

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.**

**Present:**

Mr Aidan McCormick (Chair)  
Mr Brian Doran (CEO)  
Miss Louisa Goss  
Miss Laura Milner  
Dr Thomas Moore  
Prof. Gregory O'Hare  
Mrs Hilary Singleton  
Mrs Judith Thompson  
Mr Matthew Turner

**In Attendance:**

Mr Andrew Saunders, Governing Body Chair  
Mr Keith Kilpatrick, Director of Curriculum  
Mrs Carolyn Davison, Assistant Director HE & Quality Improvement  
Mrs Fiona Bradley, Assistant Director FE & Training  
Mrs Elaine Nesbitt, Head of Faculty PRSE  
Mr Stephen Rogan, Head of Faculty CDAC  
Mrs Carmel Murray, Head of Faculty HESC  
Mr Gary Mackin, Head of Faculty BUTE  
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.32.

**A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**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 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mrs Thompson.

**A04. MATTERS ARISING**

None.

**A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr McCormick welcomed new Governors Miss Milner, Mrs Singleton and Dr Moore to their first meeting of SRC's Education Committee.

Mr McCormick offered his congratulations to Mrs Murray on the annual ICAS arts and science conference exploring Posthumanism and the Anthropocene, and asked that his

<b>ACTION BY WHOM</b>

thanks be forwarded to Mr Paul Torley, Mr Thomas Torley and Mrs Liz Finnegan for an informative and pleasurable event.

## **A06. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLANS**

- **Faculty of Health & Science**

Mrs Murray advised the Committee on ongoing work within the Faculty of Health and Science informing on challenges recruiting to FE PT enrolment. She advised that a Trauma Informed College working group has been established with over 100 staff having completed training and informed on developments in childcare curriculum and plans to offer a new level 2 extended certificate in Forensic Science and Criminology next academic year.

Mrs Murray advised on developments within Brewing and Distilling and informed on good progress in regard to Nursing curriculum. She relayed that 3 international trips have been planned for Granada, Bologna and Portugal.

- **Faculty of Professional Services**

Mrs Nesbitt informed that the Faculty continues to focus on increasing enrolments, advising that additional classes in Barista did not recruit to as planned. She informed on good success with the Women Returners provision.

Mrs Nesbitt stated that the Faculty was highly impacted by Covid-19 and the imposed closures in the hospitality and beauty sectors, and advised on the allocation of lost learning funding. She confirmed that a marketing plan is in place, informing that Butchery remains a key area for development and advising on plans for collaborative working with local hotels.

Mrs Nesbitt advised that the L3 Advanced Technical Award for Business is progressing well and emphasised the benefits of project based learning.

She provided an update on OU approval for Degree provision in Sport and Exercise and informed on WorldSkills success, advising on 2 golds achieved in Beauty and Media Makeup, a highly commended in Butchery and a best apprentice award.

Mrs Nesbitt advised on a focus on retention for travel and tourism and planned short courses in development.

In response to a query from Mrs Singleton, Mrs Nesbitt informed on a strong social media and radio presence, as well as marketing through local newspapers.

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

Mr Rogan confirmed that Faculty enrolments are still in decline having been badly impacted by the pandemic, however advised that two new online cyber security courses have been delivered. He advised on revalidation with OU and a renewed focus on adult access.

Mr Rogan informed on a detailed plan within the field of computing, a focus on coding, the development of accredited recreational courses and short music courses planned for Armagh.

Mr Kilpatrick advised on the development of short accredited computing modules.

In response to a query from Miss Milner, Mr Rogan confirmed that the sector are working collaboratively to address the gender imbalance in STEM curriculum. He advised on advancements within robotics and VR technology and informed on his desire to engage with parents to showcase College competences and resources available in the new build campuses.

Prof O'Hare welcomed the development of modularisation and referred to creative and customer facing areas within computing that may attract more female enrolments.

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

Mr Mackin informed Members of key developments within the BUTE Faculty, including employer engagement and curriculum development.

