

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.**

**PRESENT:**

Mr Scott Alexander, Chair  
Mr Brian Doran  
Mr Gordon Gough  
Mr John Nugent  
Mrs Carla Shields  
Dr Eileen Stewart

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Andrew Saunders, Governing Body Chair  
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services  
Mrs Ann Marie Hughes, Assistant Director Human Resources and Development  
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.36.

Mr Alexander welcomed Mrs Shields to her first meeting of SRC's Staffing Committee.

**A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Nicola Wilson.

**A02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting any conflicts with regard to matters to be discussed.

No interests were declared.

**A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 4 MAY 2021**

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 4 May 2021 for accuracy. These were approved on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Gough.

**A04. MATTERS ARISING**

Members were reminded that the Director of Curriculum reported on the student survey results on virtual learning to the full Governing Body meeting in June. Mr Doran advised that further considerations are being given to the use of blended learning should the need arise as a result of further lockdowns. He informed on the development of an E-College curriculum being progressed under the flexible skills fund and collaboration with the Open College Network.

Mr Saunders arrived at the meeting at 17.43.

**A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

- **CIPD Awards**

Mrs Hughes informed Members that SRC has submitted a bid for an award for Best Change Management Initiative at the CIPD NI HR Awards 2021 with winners to be decided on 7 October.

**ACTION**  
by whom

She advised that the College are competing against ABC Council, the Bank of Ireland and the NI Education Authority and expressed her delight that the HR Department has been acknowledged for their sterling work in this regard.

Mr Alexander remarked on the recent coverage on the BBC highlighting the College's appointment of its first female plumbing lecturer and acknowledging Colleen Rafferty's appointment onto the teaching staff having previously graduated from the College's plumbing and heating apprenticeship programme.

#### **A06. STAFFING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Mr Alexander referred Members to the Staffing Committee Annual Report and the findings of the self-assessment outcomes. Members noted that one respondent was unclear as to whether the number of Committee meetings are appropriate to deal with the amount of business. Mr Saunders stated that attendance has been very good at online meetings and advised that if an additional meeting of Staffing Committee is required to address emerging issues specific to the Staffing Committee, then he is happy to sanction this.

Members noted that additional Governing Body meetings have been convened during the lockdown to consider matters relating to the impact of Covid-19 on awarding grades, remote delivery and health and wellbeing. The Committee considered this to be the appropriate forum for discussions to take place.

Mr Doran confirmed that the Committee is apprised as to TOR 8 Monitor staffing levels within the College and TOR 10 Monitor the appraisal processes operating across all areas of the College. He advised on the confidential nature of the appraisal process and confirmed that completion records are monitored throughout the College.

The Annual Report was approved as an accurate record on the proposal of Mr Nugent and seconded by Mr Gough.

#### **A07. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members conducted their yearly review of the Committee's Terms of Reference to ensure that they remain appropriate.

Mrs Shields suggested the entry of an additional TOR to reflect the monitoring of the various work undertaken by staff in the area of health and wellbeing.

Members concurred and approved their Terms of Reference on the proposal of Mrs Shields and seconded by Dr Stewart, subject to future agreement on the wording of the additional TOR.

#### **A08. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS**

Mrs Hughes advised Members of a career break request to allow for the development of a family business and to address childcare responsibilities.

She advised that internal staff are supportive of the proposal and the request has been discussed with the Committee Chair and Chief Executive who have provided their endorsement.

Members approved the request on the proposal of Mr Gough and seconded by Dr Stewart.

Mr Sloan / Mrs Hughes

## **A09. SECTION 75 ANNUAL EQUALITY PROGRESS REPORT**

### **• Equality Progress Report**

Mrs Hughes presented the Annual Progress Report detailing a range of initiatives and achievements covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. She advised that the document reports on practices and compliance relating to the Equality Scheme and Disability Discrimination legislation.

