

## SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**  
held on Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 9.00 am  
via Microsoft Teams

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**PRESENT:** Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)  
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey  
Mrs Gillian McDowell (Committee Chair)  
Mrs Monica McGeary  
Mr Michael Skuce

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body  
Mrs Eimear Rushe, Head of Human Resources  
Mr Ciaran McManus, Assistance Chief Executive (Industry Partnerships and Centres for Excellence) (*Item 7.0 only*)

**APOLOGIES:** Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body

### **1.0 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Dr O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body.

### **2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

### **3.0 SAFEGUARDING**

No safeguarding matters were raised.

### **4.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04 Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 3 February 2021.

There were no matters arising.

### **5.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 05.02 Key Strategic Issues Management Update.

### **5.1 Covid-19 Recovery & Resilience**

Referring to paper 05.02, Mr McAlister outlined statistics on Covid-19 diagnoses in the College community as well as in relevant local government districts. He advised that the Framework for the Safe Resumption of Onsite Activity has been updated and that communications are provided to staff and students on a regular basis. He explained that return to onsite learning is now urgently required in order to carry out the practical demonstrations and assessments necessary to facilitate student achievement and noted that a date for this return is awaited from DfE.

### **5.2 Centre for People and Workforce Development**

Mr McAlister advised that the College of the Future Report for Northern Ireland has been published. He went on to provide an overview of the five recommendations made in the report and to detail the two options listed under the recommendation to establish a single coherent college structure.

Members then discussed the two options proposed. The importance of protecting provision for the local population and other college stakeholders was highlighted; the College's good position in terms of its lean management structure was noted; and the need for sectoral cost savings was acknowledged. Members also commented on the College's ability to respond to local needs and expressed concern that additional bureaucracy may stymie the College's agility in servicing the local community in this manner.

### **5.3 Review of College Management Structure**

It was noted that an update on the ongoing review of the College's culture and structure would be provided later in the meeting.

### **5.4 Collaborations (including Shared Services)**

With reference to paper 05.02, Mr McAlister reminded the meeting of the background to the Systems, Technology & Services (STS) Project and provided an update on its progress. He reported that some slippage to the original programme had occurred resulting in an extension to the timeline, that the project remains within budget, that additional resource has been allocated to support the Teaching and Learning module and that the Gateway 5 Review has been scheduled for Autumn 2021. He concluded by noting that a common set of systems will be in use by the sector upon completion of the project.

### **5.5 Impact and Resourcing of New Initiatives**

**Traineeships** – Mr McAlister reminded members of the planned launch of the Traineeships Programme in September 2021. He provided an overview of the content and benefits of the level 2 traineeship qualification and quantified the enrolments anticipated. He also reported on the tailored training programme to be delivered to the staff involved in delivering the qualification.

**Erne Campus** - Mr McAlister reported on the resourcing recommendations arising from the Gateway 4 Review of the Erne Campus Development.

## **5.6 Staff Retention and Recruitment**

In relation to the Transform to Deliver Business Case, Mr McAlister advised that colleges could offer a pay award of 7% over four years to lecturers from within existing budget cover and that funding had been requested from DfE to enhance this offer.

## **6.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Management Report
- Paper 06.01 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report
- Paper 06.02 Wellbeing Pulse Survey – Summary
- Paper 06.03 Wellbeing Pulse Survey – Action Plan
- Paper 06.04 Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing
- Paper 06.05 Equality Update
- Paper 06.06 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 06.07 Fixed-Term Contracts Report
- Paper 06.08 Digital Strategy 2021 – 2024 Consultation Document
- Paper 06.09 SWC Case Study
- Paper 06.10 Section 75 Non-Compliance Complaints Policy
- Paper 06.11 Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy
- Paper 06.12 Workforce Development Policy
- Paper 06.13 Support Staff Grievance Procedure.

## **6.1 Health, Safety & Wellbeing**

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Papers 06.01, 06.02, 06.03 & 06.04*

Mrs Rushe referenced the statistics on Covid-19 diagnoses reported earlier in the meeting; informed the Committee of the development of a Mandatory Wearing of Face Coverings Procedure, in which the process for applying for an exemption to the face covering edict is outlined; noted the College's participation in a one-minute silence as part of the National Day of Reflection in memory of those who died as a result of Covid-19; and reported good attendance at Return to Campus briefings to prepare staff for resumption of onsite activity.

