SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Education, Quality & Performance Committee**
held on Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 5.00 pm
via Microsoft Teams

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PRESENT:	Mr Peter Archdale
	Ms Siobhan Breen
	Mrs Deborah Brown
	Mr Colin Lewis (Interim Chief Executive)
	Mrs Margaret Martin
	Miss Caitlyn McLoughlin
	Mrs Joanne Moore (Committee Chair)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
	Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
	Mr Ciaran McManus, Assistant Chief Executive (Industry Partnerships & Centres for Excellence)
	Mr Padraig McNamee, Head of Faculty (Automotive, Computing & Engineering) (*Item 6.0 only*)
	Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body
APOLOGIES:	Mr Michael McGuckin
	Mr Mark Sterrit, Boardroom Apprentice

1.0   PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Mrs Moore opened the meeting by welcoming all present. She extended a particular welcome to Miss McLoughlin, Student Governor, to her first meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee.

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mr McGuckin and Mr Sterritt.

2.0   CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

3.0   MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03   Minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 20 October 2021.

There were no matters arising.

4.0 **KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01   List of Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.02   Key Strategic Issues Management Update
- Paper 04.03   Review of FE Delivery Model.

Mr Lewis referenced the management update on the Committee's key strategic issues provided in paper 04.02 and advised that a comprehensive report on the matters within had been provided at the 17 November 2021 Governing Body meeting. He proceeded to provide further updates by exception.

4.1 **Covid-19 Recovery & Resilience**

Mr Lewis alerted the meeting to the most recent guidance from the NI Executive to work from home where possible. He explained that this had been discussed at a Principals' Group meeting and an agreement reached that the current delivery model and open day plans would continue unless a change in this guidance is issued by the NI Executive.

In response to questions from members, Dr Cush reminded the meeting of the robust Covid-19 mitigations in place on campuses, of the range of delivery models in operation depending on course requirements and of the flexibility offered to accommodate individual staff circumstances.

4.2 **Lost Learning Initiative**

Mr Lewis confirmed that additional support to the value of circa £1 million is being provided to students, funded through DfE's 'Lost Learning Initiative', and detailed the specific interventions in place. He reported on the positive feedback received from students to date, commented on the need for further IT support for students, and explained that close monitoring of the impact of the interventions is being undertaken by the Quality Unit. At the suggestion of a member, and at the agreement of Miss McLoughlin, Mr Lewis undertook to establish a link between the Quality Manager and Miss McLoughlin in order to enable further feedback on students' views on the effectiveness of the interventions to be provided.

In response to a comment on the possibility of mainstreaming the interventions, Mr Lewis explained that the funding is ringfenced for the 2021/22 financial year and that an analysis will be undertaken of the affordability of continuing the support.

4.3 **Review of FE Delivery Model**

With reference to paper 04.03, Mr Lewis spoke of the commencement of the review of the FE delivery model, commissioned by DfE, which will inform options for a new delivery model.

5.0 **MANAGEMENT REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05   Management Report
- Paper 05.01   Further Education Centre for Excellence Implementation Plan Progress Report
- Paper 05.02   Higher Education Centre for Excellence Implementation Plan Progress Report
- Paper 05.03   Work Based Learning Centre for Excellence Implementation Plan Progress Report

- Paper 05.04   Digital Learning Centre for Excellence Implementation Plan Progress Report
  Paper 05.05   Social Inclusion, Community Learning & Development Centre for Excellence Implementation Plan Progress Report
- Paper 05.06   Safeguarding Report
- Paper 05.07   Marketing Strategy Progress Report
- Paper 05.08   Report on Externally Funded Projects
- Paper 05.09   Digital Elevation Strategy 2021 - 2024
- Paper 05.09b   Digital Elevation Strategy 2021 – 2024 Implementation Plan
- Paper 05.10   Industry Support Strategy: Skills for Industrial Transition
- Paper 05.11   Learning, Teaching and Assessment Action Plan
- Paper 05.12   Higher Education Admissions, Admission Appeals and RPL Policy
- Paper 05.13   Higher Education Internal Moderation Policy
- Paper 05.14   Higher Education Feedback on Assessment Policy
- Paper 05.15   Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policy
- Paper 05.16   Learning Resource Centre Policy
- Paper 05.17   Anti-Bullying Policy for Students
- Paper 05.18   Student Attendance Policy
- Paper 05.19   Quality Assurance & Improvement Policy.

