

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.

Present:

Mr Gordon Gough (Chair)
Mr Aidan McCormick
Prof. Gregory O'Hare
Mrs Judith Thompson
Mr Matthew Turner
Mrs Nicola Wilson

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 Janet Toal, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.32.

Mr Gough welcomed Mrs Toal to her first meeting of SRC's Education Committee and remarked on the College's continued support of the Boardroom Apprentice scheme and the good experience SRC has had participating in the programme.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Brian Doran.

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.

Mrs Wilson declared an interest as employee of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 25 MAY 2021

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2021.

These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr McCormick.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members noted that Mrs Brown was unable to deliver her presentation to the full Board on becoming a Trauma Informed College.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None.

ACTION BY WHOM

A06. EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Mr Gough referred Members to the Education Committee Annual Report detailing work undertaken, items monitored and approved throughout the academic year. He remarked that it has been a privilege to have chaired the Committee for a number of years and wished Mr McCormick well in his future endeavours as Education Committee Chair.

The report was agreed as an accurate record and approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Prof O'Hare.

A07. TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

The TORs were approved for the 2021-2022 academic year on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr McCormick.

A08. FACULTY ACTION PLANS 2021-21 close out

- **BUTE**

Mrs Bradley referred Members to the BUTE faculty action plan and advised that the curriculum area was particularly impacted as a result of Covid-19. She informed that 14 new traineeships were delivered and advised on 257 enrolments. She confirmed that additional hours have been secured for residual and lost learning.

Due to connectivity problems, Mrs Bradley dropped out of the online meeting at 17.41 and thereafter on several occasions.

- **HESC**

Mrs Davison presented the HESC action plan and remarked on challenges that have arisen due to the current pandemic. She informed that successful validation for a level 4 certificate in Healthcare Practice was obtained in collaboration with the OU and the Southern Trust, and advised Members on the creation of fully functional hospital wards at the Newry and Lurgan campus and enrolment stats.

Mrs Davison informed the Committee on revalidation with QUB for an Early Childhood Studies foundation degree and advised that many subject areas did not need to revert to calculated grades.

She informed on good achievement rates in literacy and numeracy and confirmed that any actions not closed out will move into the new action plan.

Mrs Davison advised that challenges still remain in the area of science, informing of a scheduled ETI inspection and concerns in relation to level 2 and 3 provision. She informed on staffing arrangements and in response to the query from Mr Gough, confirmed that the Nursing provision is going well. Mrs Davison remarked on a good initiative and positive partnership.

In response to a query from Mr Saunders, Mrs Davison advised that online provision in literacy and numeracy appears to be working well, informing on good pedagogy in place and a dedicated workforce focused on student achievement.

Mrs Davison advised that some staff are reporting on an inherited issue wherein some staff are having difficulty aligning calculated grades from schools to the FE appraisal of students' abilities.

Members thanked Mrs Davison for her report acknowledging many good initiatives taking place within the faculty. Mr Kilpatrick concurred, and commended the leadership and management of the HESC faculty. He informed that staff are working hard and mindful that not all learners' skillsets are equating to the awarded grade.

Mr Kilpatrick advised on ambitions to further the nursing curriculum and address skills shortages with the development of provision within a bespoke environment in the planned Craigavon new build project.

- **CDAC**

Members were referred to the CDAC action plan and advised on challenges in relation to recruitment and ensuring that curriculum delivery is fit for purpose. Mrs Davison advised that schools are continuing to offer a greater provision in computing, informing that the College is working collaboratively with Belfast Met to review the curriculum model on a granular level and confirming that level 3 IT computing will be moving to an Advanced Technical award.

Discussion took place regarding developments within the music provision at the Armagh campus and considerations to attracting lecturing staff in difficult to fill posts.

- **BUTE**

Mr Kilpatrick advised Members on traineeships successfully enlisted in areas of Engineering and Construction, informing on similar issues recruiting and retaining staff and the difficulties that arose testing performance due to the government imposed lockdowns.

He informed on successful bids for funding, and developments within HE identifying opportunities to differentiate curriculum provision.

Mr Kilpatrick confirmed that employment into STEM areas is thriving at present and enrolments from more learners is necessary to address the skills shortage.

- **PRSE**

Mr Turner informed Members of developments within the faculty of PRSE, difficulties in meeting enrolments and challenges within level 2 Hair and Beauty. He advised that conversations are ongoing to revise the curriculum offer in order to provide validated awards through learner progression paths.

Mr Turner provided detail on Sports provision, the College Connect summer programme and advised on difficulties generating interest for enrolments in the areas of retail and butchery.

Mrs Bradley advised that the College has had significant success in butchery at skills competitions however informed that further work is required to increase apprenticeship enrolments and address upskilling.

Committee Members noted the reports.

A09. WCQIP & ACTION PLANS close out

Mr Kilpatrick referred Members to the WCQIP action plan and advised on a lot of good work taking place to address objectives aligned with ETI recommendations.

Mrs Davison reminded Governors that staff and student surveys have been conducted, focusing on health and wellbeing and advised that work is ongoing to develop effective self-evaluation and quality improvement processes.

Mrs Bradley confirmed that additional hours have been awarded for residual learners to complete their studies, and this equates to approximately an extra 3 hours learning per week.

Mr Kilpatrick paid credit to the College lecturing cohort, advising on a clear recognition of staffs' emphasis of putting student achievement at the forefront.

Mrs Bradley and Mrs Davison left the meeting at 18.51.

A10. ENROLMENT POSITION

- **Sector Consolidated Enrolment Position**

Mr Kilpatrick referred Members to the CDR dashboard providing sector comparative data statistics. He advised on a data lift taking place on 8 October and informed that SRC are doing relatively well in regard to unique student count comparison.

Mr Kilpatrick confirmed that the College is performing well in the traineeship and apprenticeship area, advising that although the MaSN count has dropped slightly many areas are holding up well.

Mrs Thompson remarked on helpful benchmarking data. Mr Kilpatrick advised that good collaborative work is taking place.

Members noted the report.

A11. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP

Mr Kilpatrick provided an update on discussions taking place at the CDWG in regard to retention, recruitment and the developments of advanced technical awards.

He advised that the Group is providing input for the HE in FE paper.

Mr Kilpatrick informed on a planned ETI HUB evaluation mid-October and the College's bid for the WorldSkills Centre of Excellence.

The Committee noted the report.

A12. CIRCULARS

- **FE Grants FE07/21**
- **Hardship Fund FE06/21**

Mr Kilpatrick referred Members to the two circulars and advised on no significant changes.

A13. POLICY REVIEW

- **Hardship Fund**

Mr Kilpatrick referred Members to minor amendments to the Hardship policy in line with the Departmental circular.

- **Student Identification**

Members noted minimal changes to the Student Identification policy

Both policies were approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr McCormick.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 30 November 2021 at 17.30.

The meeting concluded at 19.10.

CHAIR

DATE

