

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2022 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.

PRESENT:

Mr Scott Alexander, Chair
Mr Brian Doran (CEO)
Dr Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore
Mrs Carla Shields
Dr Eileen Stewart

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services
Mrs Ann Marie Hughes, Assistant Director Human Resources and Development
Mrs Petra McGuirk, Deputy Head of Human Resources
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.34.

ACTION
by whom

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

A02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting any conflicts regarding matters to be discussed. No interests were declared.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 3 MAY 2022

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 3 May 2022 for accuracy. These were approved as an accurate record on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Dr Milner.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

None.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Members agreed to conduct the May meeting in person at the Banbridge campus.

Mr Alexander expressed his thanks to former Member Mr John Nugent for providing useful challenge and suggestions during his tenure on the Committee and wished him well in future endeavours.

A06. STAFFING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Mr Alexander referred Members to the Staffing Committee Annual Report and Self-Assessment for the 2021-2022 academic year. Members discussed the suggestion received of adding an additional meeting and concluded that three meetings per year remains adequate and acknowledged that should the need arise, an additional meeting may be scheduled.

In response to a query from Dr Moore, Miss Armstrong advised that all Members were required to submit a self-assessed skills audit to feed into the process for co-opting Members and all new Governors complete one as part of their induction programme. Mr Sloan clarified that the information proves useful when committee membership needs strengthening or when vacancies arise.

Mrs Hughes confirmed that appraisal completion data is provided in the year end KPI report and provides differential data regarding lecturing and support staff.

The document was approved on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Dr Milner.

A07. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members reviewed their Terms of Reference and unanimously agreed that they remain appropriate. This was approved on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Dr Milner.

A08. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS

None to note.

A09. POLICIES

- **Employee Development (all staff)**

Members reviewed the Organisational Development policy noting the change of title, amendment to the payment of exam fees and additions relating to the conditions for approved development activities and recovery of course fees.

Mrs Hughes clarified the approval process and advised that the prioritisation of funded development opportunities comes through the appraisal process or corporate priorities linked to the annual planning process. She informed that all of these are reviewed via the Organisational Development Committee and ultimately detailed in the Organisational Development Plan for the incoming year.

The policy was approved by Members, adding a recommendation to reference the linkage to the College's planning process within the policy.

- **Menopause policy and guidance**

Mrs Hughes presented the new Menopause policy and guidance document and advised that the paper has been shared with staff as part of the consultation process. She advised that the policy aims to break the stigma surrounding the menopause and sets out what employees may do if they are experiencing menopause symptoms that are impacting on their health and wellbeing and performance at work.

Mrs Hughes stated that the policy has been developed in line with guidance sought from professional bodies and advised that SRC's workforce is 67% female and that 38% of females fall within the age bracket of 45-55 which is the normal age range in which Menopause may occur.

Members noted the policy and remarked on a good document and proactive approach.

- **Draft Hybrid Working Framework (Support staff)**

Members were consulted on the draft Hybrid Working Framework for Support staff and were advised that hybrid working is not a legal entitlement and will not lead to a change in the contract of employment.

Mrs Hughes explained that given the different working arrangements across colleges, a sector policy was not agreed. She advised that SRC are working with the trade unions to develop a localised framework. She informed that lecturing staff are presently able to avail of flexible working through management of their timetable and the development of online delivery.

Mrs Shields arrived at the meeting at 18.31.

Mrs Hughes clarified that there may be a requirement to share workstations onsite as an individual may wish to opt to work on a different campus to their designated base as it is closer to their home. Members were also advised that those staff members who presently have a flexible working arrangement may not be considered for hybrid working if already working reduced days however this would be subject to individual and team discussions.

The Committee noted the report.

A10. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022 2023

Mrs Hughes presented the Organisational Development Plan and advised on the six main areas. Mr Alexander recommended highlighting significant areas. Mrs Hughes committed to conducting an analysis with a view to identifying some financial KPIs and also to include a glossary of abbreviations.