5.1   Further Education

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 05.01

Mr McManus commented on the declining enrolments to further education provision across the sector and went on to identify DfE's '10x Economy' strategy and emerging skills strategy as the key documents influencing the College's future provision. He advised that these strategies have informed the College's new Industry Support Strategy, in paper 05.10, as well as the College's draft development priorities, listed in paper 05, which have been mapped to faculties and schools.

5.2   Higher Education

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 05.02

Mr McManus reported a decline in enrolments to full-time higher education provision and explained that this has been offset by an increase in enrolments to Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) provision. He explained that enrolments to Engineering related provision account for over 50% of all HLA enrolments and attributed this achievement to the strength of the College's curriculum and industry partnerships. He also informed the meeting of the forthcoming introduction of a level 4 Certificate in Healthcare Practice course, which he described as a key development.

5.3   Work Based Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.03

Referring to the Committee's prior request for further information on the College's relationship with MEGA, Mr McManus provided an overview of the initiatives delivered in conjunction with MEGA including apprenticeships, welding academies, work experience programmes and upskilling opportunities through the Flexible Skills Fund such as the workplace mentorship programme.

In response to a question from a member on the Internet of Things, Mr McManus explained that new and emerging technologies are embedded within the 10x Economy strategy.

5.4   **Digital Learning**

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Paper 05.04

Mr McManus reported on the digital skills support provided to students. He commented on the digital poverty experienced by students and on the consequent high demand for the Laptop Loan Scheme, adding that 300 further laptops have been procured to ensure that all laptop requests are fulfilled.

5.5   **Social Inclusion, Community Learning and Development**

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Paper 05.05

Mr McManus confirmed the receipt of funding from the UK Community Renewal Fund for the Rural Economic Accelerator Programme and commented on the alignment of this project with the College's sustainability commitments.

It was noted that the UK Community Renewal Fund is a pilot for the Shared Prosperity Fund which is expected to succeed the current European Social Fund. In response to a query on the correlation between the Rural Economic Accelerator Programme and the College's ESF funded social inclusion programmes, Mr McManus explained that the Rural Economic Accelerator Programme has three strands relating to sustainable skills, sustainable business and sustainable employment in line with the wider scope of the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund. He spoke of the importance of differentiating the application to the UK Community Renewal Fund from current provision and provided assurances that future applications will focus on social inclusion to protect the strong foundation created through previous and current social inclusion programmes.

In response to a question on the resources required to apply for and deliver funded projects, Mr McManus then explained that external support has been procured to assist with bid writing and that funding is made available to recruit additional staff to manage and deliver such projects.

5.6   **Internationalisation (Curriculum)**

Ref: Management Report Section 8.0

Mr McManus spoke of the success of the College's participation in the COP26 conference in generating interest in the Erne Campus. Dr Cush added that an evaluation of the associated outcomes for the College will be prepared for presentation to the Governing Body at its January 2022 meeting.

5.7   **Engineering & Manufacturing Hub**

Ref: Management Report Section 9.0

Mr McManus reported that positive verbal feedback had been received from the ETI following its evaluation of the Engineering Hub and went on to list the strengths and areas for development identified.

5.8 Safeguarding

Ref: Management Report Section 10.0 and Paper 05.06

Mr McManus reported that eight referrals had been received by the College's Safeguarding Assistants in October 2021. He drew attention to the case studies provided on issues relating to self-harm and fear of isolation and apprised the Committee of the provision of professional supervision for the safeguarding team to support them in managing their response to safeguarding incidents.

5.9 Policy Reviews

Ref: Management Report Sections 12.3 & 13.0 and Papers 05.09, 05.09b, 05.12, 05.13, 05.14, 05.15, 05.16, 05.17, 05.18 & 05.19

Mr McManus undertook to correct an error identified in the Quality Assurance & Improvement Policy.