He advised on competition success and a planned ETI visit.

Mrs Bradley advised on apprenticeship success and stated that L3 provision continues to grow. She informed on a focus on retaining and progressing learners, advised on developments with retrofit and secured funding for development work on new HLAs at L5.

Members noted the reports and thanked the Heads of Faculty for their continuing hard work. Mrs Murray, Mrs Nesbitt, Mr Rogan and Mr Mackin left the meeting at 18.54.

#### **A07. QDP SURVEY**

Mrs Davison presented the outcome of the QDP survey advising that SRC students have annually participated in two online surveys for the past 10 years. She informed that the report allows the College to highlight successes and problems at faculty level, and track distance travelled in order to measure the impact of any changes and provide validation of improvement or further interventions required.

Mrs Davison informed on a total of 2,563 respondents and advised that the data allows for benchmarking comparison against 1,286,054 learners from 101 colleges. Members noted that the College has consistency been rated in the top two quartiles.

In response to a query from Miss Milner, Members were advised that students no longer have the opportunity to raise their individual concerns within the survey. Mrs Davison informed that learners may voice concerns through the student council focus groups.

The Committee noted the reports.

#### **A08. WHOLE COLLEGE SER (WBL/FE)**

Mr Kilpatrick confirmed that submission of the report has been deferred to November 2022. Mrs Davison advised that Members will be asked to approve the final submission at a future meeting of the Education Committee. She informed that the paper derives from 143 individual self evaluation documents and the ETI framework and advised that it is important to note that the College operates in a region with a significant number of social deprived neighbourhoods.

Mrs Davison informed on the direct impact of Covid-19 in certain curriculum areas, the challenges arising from centre determined grade, and the burden on staff having had to work remotely with minimum notice and preparation during the first Government imposed lockdown.

She referred to the table of overall effectiveness and very good ratings awarded in outcomes for learners and quality of provision. Members noted that an outstanding award has been credited to leadership and management.

The Committee noted the overall quality of programmes evaluated and the individual faculty reviews.

Mrs Davison advised on two visits expected from the ETI and informed that numeracy essential skills remains an important area for improvement. She advised that literacy skills are well improved and on a positive trajectory. Mrs Bradley informed that additional hours have been allocated to develop numeracy skills and relayed that diagnostic assessment tests by College staff have assessed essential skills in many cases to be lower than those awarded through centre assessed grades.

In response to a query from Dr Moore, Mr Kilpatrick advised that should negative feedback be received in areas of curriculum, management will consider options for oversight and scrutiny.

The Committee noted the report.

#### **A09. HE PLAN 2020-2025 – updated plan**

Mrs Davison referred Members to the updated HE three year plan focusing on widening access.

Mr Doran informed that the College is awaiting the outcome of the HE in FE review and considering strategic proposals to support level 6 provision.

Members noted the report.

#### **A10. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP**

Mr Doran advised the Committee of the three strands of work being developed to address the reform of vocational qualifications and alignment with the four nations. He informed of productive engagement with OCN and advised on a current disconnect with stakeholders to support commitment to Departmental policy on Traineeships and Advanced Technicals.

Mr Doran spoke to the sector's desire to modernise the vocational offer to embed project based learning and traversal skills and to progress a programme of development of new qualifications.

Members recognised the significant piece of work and requested the full support of the sponsor Department to refocus on the 2015 strategy and continue to progress with the implementation of the deep reform areas.

#### **A11. POLICY REVIEW**

- **Curriculum**

Members noted minor recommended changes to remove definitions no longer in use.

- **Learning Support**

Members noted no recommended changes to the Learning Support policy in line with its annual review.

The policies were approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr Doran.

**A12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr Doran extended his congratulations to McGuiness plumbing as winners of the 'small to medium enterprise award' as part of the NI Apprenticeship Awards 2022.

**A13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 24 May 2022 at 17.30.

The meeting concluded at 20.18.

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**

