MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 28 MAY 2024 AT 18.30, BOARDROOM, NEWRY WEST CAMPUS.

Present:
Mr Stuart Harper (Chair)
Mrs Lee Campbell (Interim Principal / Chief Executive)
Dr Liz Finnigan
Dr Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore
Mrs Hilary Singleton
Mrs Angela Whiteside (Via Teams)

In Attendance:
Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum
Mrs Elaine Nesbitt, Acting AD Apprenticeships & Essential Skills
Mr Gary Mackin, Head of Faculty BUTE
Mrs Carmel Murray, Head of Faculty HESC
Mr Stephen Rogan, Head of Faculty CDAC
Mr Matt Turner, Head of Faculty PRSE
Mrs Sinead Lavery, Boardroom Apprentice
Ms Carolyn Davison, AD FE, HE & Quality
Ms Sandra Barry, Acting Secretary to the Governing Body

Apologies:
Mrs Lorraine McKeown, AD Student Services & Marketing
Miss Evie Martin, Student Governor

The meeting convened at 18.30.

ACTION BY WHOM

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Lorraine McKeown and Miss Evie Martin.

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 27 FEBRUARY 2024

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the last meeting held on 27 February 2024. These were checked for accuracy, a duplicated paragraph in agenda item A07 was removed. The minutes were then unanimously approved following a proposal from Mrs Singleton and seconded by Dr Finnigan.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members reviewed outstanding business on the action sheet.
The Hardship Fund Team are scheduled to meet on 05 June, it was agreed that Mr McMurray would provide an update to the Governing Body at the meeting on 18 June.

Ms Shackels advised that the working group convened late in the year so it is unlikely that the sectoral Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy will be ready for September 2024. An update will be given in the new academic year.

The Faculty reports being brought to the Education Committee will take the form of 2 slides per faculty and will be presented under agenda item 9 of this meeting.

Mrs Campbell advised that she is looking at the issue of agendas and themes. A curriculum strategy is being drafted and will be brought to the next meeting on 24 September. The agenda will take on a thematic approach in line with the curriculum strategy, from September 2024.

The Safeguarding policy cannot be updated until it has been adopted by the sector committees when they come together in September and any proposed changes presented to the Department for the Economy (DfE). If the policy is subsequently updated, it will be presented to the Governing Body in February 2025.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair recorded his thanks to Miss Armstrong for her contribution to the Education Committee meetings and Ms Barry was welcomed as the Interim Secretary.

Mrs Lavery advised that this is her last Education Committee meeting and expressed her thanks to Members for the experience. Members recorded their thanks to Mrs Lavery.

Members recorded their thanks to Miss Martin who is the outgoing student governor and were informed that Mr James Hutchinson is the new incoming student governor commencing in the next academic year.

The Chair and Dr Moore attended the recent WorldSkills events and remarked that it was great event with an opportunity to meet students and celebrate their success. They now look forward to attending the FE Sector Excellence Awards event on 04 June, at Armagh City Hotel.

A06. STUDENT COUNCIL SUMMARY REPORT 2023-24

Miss Shackels presented the Student Council Summary Report and noted that it was a positive report that highlights the issues raised by the SRC Student Body at the Student Council meetings which took place throughout the year. A number of issues that were raised have been closed off or escalated to the appropriate authority. There was a 26.4% decrease in the number of issues raised compared to the previous year.

Student representatives are appointed for each area and the report highlights the student experience by campus.

Dr Moore noted how positive it is to see that there were no academic issues and Mrs Singleton was happy to see more discussion at Student Council level in terms of sustainability issues and advised that this will all feed into the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) agenda.

Dr Moore queried if any students were not covered and was advised that the report covers a cross section of all students, and is dependent on individual students wanting to engage.

The questions for the survey are reviewed every year to ensure relevance. The survey covers all 6 colleges and is used to benchmark. The National Student Survey (NSS) provides a full report on the responses.

Following a query on students not having access to laptops the Chair was informed that there is a very strong process in place and students can borrow a laptop for a year. The lecturer completes a form on behalf of the student and the laptop and Wi-Fi can be borrowed. The learning resource centre is also encouraged and students can book a room to work from if needed.

A07. ENROLMENT POSITION 2023-24

- **SRC March 2024 College Development Plan (CDP) Progress Report**

  Ms Shackels presented the CDP Progress Report advising progress is measured under, Innovation, Inclusive Growth and Sustainability. Progress is monitored using a RAG status and the Principal and Chief Executive will sign off once completed. Ms Shackels advised that under inclusive growth, retention and achievement in FE and HE was still to be closed out. All phases (Innovation, Inclusive Growth and Sustainability) are reported to the College's Senior Management Team (SMT) and Governing Body.

  Mrs Campbell advised that the 2023-24 CDP template was based on 10X and confirmed a new CDP template for 2024-25 based on the DfE Minister's economic vision is currently being drafted.

  Dr Moore queried if the Action Short of Strike (ASOS) had affected retention. Ms Shackels advised she is confident the College will meet its targets.

  Dr Moore questioned data reporting and indicated that he would like to see comparison reporting between Colleges. Ms Shackels advised that the key challenge is that each college records data slightly differently but that this is something DfE are working with Principals and Curriculum Directors to address.

