asked that his thanks be noted to Mrs Finnegan, Mr Torley and colleagues for their success at the ICAS carnival and providing a comprehensive report on English and History provision at the College.

Prof O'Hare and Mrs Thompson arrived at the meeting at 17.40.

Mr McCormick remarked on a detailed prospectus and learning possibilities communicated through various media streams.

He recommended that the next meeting of the Education Committee be face to face.

Miss Armstrong

A06. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLANS

- **Faculty of Health & Science**

Mrs Murray advised on developments within the HESC faculty informing of successful delivery of the first cohort of OU L4 Health Care students in partnership with Southern Health and Social Care Trust. She informed on success in the transition of OCN level 2 to HE programmes and the provision of ACE awareness training to 235 college staff.

Mrs Murray advised on the introduction of a level 3 extended diploma in Forensic and Criminal Investigation at the Portadown campus and informed that three HLA science students have qualified for the WorldSkills lab technicians' final. Members were notified of successful revalidation with Ulster University for level 3 qualifications in Science, Arts and Humanities and Public Health.

Members were provided with detail on enrolments within the Faculty and advised that retention for level 3 Health and Social Care in Lurgan Year 1 is 69%. Mrs Murray informed that significant staff absence has resulted in a large overspend in the PTL budget.

In response to a query from Mrs Thompson, Mrs Murray informed that no trend has been identified regarding staff sickness absence. She advised on several interventions being utilised including counselling and referral to occupational health.

In response to a query from Mrs Singleton regarding declining enrolments, Ms Shackels informed that the sector on the whole are experiencing challenges and advised on the impact of Covid-19. She commented that the 14-19 agenda is an important piece of work and many students would be much better suited to traineeship and apprenticeships rather than remaining at schools to complete A levels. Ms Shackels advised on a meeting later in the week to review the curriculum offer and welcomed Members input to inform discussions.

Mr Doran informed that the sector fed into to the independent review and advised on difficulties appealing to schools to provide learning options. He stated that he has written to all post primary schools in the region and approximately 30% have responded positively to address future engagement.

Mr Doran reminded Members that the 14-19 strategy was launched June 2022 and is now operational. He stated that he looks forward to sight of the action plan and DE support that learners be provided with career progression options.

Members welcomed convening a meeting to address recruitment strategies. It was agreed that it should be considered at the Annual Strategy Day so that Governors may understand all measure taken and additional requirements.

Miss Armstrong

- **Faculty of Computing, Design & Academic Studies**

Mr Rogan provided a report on the end year position and advised on successful validation with OU foundation degree and BSc hon degree in Computing. He informed of the launch of the Next Gen coding initiative and the upskilling of staff in relevant computing curriculum.

Mr Rogan informed of the validation of level 4/5 modules for industry around Data Analytics, Cyber Security and Cloud Technologies through OCN NI and the development of various cyber security qualifications. He informed of skills competition success and the successful engagement with First Derivatives technology leading to an 8 week assured skills academy launching November 2022.

Mr Rogan informed on difficulties in enrolment and advised on engagement with industry and local organisations. Members remarked on the importance of having statutory access to schools. Ms Shackels commented that a key strength to NI FE is its ability to respond. She stated that communication of the curriculum offer to schools and parents is paramount, as well as engaging with employers and optimising the careers fayre.

Mrs Murray and Mr Rogan left the meeting at 18.36.

- **Faculty of Building, Technology & Engineering**

Mr Mackin advised on substantial success at the NI SkillsBuild competition advising that 16 of the 24 SRC students are learners from the BUTE Faculty. He informed that Aaron Gillespie is part of the UK squad going to Shanghai to compete in the WorldSkills tiling competition.

Mr Doran informed Members that SRC are consistently the most effective college in NI in SkillsBuild success, and second in the UK to submit the highest number of competitors.

Mr Mackin informed on successful validation with OU in Mechatronics, Technical Design and Manufacture, Electrical and Electronic Engineering. He advised on staff upskilling in the latest engineering technologies and validation of OCN NI level 3 and 4 for Industrial Robotics. Members were informed of the purchase of cutting edge industry standard engineering equipment for the Newry, Portadown and Armagh campus including collaborative robots, welding robots and an IOT system.