Mrs Hughes

Members were advised that the appraisal process gives staff an opportunity to reflect on their work and to identify and agree development needs with their manager.

Dr Moore remarked that a commitment to staff development will manifest in support for students and putting the learner first.

The Plan was approved on proposal of Dr Stewart and seconded by Dr Milner.

A11. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Members reviewed the infographic detailing organisational development activities for 2021-2022 and noted a 100% completion rate of appraisals. Dr Milner remarked on a good report reflective of the hard work of committed individuals. She recommended further highlighting the College's ability to upskill staff. Mrs Hughes advised that the HRD team are looking at actions for improvement including effective recruitment and advertising. Members noted the constraints on public sector recruitment processes and confines to operate within.

A12. SECTION 75 ANNUAL EQUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

- **Equality Progress Report**
- **Key Highlights of Progress Report**

Mrs Hughes advised Members of the College's statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across the College and positive duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order 2006.

The report was approved on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Dr Milner.

Dr Stewart commented on the College's remarkable achievement of raising £21k for Air Ambulance NI through fundraising activities in 2021-2022.

A13. FAIR EMPLOYMENT MONITORING RETURN

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the Fair Employment Monitoring Return detailing the composition of male and female employees, applicants and appointees, promotees and leavers and their community background.

Members noted an increase in non-determined religious background and were advised that the census figures detailing the comparator tables of the economically active should be made available in the new year.

A14. IIP AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- **IIP Report**
- **Summary of HWB activities 2021-2022**
- **HWB calendar of events 2022-2023**
- **Charity calendar events 2022-2023**

Mrs Hughes informed that SRC has retained silver accreditation following assessment under the Investors In People scheme and advised that the College has increased in seven of the twenty seven themes. She informed of a 53% response rate to the staff survey and stated that the HRD team are working on an action plan based on the recommendations provided.

Members remarked on the commendable achievement and recommended highlighting the success.

Committee Members reviewed the physical, psychological and social activities that took place in the 2021-2022 academic year and remarked on the success of the GoodForMeGoodForFE initiative.

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the health and wellbeing monthly key topics scheduled for 2022-2023 and scheduled charity events.

Members discussed promotion of the key messages across social media and on the TVs located across the campuses. Mr Doran informed of engagement with Brown O'Connor as part of the College's marketing plans.

A15. KPIs ANNUAL REPORT year end

Members expressed their satisfaction with the new reporting format.

Mrs Hughes advised that sickness absence was 3.62% against a target of 3.5% and provided detail in terms of academic staff and support staff, causes of sickness absence by days lost and number of episodes.

Members were informed that around one in twenty-six staff had an absence due to Covid-19 during 2021-2022. Mrs Hughes informed that 1805 days were lost in 2021-2022 which were attributed to a mental health illness. Members were provided with granular information relating to short-term and long-term absence and sickness absence management activity.

Mrs Hughes pointed out that 74% of all staff did not have a spell of sickness through the 2021-2022 academic year.

Mrs McGuirk advised that the HRD team are reflecting on presenteeism and are mindful that staff onsite may be suffering from stress.

Members were provided with detail on recruitment data, staff review requests and staff turnover and were advised on the robust procedures that are applied when a vacancy is created. Mrs Hughes reported on employee relations, staff contracts and part time lecturers with more than four years' service.

Members noted the report. Mr Alexander advised that it may prove helpful to provide long term trends of sickness absence on an ad hoc basis.

A16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Hughes informed that the College has recently gone through an AccessNI compliance audit and relayed that a satisfactory rating was returned by the Auditors.

Mrs Hughes confirmed that the College has been shortlisted for a CIPD award for the OCN level 5 Leadership and Management course that was developed inhouse.

A17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 28 February 2023 via TEAMS. Members also agreed that the final Staffing Committee of the year in May will be held in Banbridge.

The meeting concluded at 19.49.

signature redacted

20/8/2023
DATE

~~Certified as a true copy of minutes~~ approved by Members at their meeting of 28 February 2023, by the Secretary, Miss Lindsay Armstrong.

signature redacted

2 March 2023.
DATE