

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS, ON TUESDAY 10 MARCH 2008 AT 4.00P.M.

PRESENT: Prof F Monds (Chair)
Miss E Cavanagh
Dame Geraldine Keegan
Mr S Murphy (Director)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr C Morrison (Assistant Director, Curriculum)
Mr D Kinnaird (Assistant Director, Client Services)
Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

4.1 APOLOGIES

Apology was received from Mr A Rainey

4.2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2008

It was proposed by Miss Cavanagh seconded by Mr Murphy and agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting subject to the inclusion of an apology from Dame Geraldine Keegan.

4.3 MATTERS ARISING

3.3 (2.5) Academic Board. The Director reported that, as it still had not been possible to implement the new management structure, the first meeting of the Board had been delayed. He hoped matters would be resolved to enable the Board to meet in the summer term.

3.4.2 DEL Timetable for consultative documents. The Secretary read a letter from the Head of the Further Education Division in which she pointed out that details of forthcoming consultations were posted regularly on the policy link section of the web-site of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

3.4.4 Quality Issues. The Director reported that, at a recent meeting with DEL, consideration had been given to the benefits of the College initially working towards the Investors in People standard at corporate level over a 12 – 15 month period. Members recommended that it would be beneficial to arrange a base-line assessment. The Director indicated that a paper on the matter would come to the next meeting of the Committee. Members requested that an estimate of costs would be included.

4.4 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

No business was conducted under this heading.

4.5 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

The Director outlined the contents of the Plan pointing out that some matters mentioned would arise outside the timing of Committee meetings. The Chair suggested that a list of strategic items for consideration by the Committee should be drawn up and that, from the list, one item per meeting could be placed on its agenda. A member enquired about policy development and review referring particularly to policies relating to teaching and learning. The Director indicated

that, although policies on aspects of teaching and learning existed, it would be useful to develop a foundation policy on the matter and that he would arrange for a paper to be available for the next meeting of the Committee. It was agreed that other strategic issues would then be considered at future meetings.

4.6 COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN: MID-YEAR REVIEW

The Director mentioned that the data detailed in the review paper had been discussed with DEL and that there had been agreement, in general, that targets should be met by year-end. The Assistant Director (CS) pointed out that, should there be late withdrawals from courses, these could influence the final FLU figures. The Chair enquired about Part 2 of the CDP (agreed at the Governing Body meeting on 9 October 2007). The Director undertook to review this section and to circulate any problems or concerns to members as well as report same to the appropriate Committee.

4.7 CHINA DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The Chair outlined the 4 issues which had been concerning the Governing Body at its meeting on 5 February 2008. The Assistant Director (C) detailed the anticipated costs including salary of a directly employed member of staff. The Director stated that this salary was consistent with recommendations obtained from the Chinese organisation FESCO. A member felt that further reassurance was necessary both on this matter and that of procurement relating to the use of North West Marketing. The Director agreed to write to a senior official of the British Council to seek assurance that the proposal in all aspects was consistent with good practice. Subject to receiving a satisfactory reply, which the Director would circulate to members, it was agreed that the proposal would be recommended to the Governing Body for implementation. The Assistant Director (C) advised members that a review of the proposal was due in December 2008 and again in October 2009.

4.8 ETI INSPECTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN FURTHER EDUCATION

The Assistant Director (C) indicated that the survey had been carried out across the sector prior to the merger of colleges. Management had considered the 6 areas for improvement listed in the report and had drawn up an action plan in relation to NWRC. The issues which were particularly relevant include

- The use of information systems to produce accurate HE statistics
- The difficulty in attracting students to programmes in science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- The development of ILT to support teaching and learning.

It was agreed that progress in plan implementation would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

4.9 MINUTES OF NW WORKFORCE FORUM

Members noted the minutes of the Forum meeting held on 16 January 2008. In reply to a question the Director reported that the Forum responses to DEL consultative documents were consistent with College responses. In reply to a further question the Director indicated that the Chair of the Forum was keen to drive its remit forward. He felt that the major challenge the region faced at present was seeking to resolve the issue of the disengaged where low levels of uptake for employment opportunities available exist.

4.10 CORRESPONDENCE

None

4.11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.11.1 ICT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY. The Assistant Director (CS) outlined the policy as contained in the draft paper. In reply to a number of questions he indicated that

- the policy would apply to both staff and students
- it reflected similar policies across the sector
- issues surrounding “reasonable personal use” needed to be managed
- a review of the policy would be required as technology changed
- active monitoring of all ICT usage in the College already takes place.

Members agreed to recommend to the Governing Body that the policy be accepted.

Date of next meeting: It was agreed to meet on Monday 12 May 2008 at 4.00pm in Strand Road.

This being all the business the Chair closed the meeting at 5.35pm.