Mrs Rushe then drew attention to the summary of responses received to the Wellbeing Pulse Survey undertaken in February 2021 as well as to the associated action plan and commented on the reported anxieties related to return to campus. She also referred to the workshops delivered on emotional wellbeing for individuals and teams.

## **6.2 Equality**

*Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 06.05*

Mrs Rushe referenced the update provided in paper 06.05 and highlighted a recent focus on ensuring that college policies align with accessibility guidelines.

### 6.3 Human Resources

#### 6.3.1 Appointments

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.06*

Referencing the proposed staff appointments listed in the Staff Resource Report, Mrs Rushe outlined the process undertaken in the appointment of Associate Lecturers.

**AGREED: that the appointments listed in paper 06.06 be ratified by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body.**

#### 6.3.2 Staff Requests

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.06*

With reference to the Staff Resource Report, Mrs Rushe highlighted the request for a BIM & Asset Management Co-ordinator and a part-time Engineering Centre Development Lead. She explained that the former has been recommended by the Erne Gateway Review Team and the Erne Project Board and that the latter is part of a business case for funding for an Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Centre of Excellence through the Mid South West Growth Deal. In response to questions from members, Mr McAlister detailed the duties and responsibilities associated with the BIM & Asset Management Co-ordinator post.

In addition to the staff requests listed in the report, Mrs Rushe sought approval to recruit to a new 'Assessor & Trainer' role within the Industrial Training Facility as well as an Associate Lecturer in Business Management, should the current postholder's Career Break request be approved.

**AGREED: that the staff requests listed in paper 06.06 and those noted above be approved by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body.**

#### 6.3.3 Resignations

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.06*

Mrs Rushe reported on the reasons given by each of the three staff members that have tendered their resignation. In response to a question from a member, it was noted that it would be prudent to defer discussions on the Head of Business Development post until conclusion of the Culture and Structure Review and that an extension request to the cover arrangements currently in place has been made in the Fixed Terms Contracts Report.

#### 6.3.4 Death in Service

Mrs Rushe informed the Committee of the death of Mr Colin McCormick, a long serving member of staff based in the Enniskillen Campus. Members conveyed their sorrow at this sad news.

#### 6.3.5 Other Resourcing Issues

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.06*

At the request of a member, the meeting was advised of the proposed arrangements for the permanent secondment of a member of SWC staff to the sectoral Collaboration Officer post. It was noted that the secondment of the Assistant Chief Executive (Learner Experience & Digital Transformation) will be discussed in confidential session.

**AGREED: that the recommendations made in this section of the Staff Resource Report be noted / supported as appropriate.**

#### 6.3.6 Fixed Term Contracts

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.07*

Mrs Rushe clarified that a contract extension until July 2021 is proposed for the Hair & Beauty Therapy Technician.

**AGREED: that the fixed term contracts proposals detailed paper 06.07 be ratified by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body.**

### 7.0 RESOURCE PLANNING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CENTRES FOR EXCELLENCE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Resource Planning and Workforce Development in the Centres for Excellence.

***Mr Ciaran McManus, Assistant Chief Executive (Industry Partnerships and Centres for Excellence), joined the meeting for this item.***

In presenting his report on resource planning and workforce development in the Centres for Excellence, Mr McManus began by outlining the resourcing challenges encountered including the management of remote working, the return to campus process, preparations for the introduction of traineeships and the insecurity of social inclusion funding. He commented on the mitigations in place as well as on the associated opportunities presented.

Mr McManus went on to advise the meeting of collaborations with internal and external partners and highlight the outcomes arising including a refreshed curriculum offer, the provision of real-time data to inform decision making, additional apprenticeship pathways and the provision of an Industrial Training Facility in Cookstown.

Mr McManus concluded his presentation by reporting on the workforce development priorities for the Centres for Excellence noting plans for staff upskilling in data analytics, the Education Business System (EBS) and sustainability practices as well as for the further enhancement of digital skills. He also commented on the introduction of public sector and all-age apprenticeships and on the increasing recognition of the role of mentoring.

In response to a query from a member on potential displacement due to the introduction of Degree Apprenticeships by another Higher Education Institution, Mr McManus spoke of his confidence in the College's provision and assured the Committee that DfE had been apprised of the College's concerns regarding entry requirements. In response to a further question, he also confirmed his satisfaction with resourcing levels and staff training opportunities and outlined the background to his request for a new Trainer & Assessor role in the Industrial Training Facility to provide practical and mentoring support to Welding Academy participants.

