
MINUTES OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS, ON MONDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2010 AT 4.00P.M.

PRESENT: Prof F Monds (Chair)
Ms E Cavanagh
Mrs G McCafferty (from 4.15pm)
Mr S Murphy (Principal and Chief Executive)
Mr A Rainey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr C Morrison (Director of Curriculum)
Mr D Kinnaird (Director of Learner Services)
Ms P Morrison (Quality Manager)
Ms D McElwee (HE Co-ordinator)
Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

The Chair welcomed Ms Morrison and Ms McElwee to the meeting.

13.1 APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Dame Geraldine Keegan.

13.2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No member declared a conflict of interest in the business of the meeting.

13.3 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2010

It was proposed by Mr Rainey seconded by Mr Murphy and agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting.

Action: Secretary to arrange publication of approved minutes asap.

13.4 MATTERS ARISING

12.4 (11.4) (10.4) (9.8) Strabane Update. The Principal reported that the new temporary accommodation was now operational with good numbers of students attending. Members commented on the encouraging outcome of this initiative.

12.7 China Development Update. The Director of Curriculum reported that 2 students from China had been enrolled in the College this year as a result of local marketing. He indicated that the College's financial arrangements for support from North West Marketing would change from being responsible for payment of salary of local staff to paying a fee for each student recruited to the College. The Director also mentioned that the British Council project of student exchange would be taking place again this year.

12.10 Academic Board. In reply to a question, the Director of Curriculum said that the arrangements for progression of HND students to final year of a degree course were now operational.

13.5 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

In response to an invitation from the Chair, Ms Morrison described various aspects of her work as Quality Manager.

13.6 QUALITY CONTROL WITHIN THE CURRICULUM (Ref: paper EC13.6)

The Chair reminded members that this matter had arisen as a result of responses to the Governance Health Check. He said that the paper being presented to members was in preparation for it being shared with other members of the Governing Body. In describing how quality control was achieved, the Director of Curriculum's remarks included reference to the periodic review of courses and the annual meeting between the SMT and course teams where student achievement rate fell below the agreed threshold. He also mentioned the part staff appraisal would play in the process. The Chair suggested that the paper should include the contribution made to quality controls by external agencies such as ETI and QAA. He said it was important, in viewing the totality of the controls in place, to emphasise their scale and complexity. It was agreed that the Secretary would liaise with the GB Chair in seeking to bring the issue to a meeting of the Governing Body.

Action: Secretary to liaise with GB Chair on arrangements for a presentation at a GB meeting.

13.7 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE UPDATE (Ref: paper EC13.7.1, EC13.7.2 & EC13.7.3)

The Director of Learner Services reported that work towards the standard had commenced with staff from his own section but had now been expanded to include staff in all functional areas (i.e. non-teaching staff). He referred members to the results of a gap analysis survey which had identified the present position by staff category on the individual elements of the standard. He indicated that a working group consisting of volunteers representing all functional groups was being set up to address the areas for improvement. He said that the group would be working towards being ready for assessment by April 2011. In concluding the item, the Chair welcomed the developments taking place in relation to the initiative.

13.8 ETI: RESPONSE TO INSPECTION ON WHOLE COLLEGE SELF-EVALUATION REVIEW (SER) AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANNING (QIP) (Ref: paper EC13.8)

The Director of Learner Services reported that ETI had awarded the College a Grade 3 (good) as a result of the inspection. The College was therefore only required to develop an internal action plan. The Quality Manager indicated that the College would be seeking to make the action plan quantifiable with specifics to measure improvement. Members noted the plan.

13.9 ETI: FOLLOW UP INSPECTION ON PSA LEVEL 2 ESSENTIAL SKILLS (Ref: paper EC13.9)

The Director of Curriculum reported that ETI had awarded the College a Grade 2 (very good) as a result of the follow-up inspection. He mentioned the work undertaken by staff to achieve this standard including early intervention and embedding of essential skills in vocational areas. Members noted the report.

13.10 ESSENTIAL SKILLS: REVIEW OF ACTION PLAN 2009/10 (Ref: papers EC12.10.1 & EC12.10.2)

The Director of Curriculum explained that DEL required a review of the plan including actions taken in areas for improvement. He tabled a paper containing the actions taken to date. The paper also referred to the recent ETI report (see agenda item 13.9) as evidence of improvement in the areas listed. He said that the plan for 2010/11 was under development. Members noted the review.

13.11 QAA: UPDATE (Ref: paper EC13.11)

The Chair reminded members of the process which was being introduced to evaluate HE in FE Colleges in NI. The Director of Curriculum outlined the Developmental engagement stage of the process with which the College would be involved during this academic year. Members noted the paper.

13.12 CAREER ACADEMIES: PROGRESS REPORT (Ref: paper EC13.12)

The Chair introduced the item by explaining that the initiative was designed to give students the opportunity to gain a UK wide perspective of business and the world of work. The HE Co-ordinator then described the activities undertaken by initial cohorts from the College which had taken part in the scheme and the benefits they had accrued. In relation to difficulties over obtaining internships, members suggested that the members of the Governing Body may be able to provide advice and/or assistance.

13.13 ACADEMIC BOARD: MEETING HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2010 (Ref: paper EC13.13.1 & EC13.13.2)

Members noted the minutes of the meeting commenting favourably on the proposal for a new course in 3D Design.

13.14 CORRESPONDENCE

None.

13.15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Chair thanked Ms Morrison and Ms McElwee for attending the meeting.

Date of next meeting. - Monday 24 January 2011 at 4.00pm in Strand Road (not 31 January 2011 as on original schedule).

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 5.20pm.

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____