

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER 2020 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.

Present:

Mr Gordon Gough (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (CEO)
Mr Aaron Foy
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
Mr Stephen Rogan, Head of Faculty CDAC
Mr Lindsay Bronte, Head of Faculty BUTE
Mrs Carmel Murray, Head of Faculty HESC
Mrs Elaine Nesbitt, Head of Faculty PRSE
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.34.

Mr Gough welcomed all parties to the meeting.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Boardroom Apprentice, Mr McGuigan.

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 29 SEPTEMBER 2020

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2020. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr McCormick.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members noted that all matters arising are addressed. Members agreed to adopt the standardised Term of Reference in relation to policy review.

Mrs Thompson arrived at the meeting at 17.37.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr Gough welcomed Mr Foy and Mrs Thompson to their first meeting as Members of the Education Committee.

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A06. FACULTY – COVID UPDATE

Mr Gough introduced the Heads of Faculty and thanked them for the individual presentations and video messages previously distributed to Members detailing good practice delivery examples.

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

Mr Rogan presented a comprehensive report detailing the move to online teaching dependent on class sizes, room capacity and resource requirement. He advised on the alternative delivery model across Level 2 and 3, HE and part time. Mr Rogan provided Members with examples of technologies used, good practice and advised on the positives and negatives of remote teaching.

Mr Rogan informed on staff and student feedback and advised that most students at the College have a strong technology skillset.

In response to a query, Mr Rogan confirmed that learners deemed to be 'at risk' are identified if they are not engaging or producing work of a poor standard, and advised on appropriate measures taken.

Prof O'Hare spoke of the opportunities available to increase accessibility in remote learning by embracing technology.

Mr Saunders enquired about those practical courses not necessarily suited for online delivery. Mr Rogan advised that course tutors are focused on providing technical lessons on site.

Mr McCormick congratulated staff for their adaptability and resilience and expressed concern on the potential for some learners to 'fade away'. Mr Rogan informed Members of the e-tutor programme developed to maintain student engagement.

Mr Foy spoke of a good experience as a music student, further advising that those learners who have experienced connectivity difficulties due to their rural location, are availing of campus resources to enable them to progress with their studies.

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

Mr Bronte advised Members of the practical challenges that have occurred within the BUTE faculty, and provided as an example, changes applied to the alternating model L3 extended diploma in engineering and advised on various resources used. He confirmed that students are able to avail of specialist industrial software by remote log on to college servers and informed that personal home electronic kits have been issued to learners.

Mr Bronte advised that over time there has been good progress to overcome the initial problems faced by the faculty and informed on a range of innovative resources now in place for online learning. He confirmed that staff are ensuring that students are maximising their time on campus to engage in practical assessment.

Members were informed on challenges and associated cost implications in providing appropriate software and licences.

- **Faculty of Health & Science HESC**

Mrs Murray referred Members to the presentation and video clips on staff interviews and the use of innovative technologies, reminded the Committee of last year's ETI and validation with John Moore's university.

Mrs Murray spoke of a dedicated team and advised on the creation of a counselling and health and social care support website and childcare simulation suites. Mrs Murray issued an invite for the sixth annual interdisciplinary virtual conference in Arts and Science.

- **Faculty of Professional Services PRSE**

Mrs Nesbitt advised on the blended learning strategy and range of communication channels tested within the PRSE faculty. She informed on the use of STATSports to allow learners access to research publications linking theory to the practical elements of study. Prof O'Hare informed on his familiarity with STATSports and advised on their strong international reputation.

Mrs Nesbitt provided detail on shared learning, the use of social media and parent engagement, and provided information on elements of the alternative delivery model going well and support required going forward.

Mr Gough thanked the Heads of Faculty for their comprehensive reports providing Governors with good insight into innovative working that may be further developed at the Governor Strategy Day.

Mr Kilpatrick thanked the HOFs and remarked on interesting work using a wide range of available tools. Mr Kilpatrick advised that it is appropriate for staff to explore the VLE capability when reviewing the curriculum strategy in terms of digital resources.

Mr Rogan, Mr Bronte, Mrs Murray and Mrs Nesbitt left the meeting at 18.52.

A07. HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY

Mr Kilpatrick presented the proposed HE strategy, developed to increase the College's higher education offer through collaborative working with a range of partners to ensure flexibility and progression pathway in a number of areas of curriculum.

Prof O'Hare confirmed his endorsement that the College should explore opportunities to increase curriculum delivery with appropriate partners.

Mrs Bradley advised that the strategy has been proposed in response to employer demand and to establish the HLA portfolio progression route to allow for greater opportunity for students.

Members voiced their strong support, citing the need to be responsive to sector demands, and unanimously approved the curriculum proposal.

A08. CONSOLIDATED ENROLMENTS

Mr Doran presented the spreadsheet on sector consolidated enrolments. Members noted that overall SRC has reduced full time enrolment by 2% on the previous year and has achieved well comparatively.

The Committee noted the information, with Prof O'Hare offered his congratulations to the College.

A09. TRAINEESHIP IMPLEMENTATION

- **Blueprint**
- **Traineeship areas and qualifications**

Mr Kilpatrick presented the proposed traineeship programme detailing ethos, components and delivery methods, and advised on the determination of the Curriculum

Directors Working Group to develop a new and consistent traineeship system that delivers industry relevant skills and knowledge by integrating work based learning with achievement in core literacy and numeracy skills. He informed on the desire to create a new fully integrated qualification incorporating literacy and numeracy elements.

Mr Kilpatrick reported on the entrance criteria, and the need to carry out an initial diagnostic assessment to determine the applicant's current literacy and numeracy skills levels. He advised that the traineeship strategy envisaged new professional and technical awards at level 2 equating to a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and Mathematics.

Mr Doran advised that the working group has representatives on the DfE project board and informed on the proposal to introduce a preparatory stage for applicants who do not meet entrance requirements for full Traineeship.

The Committee noted the significant piece of work, acknowledged the particular shortage of essential skills in NI and impacted by the lack of progress on the 14-19 programme.

Mrs Wilson stated that it is important to understand the learners' point of view and create a level, all-inclusive platform for learners.

A10. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP

Mr Kilpatrick advised that in addition to the traineeship proposals, the CDWG are focused on mitigations required from the awarding organisations and regulator to ensure clear guidance and NI representation across all levels.

The Committee noted the report.

A11. POLICY REVIEW

- **Educational Visits**

Members noted an amendment to the Educational Visits policy providing a Covid update that non-essential travel should be avoided during the pandemic and if deemed necessary, a risk assessment completed and agreed by the relevant Director before permission is granted.

Mr Doran advised that staff continue to work on the ERAMUS project although exchange visits are no longer taking place.

The policy was approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr McCormick.

Mr Doran advised that approval of the Safeguarding policy and the Learning Support policy is deferred as amendment is required in response to Departmental guidance.

A12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Doran informed Members that the Chair of the Principals Group has written to Mr Wilkinson, Director of Apprenticeships, Career and Vocational Division to express concern around mitigations required to assessment.

A13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 17.30.

The meeting concluded at 19.31.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