AGREED: that the following strategy and policies be recommended to the Governing Body for approval:

- **Digital Strategy 2021 – 2024**
- **Higher Education Admissions, Admission Appeals and RPL Policy**
- **Higher Education Internal Moderation Policy**
- **Higher Education Feedback on Assessment Policy**
- **Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policy**
- **Learning Resource Centre Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy for Students**
- **Student Attendance Policy**
- **Quality Assurance & Improvement Policy.**

Members commented on the large quantity of policies for review and requested that consideration be given to balancing the policy reviews over the five committee meetings of the academic year.

5.10 Other

Ref: Management Report Sections 6.0, 7.0, 11.0, 12.1, 12.2, 12.4 & 12.5 and Papers 05.07, 05.08, 05.10 & 05.11

The updates and additional information provided in the Management Report and associated papers on Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Economic Engagement, Annual Development Plan Implementation, Marketing, Externally Funded Projects, the Industry Support Strategy and the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Plan were referenced.

Mr Lewis withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

6.0 REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANS OF THE AUTOMOTIVE, COMPUTING AND ENGINEERING FACULTY

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06   Performance & Strategic Plans of the Automotive, Computing and Engineering Faculty.

Mr Padraig McNamee, Head of Faculty (Automotive, Computing and Engineering), joined the meeting for this item.

With reference to paper 06, Mr McNamee began his presentation by listing the medium and long term objectives for his faculty. He detailed the projects and initiatives in place to deliver on these objectives and explained how performance will be measured. He referenced the update provided on the staffing strategy, curriculum developments and system infrastructure and presented a comparison of enrolments in the current and prior years.

In response to a question on enrolments to STEM courses from females and adult returners, Mr McNamee explained that the College's HLA and part-time higher education offer caters well to adult returners and spoke of the difficulty in recruiting females to STEM subjects in significant numbers, despite the implementation of a range of initiatives in the past. He went on to comment on the perception of careers in engineering generally and on the need to raise awareness of the range of opportunities available with a view to increasing enrolments generally. He apprised the meeting of the target to double enrolments to engineering courses in three years and undertook to keep the Committee informed of progress.

In response to a question on the challenges faced by his faculty, Mr McNamee apprised the meeting of the ongoing challenge in recruiting staff to particular curricular areas.

Mr McNamee withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

7.0   ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

The Committee Chair acknowledged Mr Archdale and Mrs Martin's last attendance at a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee due to the end of their term of office on 31 December 2021. She spoke of the experience and expertise brought by them to discussions and thanked them for their contribution to the Committee during their tenure as governors. Mrs Martin reflected on her time serving on the Committee and thanked management and staff for their unswerving commitment to the young people of the region.

The Committee Chair reflected on the conversation held on the recruitment of females and adult returners to STEM courses and suggested that related SMART goals are defined in the Marketing Strategy. A discussion then ensued on the need to include staff in the development of solutions to issues such as that relating to the recruitment of females, following which Ms Breen and Mrs Brown undertook to consult with staff on how the Committee may most effectively listen to the staff voice on issues relevant to the Committee and to feedback on this matter at the January 2022 committee meeting.

8.0   REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

▪ Paper 08   Outstanding Actions.

Following a review of outstanding actions, it was agreed to retain the action relating to a meeting with MEGA and that all other actions may be closed.

A revised list of outstanding actions is provided in Appendix A.

9.0 <u>**REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING**</u>

No comments were made under this heading.

Ms Breen, Mrs Brown and Miss McLoughlin withdrew from the meeting at this juncture (6:50 pm) and the meeting went into confidential session.

CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 JANUARY 2022.

CHAIRMAN   _____   **DATE** _____

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

#	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	20/10/2021	6.0	Dr Cush to arrange a high level strategic meeting with MEGA and the Colleges Senior Management team
2	24/11/2021	4.2	Mr Lewis to establish a link between the Quality Manager and Miss McLoughlin in order to enable further feedback on students' views on the effectiveness of the lost learning interventions to be provided.
3	24/11/2021	7.0	Ms Breen and Mrs Brown undertook to consult with staff on how the Committee may most effectively listen to the staff voice on issues relevant to the Committee and to feedback on this matter at the January 2022 committee meeting.