

MINUTES OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS, ON MONDAY 24 JANUARY 2011 AT 4.00P.M.

PRESENT: Prof F Monds (Chair)
Mrs G McCafferty
Mr S Murphy (Principal and Chief Executive)
Mr A Rainey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr C Morrison (Director of Curriculum)
Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

14.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dame Geraldine Keegan and David Kinnaird.

14.2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

14.3 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2010

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

Action: Secretary to arrange publication of approved minutes asap.

14.4 MATTERS ARISING

13.6 Quality Control within the Curriculum. The Chair thanked the Director for a very useful and successful presentation to the Governing Body at its November meeting.

13.7 Investors in People. In reply to a question, the Principal said that the IiP initiative was still working towards assessment in April.

13.10 Essential Skills. The Principal indicated that additional funding had been received to support this aspect of the curriculum.

13.12 Career Academies. The Chair mentioned that a NWRC cohort in Computing was presently taking part in the scheme. He also commented favourably on the active participation of local business and industry.

14.5 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair congratulated the College on the quality and concise nature of the information contained in its publication "Guide to Courses". The Principal said that it is being distributed widely throughout the community.

14.6 DRAFT COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011/14 (Ref: paper GB21.13)

The Chair introduced the item by commenting on the draft Plan's layout and its progressive narrative. The Principal said that further amendments were being made. In relation to the FLU element, numbers in the Plan would reflect need. The Chair then invited members to comment on the draft. A range of issues were mentioned including

- The importance of the inclusion of students' views
- Reference to difficulties future students may experience in accessing higher education
- Reference to the Investors in People initiative
- Comment on the contribution made by further education to higher education courses.

In reply to a question, the Principal indicated that a range of action plans would be developed in implementing the Plan.

Members agreed to commend the Plan to the Governing Body.

14.7 ADDITIONAL FLU FUNDING (Ref: paper EC14.7)

The Principal reported on additional funding provided recently by DEL. FLU targets for 2010/11 would be adjusted accordingly. The matter will be reported to the Governing Body for ratification.

Action: Principal to report increased funding to next GB meeting.

14.8 RETENTION AND ACHIEVEMENT STATISTICS (Ref: paper EC14.8)

The Principal presented the statistics for 2009/10 academic year with comparison stats for 08/09 and 07/08. They indicate that overall performance in 2 year courses has improved significantly (retention 64%; success 88%; o/a achievement 57%) but that overall performance on 1 year courses has regressed to the 07/08 figure (retention 78%; success 75%; o/a achievement 58%).

The Principal considered that measures taken to improve would include:

- Setting a target of a further 5% improvement over the period 10/11 to 13/14
- Recent restructuring of Schools
- Re-appraisal of students continuing on a course if they have demonstrated little or no commitment during its 1st semester.

The Principal said that DEL had indicated that, from a sector-wide perspective, the College was above average on success but below average on retention.

In relation to the analysis by School, the Chair enquired about the Schools who were showing low overall achievement. The Principal considered that re-structuring should improve this situation. A member suggested that it would be helpful to have comparative Schools stats from previous years. The Chair felt that, with the re-structuring of Schools, it would be important to maintain accurate comparative figures with previous years. It was agreed that the paper should be circulated to all GB members with an accompanying commentary from the Principal.

In concluding the item the Chair thanked the Principal for providing the statistics which, he said, showed some good results. He thanked members for their contributions to a useful and informative discussion.

Action: (1) Director to supply comparative Schools stats from previous years.

(2) Secretary to circulate paper to other GB members for next GB meeting

14.9 ETI: BLENDED LEARNING REPORT (Ref: paper EC14.9)

The Director of Curriculum reported on this pilot project covering 5 courses with over 100 students participating, the courses including an element of on-line self-study. The Principal mentioned a number of difficulties including tracking student participation and inclusion of accredited hours in the FLU figures. He suggested that a DEL policy on the issue was required.

14.10 UU: COURSE REVIEWS (Ref: papers EC14.10)

The Director of Curriculum explained that the issues identified in the paper had been gathered from annual course reviews and examiners' reports. Areas of good practice would be shared across the College. Issues requiring attention are being dealt with through course Directors and course teams. Members noted the paper.

14.11 UU: INSTITUTIONAL RE-APPROVAL (Ref: paper EC14.11)

The Director of Curriculum explained that, in devising the format for re-approval of the College as a partner College with the University, it had been agreed that the general context of the College as contained in the paper would be applicable for all courses thus enabling each course panel to concentrate on academic issues. The Chair mentioned the need to check consistency of content with the College's Development Plan. Members noted the paper.

14.12 QAA: LINES OF ENQUIRY FOR INTEGRATED QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REVIEW (Ref: paper EC14.12)

The Director of Curriculum explained that, through discussion, agreement had been reached with the QAA Co-ordinator on lines of enquiry (as listed in the paper) to be pursued at the forth-coming Developmental Review in May. Members noted the paper.

14.13 ACADEMIC BOARD: MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2010 (Ref: paper EC14.13.1 & EC14.13.2)

The Chair commented on the good attendance at the meeting. He also enquired about the feasibility of attaining to a 70% overall achievement level (item 7). The Principal considered that the target was realistic. He also commented on how helpful the staff had found the review process. The Chair requested that the Committee receive the minutes of the Academic Standards Committee.

Action: Director to supply minutes of Academic Standards Committee minutes to the Education Committee as and when they become available.

14.14 CORRESPONDENCE

None.

14.15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

Date of next meeting. - Monday 28 March 2011 at 4.00pm in Strand Road.

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 5.10pm.

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____