### **• Top 10 Activities**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the infographic detailing the top ten activities undertaken throughout the period. She reported on the prioritisation of staff and student health and wellbeing, the investment to maintain and improve ILT infrastructure, and the College's commitment to developing knowledge and understanding of Trauma Informed Practice and the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

Members noted the wide range of student activities and commented on an impressive piece of work aimed at supporting students. The Committee advised that it may prove helpful to capture information on areas for improvement.

Committee Members sanctioned the Chair's sign off and endorsement of the document.

## **A10. POLICY APPROVAL**

- Flexi-scheme – support staff**
- Eyesight policy**
- Alcohol, Drug & Substance Misuse**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to minor amendments to the Flexi-scheme policy including the introduction of PIP. She advised on minor amendments to the Eyesight policy relating to changes to method of payment and minimal recommended changes to the Alcohol, Drugs & Substance Misuse policy.

All three policies were approved on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Gough.

## **A11. KPI YEAR END REPORT**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the KPI year-end report and informed on the fair employment return detailing gender and community background. Mr Alexander commented that it would be helpful if percentage figures could be provided going forward.

Mrs Hughes reported on a slight increase in recruitment exercises and a staff turnover of 7.08%. Discussion took place regarding the apparent general upward trend of individuals seeking new employment. Mrs Hughes advised on the difficulties in recruiting to certain posts across both support and lecturing areas, for example within marketing, procurement and certain trade lecturing posts. Mr Doran informed that a greater number of lecturing staff appear to be moving to the school sector seeking a more attractive salary offer.

Mrs Hughes informed that the College is seeking to develop workforce skills, as well as attract and retain staff. She presented detail on mandatory training completion rates and clarified that the lower figures correspond with the release of revised programmes, informing on regular reporting to the senior management team on statistics relating to individual teams.

Mrs Hughes

Mrs Hughes

Mrs Hughes reported on the excellent appraisal completion rates and informed that the revised deadline appears to be having a positive effect.

Members noted good sickness absence management and were informed on increased management activity and regular engagement. The Committee acknowledged that stress and anxiety contributes significantly to sickness absence causes and agreed to retain the target of 3.5%.

Mrs Hughes committed to enquiring about benchmarking statistics of rank causes of sickness absence at the HRWG and referred Members to the analysis of departmental absences.

Mrs Hughes informed the Committee on staff grievances, staff discipline, formal counselling, harassment and capability cases and staff contracts.

Mr Nugent commented on a good report, detailing positive indicators.

The Committee noted the report.

#### **A12. SUMMARY OF ED ACTIVITIES 2020-2021**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the infographic detailing employee development activities over the 2020-2021 academic year. The Committee noted many areas of upskilling for management and support staff, health and safety training and a focus in the area of pedagogy.

The Committee noted the report, commenting favourably on the style of the report and the comprehensive range of development activities for staff.

#### **A13. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2022**

Members reviewed the updated Employee Development Plan noting the six areas of focus and various actions attributed to development activities.

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the Health and Wellbeing Charter clarifying the emphasis placed on physical, psychological and social welfare, areas of responsibility and the action plan detailing activity and measurable outcomes.

Mr Doran informed the Committee of the work being progressed through the WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence initiative due to be launched on 24 September. He advised on a collaborative training programme using world skills expertise to impart knowledge, skills and expertise in various curriculum areas, and which in turn will be further cascaded to all staff within the various participating organisations.

Mrs Hughes advised on the staff induction process and probation periods, and committed to review the key areas and give consideration to relisting priorities.

#### **A14. IIP AND HEALTH & WELLBEING**

- **IIP & Health & Wellbeing Action Plan at 31 August 2021**
- **Summary of HWB activities 2021-2022**
- **HWB calendar of events 2021-2022**
- **Charity calendar events 2021-2022**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the action plan and significant achievement in agreed actions. She advised on the progression of activities relating to physical, psychological and social wellbeing and the monthly events calendar.

Mrs Hughes

Mrs Hughes

Members noted the planned charity events and the College's dedicated support for Air Ambulance NI for the upcoming year.

**A15. CEF CIRCULARS**

None.

**A16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**A17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 1 March 2021.

The meeting concluded at 19.24.

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**

