

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2020 IN THE BOARDROOM, BANBRIDGE CAMPUS AT 18.30.

PRESENT:

Mr Scott Alexander, Chair
Mr Brian Doran, Chief Executive
Mr Gordon Gough
Dr Eileen Stewart

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Andrew Saunders, Governing Body Chair
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 18.28.

**ACTION
by whom**

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr John Nugent and Mrs Neill McCready.

A02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting any conflicts with regard to matters to be discussed. No interests were declared.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 21 OCTOBER 2019

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 21 October 2019. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on the proposal of Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Gough.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Mr Sloan stated that the planned training event for IOSH leading safety for new members of the Senior Management Team and Governors who have not yet completed the course, has not yet been organised. This will be delivered prior to the end of the academic year.

Mrs Hughes confirmed that South West College and Southern Regional College have partnered with Belfast Metropolitan College for the provision of payroll services. SRC are to commence with the service in April 2021.

Mrs Hughes advised that the sector HR group are currently collating college practices to determine the approach to incorporating average overtime into holiday pay.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None.

A06. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS

Mrs Hughes advised the Committee of a career break extension on the grounds of caring responsibilities.

The request was unanimously approved by Committee Members.

A07. POLICIES;

- **Disciplinary policy and procedure – support staff**

Mr Sloan apologised for a delay in distributing the updated policy and advised that the document was issued to NIPSA for consultation on 29 January and despite issuing an extension, no comment has been received from the staff representatives. Mr Sloan informed of a meeting scheduled with NIPSA on 26 February during which this matter may be raised again. He advised that he believed that an appropriate period of consultation had taken place and assured the Committee that agreement with the TU was not required and that consultation was sufficient.

Mr Sloan reminded Members that the Staffing Committee, at its meeting in October, acknowledged that the dismissal of support staff is an operational matter. He stated that subsequent endorsement arising from the Governing Body meeting in November 2019, recommended the inclusion of a Governing Body Member at dismissal appeal hearings to provide independent oversight.

Mr Sloan informed Members that the policy has changed so fundamentally, issuing a tracked version document would bear no reflection to the current operating policy.

A detailed discussion took place regarding statutory obligations. Amendments to the policy were reviewed including a revision to the duties and responsibilities of the investigating officer, clarification on the penalties of sanctions, punitive authority and the right to appeal to external individuals.

Mr Sloan advised Members that the amendments would be made and the document circulated to Members for final comment. Following this the policy could be approved and recirculated to TU side as the final document.

The Committee withdrew for a comfort break between 19.56 and 19.59.

Mr Saunders left the meeting at 19.59 and returned at 20.02.

- **Equality and Good Relations**

Members noted no changes to the Equality and Good Relations policy.

- **Providing References**

Members noted updates to the Providing References policy in relation to GDPR legislation.

- **Time Off In Lieu – support staff**

The Committee noted minor amendments to the Time Off In Lieu policy.

- **Parental Leave**

Members noted minor revisions to the Parental Leave policy.

The four policies were approved on the proposal of Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Gough, subject to minor amendments.

A08. KPI IN YEAR REPORT

Members reviewed the in year KPI report noting an increase in grievance and disciplinary cases raised in comparison to the previous year, and very good sickness absence rates.

A09. STAFF LEVELS AND RECRUITMENT REPORT

Mrs Hughes presented the staff levels and recruitment report and advised on a variation of lecturing staff numbers due to the restructuring process and a change of operational titles.

Mrs Hughes informed of the difficulty in recruiting to certain posts and confirmed that duplicate recruitment exercises have been performed for the same vacancy.

The Committee noted the report.

A10. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Members noted employee development activities undertaken and remarked on good quality of presentation.

A11. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the Investors in People update and reminded Members that the College was awarded the Silver award and IIP Good Practice Health and Wellbeing award.

Mrs Hughes updated Members on the results of the recent IIP survey with staff. She had indicated that the survey serves as a useful tool in the preparation for the College reaccreditation process in May 2021. Mrs Hughes reported that the return rate for the survey had not been as high as hoped and had seen a slight decrease from the previous survey.

Mrs Hughes reported on a meeting with the IIP assessor in early January 2020. She advised that the assessor confirmed that overall the College is in a good place and that whilst going through a period of significant change as regards structures and a challenging space with pay pressures, the results demonstrate a positive position for the College.

Mrs Hughes presented the IIP Continuous Improvement Action Plan on actions to date. She advised Members that the plan will be developed based on the feedback from the assessor with a focus on the priorities previously outlined, reward and recognition, managing performance and leading and inspiring people.

Members noted the reports and congratulated the HRD team on their good work.

A12. DEPARTMENTAL GUIDANCE; TEACHING QUALIFICATION APPOINTMENT

Mr Doran referred Members to the Departmental letter of 10 December 2019 acknowledging a difficulty in recruiting lecturers in certain fields. Mr Doran advised that the Department will relax the requirements of FE 01/12, in exceptional circumstances and only with their permission, in order to offer a degree of flexibility in recruiting.

The Committee noted the information.

A13. CEF CIRCULARS

Mrs Hughes referred Members to CEF circular 2019/03 detailing the pay award for FE Principals and Deputy Directors for 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the CEF circular detailing the lecturer pay award 1 September 2018 and advised that the College has implemented payment.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Hughes advised the Committee of the College's requirement, under the Pensions Regulator, to re-enrol staff onto the pension scheme every three years. She informed that this activity has been completed and the College has received a certificate of compliance.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee will take place on Tuesday 5 May 2020 at 18.30 in the Banbridge Campus.

The meeting concluded at 20.36.

CHAIR

DATE

