
MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS, ON TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2011 AT 4.00P.M.

PRESENT: Prof F Monds (Chair)
Dame Geraldine Keegan
Mr S Murphy (Principal and Chief Executive)
Mr A Rainey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Kinnaird (Director of Learner Services)
Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

16.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms E Cavanagh and Mr C Morrison.

16.2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

16.3 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2011

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

Action: Secretary to arrange publication of approved minutes asap.

16.4 MATTERS ARISING

15.4 (14.4) (13.7) Investors in People. The Director reported that a trial assessment had taken place which had produced a very positive report. He undertook to have the full assessment carried out by November 2011.

16.5 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair thanked members for their interest and contribution to the work of the Education Committee during the last 4 years. He said that we had gained a greater understanding and appreciation of the academic work of the College.

16.6 COLLEGE: LEARNING SUPPORT ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 (Ref: paper EC16.6)

The Chair commented on the well presented and informative report. A member enquired about the transfer of information across educational sectors with respect to students who required learning support. The Director and Principal confirmed that very little information was forthcoming. The Principal agreed that he would raise the matter within the FE sector and with DEL. He considered a joint policy from both education departments would be required. Members noted that the majority of KPIs (key performance indicators) had been met.

16.7 COLLEGE: LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 (Ref: paper EC16.7)

The Chair commented on the good quality of the publication. Members noted the growth in usage of e-books. In reply to a question, the Director indicated that the publications were mainly for the information of College staff.

16.8 COLLEGE: FINAL CDP TARGETS 2011/12 (Ref: paper EC16.8)

The Principal explained that, due to an in year increase in DEL's main grant, the College was required to adjust its FLU delivery target. He proposed it be increased to 5458FLUs. It was agreed to recommend to the Governing Body that this revised target be approved. The Chair enquired about proposed reduction in taught hours for full-time courses. The Principal pointed out that, at present, the average number of taught hours in the College was well above DEL's base line (450 hours/year) and in some cases exceeded its maximum (600 hours/year). The modest reduction being proposed would bring further efficiencies without affecting quality of delivery. In time, such reductions would enable the College to increase student intake. The Principal indicated that he would be providing members of the Governing Body with detailed information in his Report to its next meeting.

16.9 ETI: FOLLOW-UP PSA LEVEL 3 INSPECTION UPDATE (Ref: paper EC16.9)

The Chair referred members to the 2 follow-up inspection reports on priority skills – one on information and communication technology (ICT) and computing, the other on mechanical and manufacturing engineering. He said that both reports showed commendable improvement with significant good work being done by staff. The reports confirmed the positive tone of the verbal feedback session from ETI which he had attended. He also commented on the observation made in the report that the re-structuring of Schools had contributed to the improvement. Members were pleased to note the reports.

16.10 ETI: BLENDED LEARNING INSPECTION REPORT (Ref: paper EC16.10)

The Director explained that 'blended' learning involved a course structure where the student experienced both face to face teaching and individual (virtual) learning. He indicated that early indications were that there was some improvement in retention rates and in achievement. In reply to a question, he said that the College was seeking to learn from good practice elsewhere. Members noted the report.

16.11 ETI: EVALUATION REPORT ON ADMISSIONS, ADVICE, GUIDANCE & SUPPORT (Ref: paper EC16.11)

The Chair commented on the report which had coincided with a similar report on the same issue from internal audit. He said that it was commendable that both reports had been consistent in their view that the College was providing a high quality admissions, advice, guidance and support service to students.

16.12 QAA: UPDATE REPORT (Ref: paper EC16.12)

The Principal referred members to the outcome of a recent visit by QAA as part of its developmental review of HE in the College. He indicated that the report contained no 'essential' recommendations and the College would be following up the 'advisable' and 'desirable' areas listed. Members noted the report.

16.13 BEST AWARDS (Ref: paper EC16.13)

The Principal reported that the College had attained 5 out of the 12 awards at the Business and Education through Training and Skills ceremony recently (available to the 6 colleges in the FE sector). Members congratulated staff and students on this outstanding performance. Members considered it important that the achievements receive wider publicity.

16.14 WORLDSKILLS TRAINING CAMP

Dame Geraldine Keegan reported on her attendance at this event at the Limavady Campus. She had been very impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm shown by staff and students.

16.15 ACADEMIC BOARD:

Agenda & Minutes (Ref: papers EC16.15.1, EC16.15.2)

Minutes of Academic Standards Committee (Ref: paper EC16.15.3)

Members noted the initiative taken by the Board to examine innovative methods for the delivery of the curriculum.

Amendment to Constitution (Ref: paper EC16.15.3)

The Principal outlined minor amendments required to bring the Constitution into line with the new Schools structure and re-designation of management post titles. It was agreed to recommend these changes to the Governing Body.

16.16 CORRESPONDENCE

None.

16.17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Ulster Media Awards. The Principal reported that the College had received awards in 4 of the 5 award categories.
2. BUTTLE uk. The Principal reported that the College had received this award in relation to its quality of care and support for students.
3. The Principal mentioned a request he had received in relation to integrated education.
4. A member mentioned the 'early intervention' designation given to the NI region. The Principal said he would check on progress.

Date of next meeting. - TBA

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 5.00pm.

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: 14 November 2011