

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.

Present:

Mr Gordon Gough (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran
Mr Aidan McCormick
Prof. Gregory O'Hare
Mr Andrew Saunders
Mr Matthew Turner
Mrs Nicola Wilson

In Attendance:

Mr Keith Kilpatrick, Director of Curriculum
Mrs Lorraine McKeown, Assistant Director of Student Services & Marketing
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.32.

ACTION BY WHOM

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.

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

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 19 MAY 2020

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2020. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr Saunders.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members noted that all matters arising are addressed.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr Gough thanked Members for completing and returning the self-assessment questionnaires for informing the Annual Committee Report.

A06. STUDENT COUNCIL SUMMARY REPORT

Mrs McKeown presented the Student Council Summary Report and advised that the 2019-2020 report identifies a 17% increase in the quantity of issues raised at student council meetings compared with 2018-2019. She stated that attendance at student council meetings has improved with a further 6% of registered class reps attending meetings when compared with 41% in 2018-2019.

Mrs McKeown informed that, as with the previous year, most concerns relate to the remit of the Estates Department constituting 29% of the total issues, an increase of 2% from

the previous year. She referred to legacy issues concerning canteen, price differences and food facilities and informed of meetings planned with the provider and the Director of Client Services to address students' concerns around health options.

Members noted the report, commenting that food preference is a subjective topic and observing that some campuses have more modern canteen facilities.

Mr Saunders requested further data on trend analysis be incorporated in the next report, identifying a breakdown of categories and themes.

The Committee noted the report.

A16. POLICY REVIEW Hardship policy

Mrs McKeown referred Members to minimal changes to the Hardship policy and advised that 394 students were assisted through the Hardship fund in 2019-2020.

Members were advised that Mr Redmond remains the nominated Hardship Fund Governor.

The policy was approved on the proposal of Mr Turner and seconded by Mr Saunders.

Members thanked Mrs McKeown for her assistance. Mrs McKeown left the meeting at 17.48.

A07. EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Members reviewed the Education Committee Annual Report and agreed that it constitutes an accurate record of work undertaken by Members in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Mr Gough thanked Members for their input. The Report was approved on the proposal of Mr Turner and seconded by Mr McCormick.

A08. EDUCATION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Committee Members reviewed their Terms of Reference and agreed that they remain appropriate. The Terms of Reference were approved on the proposal of Mr McCormick and seconded by Mr Turner.

A09. LEVEL 2 BALANCE SCORECARD close out

Mr Kilpatrick presented the Level 2 Balance Scorecard and advised on actions impacted by Covid-19 and to be carried over into the new action plan for 2020-21.

Members commented that the enrolment format within the College Development Plan presented by DfE and reviewed by the Governing Body, is not user friendly. Mr Saunders stated that he will raise the matter at the next meeting of the Chairs Group.

The Committee noted challenges within recruiting to fulltime higher education and an upward trend in enrolments at level 3. Mr Kilpatrick advised that this may be due to a number of factors, including the opening of the new builds and marketing of vocational training.

Mrs McKeown

Mr Kilpatrick informed Members on ongoing work in the community, referred Members to the tables on social inclusion and economic activity and advised on an increase on target in certain areas.

Members reviewed the income generated tables, community project work and European projects. Discussion took place regarding work undertaken by the business support team, the various strands of the skills intervention programme for individuals affected by Covid-19 and a focus on maintaining international activity.

The Committee noted the information.

A10. WHOLE COLLEGE QIP 2019-2020 close out

Members reviewed the Whole College Quality Improvement Action Plan noting encouraging improvement in achievement rates in level 1 and 2 in Essential Skills literacy and numeracy.

Mr Kilpatrick advised that class numbers will be incorporated into the new plan, and items carried over and affected by Covid-19 will be reset.

Prof. O'Hare arrived at the meeting at 18.11.

Mr McCormick informed on his attendance at an EU conference, acknowledged the significant amount of work undertaken throughout the College in challenging times and highlighted the advantages of collaborative working with schools in the southern region.

The Committee noted the report.

A11. ENROLMENT POSITION Analysis of Higher Education Enrolments

Mr Kilpatrick referred Members to the analysis report on Higher Education in Further Education Colleges and provided an update on enrolment figures, advising on an overall decline of 9% in full time HE.

Members noted the previous growth in Higher Level Apprenticeships over the last four years, the significant barriers for developing the provision and were advised that the College is still awaiting details on the apprenticeship intervention scheme that could be used to retain existing HLAs.

The Committee expressed alarm, noting that HE enrolments in FE colleges are in significant decline and the predicted trajectory. Members expressed concern on the direct impact this will have on the skills deficit if enrolments in level 4 and 5 continue to drop. Members agreed that an interim solution is required, a removal of the current university restrictions and a relaxation on the Departmental policy on the use of foundation degrees as a primary qualification necessary.

Mr Kilpatrick advised on a number of initiatives developed internally to focus on progression and address retention.

Members were informed that Curriculum Directors are working towards a clear collaboration plan to progress vocational provision, develop strong links with industry and enhance employment opportunities.

Members noted the report and the necessity to classify SRC as a provider of both further and higher education.

A12. CURRICULUM PLANNING STRATEGY

Mr Kilpatrick commented that the curriculum planning strategy has been badly interrupted by the current health crisis and informed on a deep reform required in traineeships.

A13. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP

Mr Kilpatrick informed that the Chairmanship of the Curriculum Directors Working Group is refreshed every year and the Curriculum Director of NWRC has taken over the position.

He advised on a clear focus on HE in FE within the collaboration plan and a strong reporting procedure informed by the Principals Group.

The Committee noted the report.

A14. ETI CURRICULUM PLANNING LEVEL 3

Mr Kilpatrick presented the ETI evaluation of curriculum planning at level 3, referred to the key findings and remarked on a positive report.

Mr McCormick referred Members to the statement concerning careers education, information, advice and guidance and congratulated staff on the strong, positive assessment statement.

Members noted the encouraging account in regard to engineering and manufacturing technologies noting that purposeful engagement with employers has led to a curriculum offer aligned closely to industry needs and that students benefit from highly authentic learning opportunities where they work in small teams to solve realistic engineering problems.

Mr Turner remarked on a favourable report, observing that the substantial interventions appear to be working well.

A15. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN SUBMISSION REQUEST

Mr Kilpatrick informed the Committee that submission of the Quality Improvement Plans has been extended to 26 February 2021.

He referred Members to the revised arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of quality improvement planning in the context of the Covid-19 public health pandemic

A17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Saunders recommended that HE provision plans form part of the agenda for the Strategy Day in December.

Members proposed that the Committee seek the full Board's approval to engage with UK universities with a view to developing the curriculum provision.

A18. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 1 December 2020 at 17.30 via teleconference.

The meeting concluded at 19.06.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