  Mrs Whiteside noted that DfE used to have sophisticated data and she suggested asking for this data. Mrs Campbell will raise this query at the Principals' Group Meeting on 29 May 2024. — Mrs L Campbell

- **FE Sector Activity in NI by Local Government District 2018/19 to 2022/23**

  Dr Moore referred members to Table 4 advising that this gives an indication of enrolment in the wards so trends can be seen.

  Table A1 shows the local district enrolment for the years indicated.

A08. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) – ACTION PLAN

The importance of the items in the QIP is paramount to what is done in the College. Ms Davison advised that she can confidently give an assurance for each programme and data. The final position in key performance indicators of retention and achievement will be closed out in September when the Self Evaluation Report (SER) process is finalised.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment – annual appraisal observations have taken place in addition to CIT, PGCE and induction programme observations. This will enable the senior curriculum team to provide an overview on the standards of learning, teaching and assessment practice. Dr Moore enquired if each lecturer has a lesson plan and Ms Davison confirmed they have a lesson plan and a scheme of work, she further advised that she has full confidence in the teaching and learning of SRC staff. Ms Davison and Ms Shackels advised on the College's Pedagogic Working Group with a term of reference to review and advise on all aspects of learning and teaching.

Ms Shackels

Dr Moore queried where he can see this best practice and was informed by Ms Davison that the curriculum team are working on a website to showcase Project Based Learning (PBL) best practice. Ms Shackels indicated that curriculum will develop an infographic for each Faculty to show the information requested by Dr Moore. Mrs Campbell added that all good news stores are marketed on the website for parents to review and check.

Dr Moore advised that he was impressed with the work taking place and felt the College is ahead of practise he is aware of in England, Wales and Scotland.

A09. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PLANS – UPDATE 2023-24

Ms Shackels noted the College's success with 11 medals won recently in WorldSkills UK and 9 medals won at IFEX 2024.

There is continued development of the level 2 flagship programme where we recruit into an Apprenticeships, Careers and Vocational Education Division (ACVED) model or level 3 professional. The NI Prince Of Wales Nursing Cadet Scheme Inaugural Cohort held a lunch event on 27 April in the Banbridge campus with the first cohort of nurses who have successfully completed the programme. This event was shown on UTV, with the Health Minister, Robin Swann and many distinguished guests in attendance. Professor Pat Cullen, General Secretary and Chief Executive of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) UK, spoke at the event and was great publicity for this course. Ms Shackels emphasised that the RCN is a volunteer course with no finance, no expenditure, no enrolment, it is all volunteered.

Each Head of Faculty gave an update on the in-year positions and plans going forward.

The Heads of Faculty left the meeting.

A10. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Admissions Criteria**
- **Admissions Policy**
- **HE Professional Suitability & Fitness to Practice Policy**
- **Assessment Internal Verification Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy (Students)**
- **Alcohol, Drugs & substance Misuse (Students) Policy**

The Committee noted the minor amendments to the enclosed 6 policies noting these policies have been approved by SMT under the Colleges policy review schedule. The 6 policies were approved without comment on proposal from Mr Harper and seconded by Dr Finnigan.

A11. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS' WORKING GROUP (CDWG)

Ms Shackels advised that the CDWG continue to meet fortnightly and will be attending the DfE meeting with Principals on 29 May 2024. The CDWG are focusing on the Traineeship level 2 and level 3 offer, Maximum Student Number (MaSN) allocation and the decline in full time HE.

The Tertiary Education group is working on micro credentials.

The Construction Industry Training Board (CIT) Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) is due for revalidation in the 2024-25 academic year.

A12. SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Dr Milner in her role as designated Safeguarding Governor advised that she has completed the Volunteer Safeguarding for Trustees.

Dr Milner met with Mrs McKeown to discuss the safeguarding log that will be presented to the Governing Body in September and noted that Mrs McKeown discussed some cases they are dealing with and the follow up. Dr Milner will continue to engage with Mrs McKeown in her role as Safeguarding Governor.

The safeguarding audit is taking place at present.

Dr Milner noted some key trends:

- Inspire student counselling, there has been a reduction in students' accessing counselling compared to the same time last year.
- Operation encompass – there are 40 referrals to date from OS NI to the College. A new initiative has been rolled out and the process is being looked at. The Safeguarding team received training in March this year.

Dr Milner expressed her thanks to Mrs McKeown for the diligence she applies in her role and Dr Milner is very content the safeguarding in place is very efficient .

Mr Harper thanked Dr Milner for her work.

A13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Mrs L Campbell advised a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) has been signed on 22 May and a number of press were present. The College is well placed on the Belfast / Dublin corridor to capitalise on skills across the border. Mrs Campbell advised that she met with Minister Hargey at this event and they talked about the challenges that would impact the cross border opportunities available to the College. Minister Hargey committed to try to resolve some of these issues.

- Mrs L Campbell advised she will be extending an invitation to Minister Murphy to visit the College in July.

- Another event planned for mid-June involves a full demonstration of their 3D construction printer and a visit to view 3D printer houses on site.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 24 September 2024 at 17.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 20.49

[redacted]

CHAIR

22nd October 2024

DATE