



SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)

held on Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 17:00, in Meeting Room D Floor, Lisburn Campus and via Microsoft Teams Videoconference

1. Chairs Business

a) Attendance and apologies

Present: Mr Ken Webb (Principal), Mr John Nugent (Chair of the Governing Body), Mr John Mackell, Mr Darren Stewart, Mrs Deborah O’Hare, Mr Samuel Hagen, Ms Sophie Leigh-Francis, Mrs Carolyn King, Mr Alan McCrum, Ms Majella Corrigan, Mr Derek Wilson, Mr Andrew Corbett, Dr Daniel McConnell, Mr Michael McQuillan

In attendance: Mrs Heather McKee (Director of Strategic Planning, Quality & Support, Mrs Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Mrs Joanna Walsh Marketing Manager) Item 4 only, Mrs Paul Walsh (Head of Learner Welfare) Item 5 only, Mrs Ciara O’Neill (Boardroom Apprentice)

Apologies: Ms Wilma Fee, Mr Mark Huddleston

In the Chair: Mrs O’Hare

b) Declarations of Conflict of Interests

The following conflict were declared:

- Mrs O’Hare advised she is employed by The Board of Governors of the Wallace High School (a NDPB) as Principal. The sponsor department for funding and development work and other applications is DENI supported by or delegated to the EA as appropriate. She is also currently a member of the College Advisory Group (Education) CAFRE DAERA CAFRE offers level 2 to level 6 + qualifications and a member of The NI Skills Council.

- Ms Corrigan declared she is employed by CCMS whose sponsor department is DENI. She is a current member of the Governing Body of Stranmillis College.

No action was taken in relation to any of the declared conflicts.

c) Minutes of Education Committee meeting, held on 20th June 2023

The committee reviewed the minutes from the meeting held on 20th June and agreed they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting. The minutes were agreed on the proposal of Alan McCrum and seconded by Derek Wilson.

2) Matters Arising

Members noted there were no matters arising or action points from the previous meetings.

3) Correspondence

The Chair advised there was no recent correspondence to consider.

4) Marketing Update

At this juncture the Head of Marketing joined the meeting.

On the invitation of the Chair, the Marketing Manager presented a detailed overview of the work of the department. She set out the objectives of the team, proposed plans for 23/24 and some of the methods used to increase the marketing presence of the College and drive applications to the College

The Chair thanked the Marketing Manager for a very comprehensive presentation and invited questions from the committee. The Chair of the Governing Body began by commended the team on the recent graduation event, he noted that it was a fantastic event for the College, and he had been particularly impressed with the way the costs were managed by including brand ambassadors. The Marketing Manager thanked the Chair and advised she wants to build on the Excellence Awards and to introduce sponsorship for local businesses as it is such an important event to recognise the work of the SERC community.

In response to a question on the current budget, the Principal advised that the marketing budget has been reduced year on year. The Marketing manager emphasized the importance of driving traffic to

social media and the relationships with the media in order to maximise the College's exposure for little expense.

Finally, the Marketing Manager advised the Sector is working with Brown O'Connor communications on all communications relating to industrial action to ensure that the message is consistent.

At this juncture the Marketing Manager left the meeting.

5) Learning Support

At this juncture the Head of Learner Welfare, Mr McQuillan and the Student Governor joined the meeting.

The Head of Learner Welfare presented a comprehensive overview of the work within the College to support students with additional needs which ensures the College meets its statutory obligations. He provided members with information on what types of support is available, how it is funded and the current levels of demand for the service.

The Chair thanked the HoLW for the presentation and advised the Governing Body are aware of the reduction in income to support the service and the challenges the team are facing in increased demands for the services, she then invited the committee members for comments and questions.

In response to a question on the funding application the HoLW advised that once it gets approval it can come through very quickly, however it is a lengthy process in applying for it which is why staff encourage students to identify needs they may have early on in the academic year.

Mr McCrum noted the challenges facing the team particularly the range of the disability profile being presented each year and he asked if the team have the sufficient skills in place to support the full range. The HoLW advised that the team are very well equipped to deal with the range of disabilities however it is challenging to keep on top of training. An additional question was asked if there is support in place for the staff in terms of their own welfare as this is a very challenging area to work in. The HoLW advised the College runs a lot of staff wellbeing courses and initiatives through Mind Yourself, staff development days in August and most valuable is the support they have amongst themselves. He advised that if a class has a majority of students with additional needs a support worker is placed in the class to support the teaching staff.

At his juncture the HoLW left the meeting.

6) Strategy 2030

The Director of SPQS advised the draft document had been circulated and she highlighted that it had been amended to reflect the range of comments made by members on values and cultures.

Additional narrative was also made on green technology, cross border partnerships and further commentary to enhance the priorities.

Agreed: The revised Strategy 2030 was approved on the proposal of Carolyn King and seconded by John Mackell.

7) College Development Plan

a) College Development Plan Progress Report

The Director of SPQS asked members to note the progress report that sets out the figures on the ERC until the end of July. She advised that work is near completion on the new CDP template and will be presented to the Principals group this week for review. She highlighted the Department has zero tolerance for variations in the current template and so there are red ratings in this report that do not have significant numbers of increase/decrease.

B) Applications and Enrolments

The Principal talked to the written report and highlighted at this point in the year enrolment figures take a while to settle but currently there is an overall increase of 8% and FE number have increased by 15%. While this is very positive and encouraging members were advised that an increase in FE enrolments does not generate additional funding and so this presents financial challenges. He noted that if the trend continues the Department need to fully understand the pressures the College will face. The Chair enquired if there was anything the Governing Body can do to assist the CMT with the Department on this matter.

The Principal advised that a consolidated budget is needed for the sector and highlighted the different funding streams, takes up so much internal resource to process. He asked that the Governing Body support engagement with the Department to request the Department gives consideration to a consolidated budget and for individual students as grant in aid is simply not an efficient way to run the Colleges. The Chair highlighted that with the delivery model review this is an opportune time to review funding models and highlight the current inefficiencies around the current funding streams.

8) Higher Education/Further Education

Members noted that the next HERB meeting was scheduled for October.

9) Items for Information

a) Engagement Update Report

The Director of SPQS talked to the written report and highlighted how pulling together a focussed staff team has enabled the College to be much more strategic in their engagement over the last 9 months. She provided members with an update on the work currently going on and advised the College has developed meaningful relationships across the community and voluntary sectors.

Responding to a query around the crèche in Newcastle the Director advised that the College has been unable to roll out to the other campuses as there is no funder for the project, however, the College are currently advising the Department on the model as it has been so impactful in helping people back into education.

b) Update on Funded Programmes

Members noted the enclosed report that provides an outline of current grant funded projects which support the work of the college alongside the mainstream delivery.

Director advised the College has received over £700k in small grants in the last 3 years that has contributed to engagement and marketing activities. Members noted that the more work that can be done in partnership with other organisations would further enhance engagement and project the message out that the College is an excellent pathway.

10) Policies for review

a) Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Policy

b) Student Performance, Behaviour and Disciplinary Management Policy

The Director of SPQS advised both policies had been reviewed. As there were no substantive changes, the policies were for noting.

11) Any other business

At this juncture the Chair of the Committee advised it was the student governor's last meeting and thanked her for her contribution to the Governing Body. Members echoed the comments of the Chair and wished Ms Francis well for the future.

No other business was discussed, and the Chair closed the meeting at 6.35pm.