
MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, LIMAVADY CAMPUS ON WEDNESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2010 COMMENCING AT 5.15PM

PRESENT: Mr H Faulkner (Chair)
Mr M Agnew
Mrs J Doherty
Mr L Gallagher
Mr D Limb
Mr D McMahan
Prof F Monds
Mr S Murphy (Principal and Chief Executive)
Mr A O'Connor
Mr A Rainey
Ms A Williamson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr C Morrison (Director of Curriculum) for item 20.13
Ms P Morrison (Quality Manager) for item 20.13
Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting including Mr Limb, Teaching Staff member and Ms Williamson, Student member to their first meeting of the Governing Body.

20.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms Cavanagh, Dame Geraldine Keegan, Mrs Lestas, Mr McBride, Mrs McCafferty and Mr Smyth.

20.2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

20.3 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2010

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

Action: Secretary to publish approved minutes asap

20.4 MATTERS ARISING

19.8 Restructuring. The Principal reported that the two new Heads of School had recently been appointed and that redeployment was being sought for the unsuccessful candidates.

[It was agreed to take item 20.13 at this point in the meeting after which the Director of Curriculum and the Quality Manager left the meeting.]

20.5 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT (Ref: SC Approved Minutes – 25 October 2010 and verbal report on meeting held on 24 November 2010)

The Acting Committee Chair referred members to the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2010 and the recommendations which they contained. She outlined the

agenda items dealt with at the Committee meeting held earlier in the day and the recommendations being brought to the meeting. In addition she mentioned the management position of the FE sector in relation to the compensation arrangements for staff who volunteer for redundancy which would shortly be discussed at the staff negotiating forums. A member commented that the compensation being proposed was less favourable than that available in the schools' sector. It was proposed by Mrs Doherty seconded by Mr Gallagher and agreed to adopt the draft minutes and to approve the following recommendations:

- Requests made by staff for changes to their working arrangements
- The procedure for dealing with part-time lecturers' pre-employment checks and student work placements via Access NI.

20.6 EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT (Ref: EC Draft Minutes – 8 November 2010).

The Committee Chair drew the attention of members to the draft minutes and, in particular, to the following items

- The revised payment arrangements for recruitment of students from China
- The arrangements for HND students to progress to final year degree courses
- The developments which had taken place in progressing towards the Investors in People standard with non-teaching staff
- The ETI inspection reports
- The excellent work done by the Career Academies. He asked members to consider if they could be of assistance in seeking to find relevant internships for students taking part in the initiative.

In reply to a member's question, the Principal said that the review of the Essential Skills action plan had been forwarded to DEL.

It was proposed by Prof Monds seconded by Mr Rainey and agreed to adopt the draft minutes.

20.7 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT (Ref: FC Approved minutes – 25 October 2010 and FC Draft minutes – 22 November 2010 tabled)

The Committee Chair referred to the minutes of the two Committee meetings held since the last GB meeting. In particular he mentioned

- The draft annual accounts and financial statements for 2009/10. He said that the inclusion of book entries for the impairment of the PFI building and for the FRS 17 pension adjustment tended to distort the true financial position of the College. The Principal indicated that further amendments to the accounts may be required after they are signed off due to the present indecision by DFP on the method to be used in accounting for the pension adjustment.
- The revised budget for 2010/11. He pointed out to members that the budget showed an estimated deficit of slightly over 2% and that a letter for approval had been sent to DEL. He advised members that overtrading would cease after this year.
- A number of estates issues including discussions between the contractor and the loss adjuster on responsibilities for warranties following the bomb damage to the new Strand Road building and the rental difficulties which might arise should the building not be ready for occupation by early March 2011.

It was proposed by Mr Rainey seconded by Mrs Doherty and agreed to adopt the minutes of both meetings and to approve the following recommendations:

- that the College seeks approval from DEL to write off debts totalling £15930 (individual debts > £750) and that the College writes off debts totalling £6750 (individual debts < £750)
- approval of the College's Annual Accounts and Financial Statements for 2009/10
- approval of the revised budget for 2010/11.

20.8 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE REPORT (Ref: AC Draft minutes – 22 November 2010 tabled.)

The Committee Chair presented the draft minutes of the Committee. He referred to:

- the corporate risk management report and the discussion which took place on corporate governance as a risk. He said he would formally reply to the staff associations on the queries concerning risk which they had raised at a recent meeting
- the annual accounts and financial statements 2009/10 which showed the College to be in a financially sound position
- the external auditor's report for 2009/10 which contained no major issues of concern
- the Committee's report to the Governing Body for 2009/10
- the 21 internal audit reviews which had taken place over the 3 years of the College's existence, most receiving 'substantial' assurance rating with only 1 being given a 'limited' assurance rating. He commended the senior management team and staff of the College for this achievement.

It was proposed by Mr McMahon seconded by Mr Agnew and agreed to adopt the draft minutes and to approve the following recommendations:

- the adoption of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2009/10.
- the acceptance of the Committee's report to the Governing Body for its work during 2009/10.

The GB Chair thanked members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Audit & Risk Committee for their work in connection with the Annual Accounts and Financial Statements.

Action: A & R Committee Chair to reply to staff associations on matters raised at the meeting on 16 November 2010.

20.9 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

1. The Chair thanked the Committee Chairs for their contribution to the useful meeting with the staff association representatives recently. He indicated that he would be commencing his visits to the College Schools with the Vice-Chair in December.
2. The Chair reported to members that DEL would shortly be publishing its recommendations on the future of College governance and seeking comment from the Governing Body.
3. The Christmas lunch for members would be held on 15 December.

20.10 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Ref: paper GB20.10)

The Principal referred members to the issues outlined in the paper. These included;

- Enrolments – the current year's figures show, in all categories, a further increase on the growth achieved last year. The significant increase over the period has been achieved without significant increase in lecturing costs.

- New Contract Implementation – the contract based on annualised hours instead of weekly hours has produced considerable efficiency gains in terms of lecturer delivery time.
- Good news stories – a wide range of academic and extra-curriculum achievements by both students and staff. The Chair suggested that the Governing Body should host an informal event to acknowledge these achievements.

The Chair thanked the Principal for his comprehensive report. In reply to a member's question about a recent media report on the Clondermot site, the Principal said he was hopeful that DEL would grant approval for the College to purchase its portion of the site. Another member considered that it was important to continue to press for new build at the Strabane Campus.

Action: SMT asked to organise an informal reception to acknowledge student and staff achievement.

20.11 SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

No business was conducted under this heading.

20.12 CORRESPONDENCE

None

20.13 PRESENTATION: QUALITY CONTROL IN THE CURRICULUM (Ref: paper GB20.13)

The Director of Curriculum highlighted the wide range of measures described in the paper which the College employs to ensure quality in the curriculum. The Quality Manager described her role in monitoring quality across the College including the curriculum. Members asked questions on the use made of benchmarking against other colleges and on the retention and achievement figures including targets set at team level. A member explained that, unlike school pupils, the turn-over of students (70% new students every year) meant integration was more difficult to achieve. In reply to the Chair's invitation, the student member commented that lecturers did make every effort to integrate students into their classes. The Chair said he wished to thank the staff of the College for the work they were doing and the results which were being achieved.

The Chair thanked the Director and Quality Manager for coming to the meeting and for the insight they had provided to the quality controls which the College had in place to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum.

20.14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No business was conducted under this heading.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 23 February 2011 at 5.00pm at Strabane Campus.

This being all the business the Chair closed the meeting at 7.00pm.

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____