Members were advised of a successful implementation of year 1 of the Advanced Technical in Engineering including achieving 100% student placement.

Mr Mackin informed on enrolments and retention within the BUTE Faculty. Members discussed various engagement opportunities with industry and areas of growth through competition.

- **Faculty of Professional Services**

Mrs Nesbitt informed on significant WorldSkills success and advised that successful marketing has resulted in increased applications. She reported that research suggests that employers are seeking softer skills and advised on the requirement to increase coaching.

Ms Shackels advised on the need to focus on attendance, retention, setting of realistic and challenging targets, and seeking feedback from students to ensure that they gain a meaningful experience at college.

Dr Moore remarked on the profound importance of marketing success.

The Heads of Faculty were thanked for their presentations. Mrs Nesbitt and Mr Mackin left the meeting at 19.30.

A07. EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Mr McCormick referred to the Annual Education Committee report reflective of the work Members conducted during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Members remarked that it may be beneficial to reflect on challenges faced over the period and include in the document before adoption by the full Board.

It was requested that comments be forwarded to the Secretary.

A08. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Committee Members reviewed their Terms of Reference and agreed that they remain appropriate.

A09. WHOLE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Ms Shackels presented the WCQIP and remarked on a comprehensive document. Mrs Davison advised on the rigorous quality assurance process, advising on regular reviews to access any emerging issues and implement remedial actions. She advised that the new bi-annual document will be presented to the next Committee meeting.

Members noted the papers and commented on a transparent document, highlighting areas of challenge and College strengths.

A10. POLICY REVIEW

- **Disciplinary (students)**
- **Course approval**
- **Student Charter**
- **Admission Criteria**
- **Admissions**
- **Personal Tutor**
- **Course Management**
- **Word Processor**
- **Hardship Fund**

Mr Doran referred to the presented policies, advising that they are submitted for Members' comments in line with their cyclical review schedule. He advised that many amendments are minor in nature.

Mr Doran informed that proposed amendments to the Disciplinary (students) policy are reflective of agreed changes to the Articles of Government and address roles and responsibilities, and right to appeal.

He advised that the Admissions Criteria policy reflects the 2023-2024 academic year and changes to the Hardship policy is reflective of the amended circular FE08-22.

The nine policies were unanimously approved by Members without comment.

Committee
Members

A11. ENROLMENT POSITION 2022-2023

Ms Shackels presented the enrolment position 2022-2023 and advised that part-time enrolments continue to be taken on campus and in the community and is likely to increase further.

She spoke to a fluid and challenging space and advised that the continuing fall in full time FE and HE enrolment is reflected in the Corporate Risk Register.

Members noted the report and were advised that the Director of Curriculum is currently developing an action plan with the wider curriculum management team to address the decline.

In response to a query from Mrs Singleton, Mr Doran informed that the College has the largest number of area and school partnerships in the sector.

A12. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP

- **ATTIG Group Update**
- **Sector FT MaSN position**

Ms Shackels advised that she has attended her first meeting of the Curriculum Directors Working Group and informed of a key focus on strategic aims and FT MaSN position. She stated that the ATTIG continue to direct their attention to traineeships.

Ms Shackels informed on good working groups feeding into each other and stated she is hopeful that the HE in FE review will address some of the challenges faced.

Members noted the report.

A13. CIRCULARS

- **Evaluation of the Assessment and Awarding Arrangements for Vocational Qualifications in Northern Ireland 2020-2021**
- **FE 02-22 Skills Focus Addendum 1**
- **FE 08-22 Hardship Fund**

Members noted the three circulars.

Mrs Thompson left the meeting at 20.30.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a query from Mrs Singleton, Mr Doran advised that the Department have not registered as a core participant in Baroness Hallett's Covid Inquiry.

Dr Moore advised that he would like to discuss UCAS points and FE clearing proposals at a future meeting. Members recommended examining further at the Annual Strategy Day.

Mr McCormick thanked all parties for their input.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 22 November 2022 at 18.30.

The meeting concluded at 20.39.

Miss Armstrong



CHAIR

DATE

Certified as a true copy of minutes approved by Members at their meeting of 22 November 2022, by the Secretary Miss Lindsay Armstrong.

signature redacted

23 November 2022.
DATE