

**MINUTES OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS, ON MONDAY 25 JANUARY 2010 AT 4.00P.M.**

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**PRESENT:** Prof F Monds (Chair)  
Mr H Faulkner (ex-officio)  
Dame Geraldine Keegan  
Mr S Murphy (Director)  
Mr A Rainey

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr D Kinnaird (Assistant Director, Client Services)  
Mr C Morrison (Assistant Director, Curriculum) from 4.45pm  
Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

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The Chair extended a welcome to Dame Geraldine on her return to the Committee and to Mr Faulkner (GB Chair).

**10.1 APOLOGIES**

An apology was received from Mrs McCafferty.

**10.2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

**10.3 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2009**

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

*Action: Secretary to arrange publication of approved minutes asap.*

**10.4 MATTERS ARISING**

**9.6 QAA College & Sector Report.** In reply to a member's question the Director explained that the curriculum managers' working group would fulfil the role of a cross-college forum for higher education.

**9.7 Essential Skills Update.** The Director reported that there has been no further contact with DEL on the matter. A follow-up inspection was anticipated around Easter.

**9.8 Strabane Update.** The Director reported that he was awaiting clarity from DEL on the level of appraisal needed for the temporary accommodation proposed. He considered limits on recruitment for 2010/11 may be needed if the build was not operational by September. The Chair expressed the Committee's concern that the urgent requirement for additional accommodation at Strabane by September could be placed in jeopardy if progress was not forthcoming.

**10.5 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

(1) The Chair enquired about the arrangements for the delivery of courses. In reply the Director indicated that most courses were operating satisfactorily on a 2 semester year.

(2) The Chair referred to the present Review of Higher Education and to the ILEX Regeneration Review. He considered that both reviews, to which the College contributes, are of significance to the College. He requested that the Committee be kept informed of developments.

[The meeting then considered items 10.7 to 10.14 incl. before returning to item 10.6 ]

**10.6 CHINA DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (Ref: paper EC10.6)**

The Assistant Director (C) outlined the 3 objectives of the project and the progress which had been made on each. He said that recruitment of Chinese students on to college courses was the least certain due, mainly, to language skills requirements. He considered it would be May before any clarity emerged. The Chair cautioned on progressing in-house language training at this stage. The Assistant Director indicated that there would be a need to review the role of the local project worker prior to the end of the contract. It was agreed that he would consult with the GB Chair and the Committee Chair during May/June.

*Action: The Assistant Director (C) to consult with GB Chair & EC Chair on the role of the local Chinese project worker in May/June.*

**10.7 PORTFOLIO OF COURSES AND THEIR RELATIVE HEALTH (Ref: Paper EC10.7)**

The Director, in presenting the range of courses, expressed concern over recruitment for engineering and computing, part of STEM priority subjects. He said that additional incentives might be necessary to improve the situation. A member suggested that there were a sizable number of students in schools who had science qualifications but would not be going to University. The Chair felt that these were critical economic areas and requested that the Committee be kept informed of trends. It was agreed that a health review of courses combined with analysis of student achievement should take place annually normally at the January meeting of the Committee.

*Action: Director to prepare a health review of courses on an annual basis for January EC meetings*

**10.8 ETI: CULTURAL DIVERSITY EVALUATION (Ref: Papers EC10.8.1 & EC10.8.2)**

The Chair commented on the generally favourable report. Members noted the report and the College's action plan.

**10.9 ETI: SURVEY OF ADMISSIONS GUIDANCE, ADVICE AND SUPPORT (Ref: Papers EC10.9.1 & EC10.9.2)**

The Assistant Director (CS) commented on the strengths and areas for improvement outlined in the report. In reply to a question he indicated that key performance indicators referred to would be developed in partnership with ETI.

Members noted the report and the College's action plan.

**10.10 ETI: SURVEY OF INFORMATION & LEARNING TECHNOLOGY (Ref: Paper EC10.10.1 & EC10.10.2)**

The Assistant Director (CS)'s comments included reference to the satisfactory conclusion contained in the report. The Chair expressed the Committee's appreciation of the high quality of work attained by the College in the area of ILT.

Members noted the report and the College's action plan.

**10.11 QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY: DEL'S UPDATE LETTER (Ref: paper EC10.11)**

Members noted the intentions of DEL in respect of the role QAA would play in monitoring higher education in further education colleges in future years.

**10.12 UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES (Ref: paper EC10.12)**

The Director outlined the generally positive nature of this annual report on the provision of higher education courses by the College.

Members noted the report.

**10.13 ENROLMENT & FLU UPDATE (Ref: paper EC10.13)**

The Director drew members' attention to the actual number of FLUs being delivered which are exceeding targets in both further education and higher education provision while keeping expenditure at last year's level.

**10.14 QUALIFICATIONS & CREDIT FRAMEWORK (Ref: paper EC10.14)**

The Director outlined the flexibility which would be gained when the new Framework was introduced in September 2010. He referred to the 5 elements of the draft plan which the College would be working through in preparation for its introduction. In reply to a member's question he considered that, in the long term, the NI sector might consider developing specific qualifications. The Assistant Director (C) indicated that the Framework was linked to the European qualifications framework.

**10.15 ACADEMIC BOARD (Ref: papers EC10.15.1, EC10.15.2 & EC10.15.3)**

The Director referred to the minutes of the recent Board meeting and of the Board's sub-Committee on Academic Standards. The Assistant Director (C) pointed out the role the sub-Committee was fulfilling in monitoring follow-up progress to ETI Inspection Reports. The Chair commented on the contribution the Committee is making to overall quality of provision.

Members noted the minutes of both meetings.

**10.16 CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**10.17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Monitoring of Complaints.** It was agreed that a full report on complaints received by the College would be presented at the next meeting of the Governing Body.

*Action: Director to provide Complaints Report at February's GB meeting.*

**Date of next meeting.** It was agreed to meet on Monday 22 March 2010 at 4.00pm in Strand Road.

The meeting ended at 5.10pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_