

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 7 MAY 2024 IN THE BOARDROOM, BANBRIDGE CAMPUS.

PRESENT:

Dr Eileen Stewart, Chair
Mrs Lee Campbell, Interim Principal / CEO
Mrs Patrica McCaffrey
Mr Gary McMurray
Dr Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Andrew Sloan, Observer
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 18.40.

**ACTION
by whom**

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Petra McGuirk

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 30 JANUARY 2024

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 30 January 2024 for accuracy. These were approved as an accurate record on proposal from Mrs McCaffrey and seconded by Dr Milner.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Mrs Hughes advised that updated sickness figures have been provided as part of the papers and Members' recommendations on the KPI report will be implemented and presented within the end of year report tabled for the October 2024 meeting.

Mrs Hughes advised that the latest Article 55 submission will be presented to the October meeting along with comparator information.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Dr Stewart advised Members that as her second term of office as Governor of Southern Regional College is coming to an end, it will be her last time Chairing the Staffing Committee. Dr Stewart advised that she has enjoyed the last eight years serving as a Member of Governing Body.

She extended a warm welcome to Mr A Sloan to his first meeting of SRC's Staffing Committee and advised that he is attending the meeting as an observer.

She extended her thanks to Mrs Hughes, Mr R Sloan and Mrs McGuirk and expressed her appreciation to Miss Armstrong for her assistance over the years.

A06. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS

Mrs Hughes advised Members on four career break requests. She informed that two lecturers are seeking an extension to their approved career break requests and informed on another two new applications.

Members granted their approval on all four requests.

A07. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Recruitment of Ex Offenders**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to minor recommended changes to update definitions and reference to the Police Act 1997. Members were advised on the history of the College recruiting ex-offenders and governing legislation requirements.

- **Special Leave of Absence**

Members noted minor recommended updates to the policy. Mrs McCaffrey commented on good practice to categorise different scenarios for special leave allocation.

- **Grievance Procedure Support Staff**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the locally agreed policy and advised on a recommendation to timebound the raising of grievances after the alleged event has occurred.

- **Health & Wellbeing**

Members noted minor recommended amendments to the Staff and Student Health and Wellbeing policy.

- **Equality & Good Relations**

The Committee noted minor recommended updates to the Equality and Good Relations policy.

The five policies were approved by Committee Members subject to minor suggested amendments.

A08. FAIR EMPLOYMENT MONITORING RETURN (FEMR)

Mrs Hughes reminded Members of the College's statutory responsibility to submit an annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. She advised that the return is broken down to reflect occupational classification, gender and community background and reflects employees, applicants, appointees, promotees and leavers.

Mrs Hughes commented on management's commitment to conduct a detailed analysis on the Article 55 triannual submission.

Members noted the report and that overall staff numbers within the College have reduced.

A09. KPI IN YEAR REPORT

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the KPI in year report and advised that of the two grievances recorded, one related to a collective complaint which has been resolved and concluded.

She advised that of the four staff discipline cases recorded, two resulted in formal counselling, one employee left the College and one sanction was issued.

In response to a query from Dr Moore, Mrs Hughes confirmed that all sanctions within the disciplinary process including verbal and written warnings are captured in the KPI paper and reported to the Staffing Committee.

Mrs Hughes advised that two formal counselling cases have been conducted inhouse.

She advised that sickness absence is 3.72% against a target of 3.5%. In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Mrs Hughes advised that long term absence is impacting on the increase in overall staff sickness absenteeism.

The Committee noted the report.

A10. DRAFT ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2025

Mrs Hughes presented the draft Organisational Development (OD) Plan for 2024-2025 and advised on the six key areas. She informed that the College identifies development needs through a number of routes including the appraisal process.

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the Health and Wellbeing programme and the new learning and development metrics.

Mr McMurray enquired about budget pressures and staff expectations for upskilling. Members were informed on contractual obligations, a review of faculty plans and liaison with line managers.

Mrs Hughes provided information on the membership of the Organisational Development Committee.

She advised that overall associated development costs will be reported to the October meeting. In response to a query from Dr Moore, Mrs Hughes advised that no sector benchmarking figures have been amassed.

Members noted the report.

A11. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE (IIP) UPDATE

Mrs Hughes advised that the College will be seeking IIP reaccreditation in May 2025. Mr R Sloan spoke to the desire to advance on indicator themes and informed that plans are in place. He advised that 'adopting a culture of recognition' is scoring the lowest of the twenty-seven themes.

Mrs Hughes informed that the OD team are looking at ways to increase staff welfare and contribute to flexible working.

The Committee noted the report.

A12. HEALTH & WELLBEING (HWB)

- **Good for Me, Good for FE update**

Mrs Hughes presented the Good for Me, Good for FE report and advised on monies raised for the charity partner NI Children's Hospice. She informed on the Educational Eats programme, donation stations, volunteering and fundraising activities.

Dr Moore remarked on the importance of promoting the College's civic function in addition to educational and economic value. He commented on the need to highlight social good and champion the College's ethical positive impact for the community.

Dr Milner encouraged the marketing department to enhance communication across the College's social media outlets.

Mr R Sloan

- **College Nominated Charity Partner**

Mrs Hughes informed that the College refreshes its charity partner every two years and the vote for preference is alternated between the staff and student body.

She advised that staff have recently voted to support The Alzheimer's Society to commence September 2024.

A13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Moore expressed his thanks to Dr Stewart for her leadership of the Staffing Committee this past academic year. He paid tribute to her public service as Member of the Governing Body and advised she should be rightly proud of the commitment and energy she has invested in the College for the past eight years.

Dr Stewart advised that she has enjoyed her tenure at SRC and wished her successor good luck.

Dr Moore noted that it is Miss Armstrong's last meeting of the Staffing Committee. He thanked her for all her assistance over the years and remarked on her clear understanding of the challenges and requirements of good governance.

A14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 8 October 2024 at 18.30 in the Boardroom, Banbridge campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.46.

[REDACTED]
CHAIR

22/10/24
DATE