*Mr McManus was thanked for his presentation and withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.*

## **8.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT (CONTINUED)**

### **8.1 Human Resources (Continued)**

#### **8.1.1 Annual Part-Time Lecturer Register 2021/22**

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.2*

Members noted the timeline presented for the recruitment of staff to the Part-Time Lecturer Register.

#### **8.1.2 Performance Management**

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.3*

It was noted that statistics on sickness absences are unavailable at present due to a sector-wide technical issue and that a comprehensive update will be provided to the Committee at its June 2021 meeting.

#### **8.1.3 Appraisals**

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.4*

Mrs Rushe explained that approximately 50% of support staff appraisals have been undertaken and commented on the difficulty in undertaking classroom observations in a remote learning context.

## **8.2 Workforce Development**

*Ref: Management Report Section 4.0*

Mrs Rushe advised the meeting of the success of two recent online staff development days and commented on her support for the retention of an online delivery methodology in such training going forward. She also referenced the ongoing consultation on the 2021-2024 Digital Strategy, the case study on Effective Online Learning and forthcoming Recruitment and Selection Training.

## **8.3 Policy Reviews**

*Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Papers 06.10, 06.11, 06.12 & 06.13*

Mrs Rushe outlined the amendments proposed to the Section 75 Non-Compliance Complaints Policy, the Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy and the Workforce Development Policy. With reference to the Support Staff Grievance Procedure, she explained that a comprehensive review had been undertaken in consultation with management, staff and trade unions. In response to a question from a member on staff training in the management of grievances, Mrs Rushe explained that training for managers has been scheduled on Managing Grievances Effectively and Managing Workplace Investigations.

At the suggestion of a member, Mrs McCauley undertook to liaise with the Risk & Compliance Officer to request that a workflow summary be appended to policies where appropriate.

**AGREED: that the Section 75 Non-Compliance Complaints Policy, the Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy and the Workforce Development Policy be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.**

#### **8.4 Other**

##### **8.4.1 UCU Lecturers' Strike and Action Short of Strike**

*Ref: Management Report Section 6.1*

Mrs Rushe advised that a number of lecturers had participated in a one-day strike in March 2021 as part of the ongoing pay dispute and have been taking action short of strike in the intervening period. Mr McAlister referred to his earlier report on the maximum offer available from colleges from within existing budgets and of the request for an enhancement from DfE.

##### **8.4.2 Payroll**

*Ref: Management Report Section 6.2*

Mrs Rushe confirmed that recovery of the payroll system had been prioritized following an IT incident ensuring no disruption to March 2021 payroll processing. In response to questions from members Mr McAlister, supported by Dr Cush, provided a high level overview of the IT incident and the subsequent actions taken, advising that limited information can be disclosed at this stage under the terms of the College's cyber insurance policy. The Committee was provided with assurances that remote learning had not been impacted and was informed that the early detection and appropriate response by the IT team had mitigated the damage caused.

***The meeting went into confidential session at this juncture.***

#### **9.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

No further business was raised.

#### **10.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 12 Outstanding Actions.

At the suggestion of the Committee Chair, it was agreed that the presentation from the Raising a Concern Champion be deferred until the 2021/22 academic year to allow time for the presentation of the report on the review of the College's culture and structure at the June 2021 committee meeting. In acknowledgement of the importance of the presentation of the report of the review of the College's culture and structure, it was also suggested that the June 2021 meeting be held in the Dungannon campus if restrictions allow.

A list of outstanding actions is provided in Appendix A.

**AGREED: that the presentation from the Raising a Concern Champion be deferred until the 2021/22 academic year.**

**11.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING**

No comments were made on the proceedings of the meeting.

*The meeting concluded at 11:50 am.*

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY  
5 MAY 2021**

**CHAIRMAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_



**SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>
03/02/2021	6.3.1	Raising a Concern Champion to be invited to a forthcoming meeting to update the Committee on her work.
14/04/2021	10.0	Presentation from the Raising a Concern Champion deferred until the 2021/22 academic year.
14/04/2021	8.3	Mrs McCauley to liaise with the Risk & Compliance Officer to request that a workflow summary be appended to policies where appropriate.