
**MINUTES OF THE NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF
THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM,
STRAND ROAD CAMPUS ON WEDNESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2010
COMMENCING AT 5.10PM**

PRESENT: Mr H Faulkner (Chair)
Ms E Cavanagh
Mrs J Doherty
Mr L Gallagher (from 5.20pm)
Dame Geraldine Keegan
Mr W McBride
Mr D McMahan (up to 6.45pm)
Prof F Monds
Mr S Murphy (Principal and Chief Executive)
Mr A O'Connor
Mr A Smyth

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

Prior to the meeting commencing, Prof Monds, on behalf of members, congratulated Mr Faulkner and wished him well on his substantive appointment as Chair of the Governing Body. In reply, the Chair thanked members for the kind comments he had received.

19.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Agnew, Mrs McCafferty and Mr Rainey. The members of the Governing Body wished to express their sympathy to Mr Agnew on his recent family bereavement.

19.2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

19.3 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2010

It was proposed by Ms Cavanagh seconded by Mr McMahan and agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting.

Action: Secretary to publish approved minutes asap

[Mr Gallagher joined the meeting during the next item.]

19.4 MATTERS ARISING

18.4 (17.14) Governance Health Check 09/10. The Secretary reported that he had now received a final revised version of the Health Check from LSDA. He agreed to circulate copies to members.

18.5 Meeting with North West Academy

The Principal reported that the Director of Curriculum was presently in discussions with the Academy. The outcome would be reported to the Education Committee.

18.7 Strabane Update

The Principal reported that the new temporary accommodation was now operational. He thanked all staff concerned. He said that a business case was being prepared for

permanent accommodation which would probably be a two phase development. In reply to a member's question, he said that the third party leasing accommodation at Strabane had now signed the new agreement.

18.7 Letter to DEL on reduction of MaSN numbers

The Principal indicated that there was little possibility of obtaining any change in this year's numbers but he suggested that a case be made to DEL for increased numbers next year. He commented on the value for money aspect of further education colleges providing higher education. A member pointed out that it also widened access opportunities for students.

18.7 Negotiations with PFI contractor on identifying savings.

The Principal reported that the Director of Finance and Estates was engaged in discussions with the contractor. He would be reporting to the Finance & General Purposes Committee on the outcome of those discussions.

18.7 Progress on implementing measures of the Financial Review paper.

As part of the review the Principal reported that he had had a meeting with staff and referred members to a subsequent article which appeared in the press. Some members mentioned that they had been approached about the matters raised. During a full ranging discussion, comments made by members included the following:

- The Governing Body constituted in 2007 for the new college does not have responsibility for matters pre-merger.
- An independent financial review carried out in 2007 on behalf of DEL prior to the merger concluded that the new college was financially sound.
- ETI Inspection reports in recent years showed clearly that management of the curriculum was of high quality
- The financial issues which the College was currently addressing were not in anticipation of the forthcoming government's comprehensive public spending review but are motivated by the need for the college to live within its budget having, in recent years, provided additional finance for its programme from its own reserves which are now diminishing.
- Staff have a responsibility to adhere to the terms and conditions of their contracts and to abide by the agreed Code of Conduct.

In addition

- The Chair requested the Staffing Committee consider issues arising from the recent staff survey at their next meeting.
- The Chair also requested that the Staffing Committee consider matters relating to industrial relations at the Strand Road Campus.
- The Principal indicated that he would be having meetings with a range of interested parties to clarify the financial situation
- Members requested that they be kept informed of any College issues which may subsequently appear in the public domain.

18.8 Photographic evidence

The Principal reported that he had provided the member concerned with relevant information.

18.9 Chairman's business

A member commented that there was a need for the Principal to be available for Access Awards ceremonies.

Actions: (1) Secretary to supply members with a copy of the updated Governance Health Check asap.

(2) Secretary and Principal to refer issue of staff survey to the Staffing Committee.

19.5 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE REPORT (Ref: AC Draft Minutes – 16 September 2010)

The Committee Chair apologised for his absence at the Committee meeting and thanked the Vice-chair for conducting the meeting.

The Vice-chair then referred members to the following matters mentioned in the draft minutes:

- Assessment criteria for appointment of Audit Chair and induction list for new Committee members arising from the self-evaluation review
- The presentation of schools' risk management registers
- The progress being made in prompt payment of invoices
- The overall satisfactory outcome of the Internal Audit reviews during 09/10
- The Internal Audit plan for 10/11 appearing to be comprehensive and well focussed
- The preliminary review of the accounts for 09/10 with opportunity for External Audit to make comment at this stage.

It was proposed by Prof Monds seconded by Mr McBride and agreed to adopt the draft minutes of the Committee including

- approval of the criteria for the appointment of the Committee Chair and the induction check-list for new Committee members
- approval of the Internal Audit plan for 2010/11.

[Mr McMahon left the meeting at the conclusion of the above item.]

19.6 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

1. The Chair regretted that, due to the tight time scale for returns, he had not been able to meet members individually to discuss their annual assessment.

2. The Chair reported that the Secretary had received a request from DEL seeking advice on the position of the staff member elected by the academic staff in 2007 to the Governing Body who had not yet taken up his position on the Board but now wished to do so. It was proposed by Mr McBride seconded by Dame Geraldine Keegan and agreed that the Governing Body had no objection to DEL appointing the person concerned to the Governing Body.

Action: Secretary to contact DEL asap to convey decision of GB on appointment of staff member.

19.7 PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (Ref: paper GB19.7)

The Principal referred members to the issues outlined in the paper. In addition he tabled on update on 2010/11 enrolments. Compared with the previous year these showed a 10% rise in full-time enrolments and a 20% rise in part-time enrolments. The number of evening enrolments remained constant.

The Principal reported that the outcome of the survey of any damage to the new build on Strand Road following the bomb incident in August had not yet been finalised.

19.8 RESTRUCTURING OF ACADEMIC PROVISION (Ref: paper GB19.8 tabled)

The Principal reminded members of the paper on restructuring which had been considered at the meeting in June. He reported that, having consulted on the options

agreed at the meeting, he had received a total of 10 responses which he detailed to members as per the tabled paper. As a result the Directorate were recommending that the second of the two options be implemented. In the discussion which followed, comments by members included:

- the need to ensure that, in restructuring schools, quality of provision was maintained
- the preferred option appeared to provide a more even distribution of College FLUs across the schools
- measures should be taken to reduce the effects of any potential redundancies.

It was then proposed by Mr O'Connor seconded by Prof Monds and agreed to approve the recommendation made by the Directorate.

19.9 SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

The Secretary thanked members for returning their updates on contact details, register of interests and training suggestions. He asked that any outstanding returns be with him as soon as possible.

19.10 CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair mentioned that he had received a letter from the local branch Chair of UCU regarding the restructuring of academic provision. He pointed out that the Principal had already dealt with the issues it raised under item 19.8.

19.11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. The Principal advised members that he had suspended a member of staff.
2. A member suggested that, in the present economic climate, it may be appropriate to discontinue the provision of an annual Christmas lunch for members.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 24 November 2010 at 5.00pm at Limavady Campus.

This being all the business the Chair closed the meeting at 7.30pm.

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____