

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Education, Quality & Performance Committee**
held on Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 5.05 pm
via Microsoft Teams

- PRESENT:**
- Mr Peter Archdale
 - Ms Siobhan Breen
 - Mrs Deborah Brown
 - Mrs Margaret Martin
 - Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
 - Mr Michael McGuckin
 - 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)
 - Ms Carol Viney, Head of Faculty (Professional & Social Services) *(Item 6.0 only)*
- APOLOGIES:**
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body

1.0 APOLOGIES

An apology was 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 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 24 March 2021.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.02 Key Strategic Issues Management Update.

4.1 Covid-19 Recovery & Resilience

Mr McAlister advised that colleges have moved to Stage 4 of the NI Executive's Pathway out of Restrictions following DfE confirmation which allows increased face-to-face teaching and the resumption of extra-curricular, inter-college and sports activities.

He reported that five new Covid-19 diagnoses had been confirmed in the College community in April 2021 bringing the total since September 2020 to 140.

He explained that a number of staff and students are participating in a self-administered Lateral Flow Device testing pilot on a voluntary basis with results being reported to the NHS through the UK government portal and that preparations are being made to commence an on-campus assisted testing pilot.

4.2 The Student

Mr McAlister made the Committee aware of the challenges encountered in finalizing assessment arrangements with Awarding Organisations noting in particular the potential disadvantage faced by NI students due to the longer lockdown and shorter academic year compared with other UK nations.

He then informed the meeting of the proposals of local universities to make unconditional offers to students before receipt of examination results and commented on the negative impact of this proposal on the HE in FE sector. He also noted the launch of a website to refer students unsuccessful in gaining their first choice place at QUB or UU to opportunities available at FE colleges.

Members welcomed the launch of the website noted above for its potential to address the significant outflow of NI students to GB universities.

4.3 The Quality of Teaching and Learning

Mr McAlister confirmed the approval of the College's Centre Assessment Policy by the CCEA.

He then reminded the meeting of the development and implementation of Curriculum Hubs throughout the sector and advised that ETI have been commissioned by DfE to independently review all hubs. He commented on the short notice initially provided in relation to the inspection and on his confidence in a good outcome.

In response to queries from members, the Committee was made aware of the benefits to students across the sector arising from the consolidation of expertise in engineering curriculum development and was updated on the continuing collaborations with industry and regional stakeholders to seek funding for the Engineering Skills & Innovation Centre through the Mid South West Growth Deal.

4.4 Curriculum

Mr McAlister provided an overview of the purpose, membership and progress of the HE in FE Review Stakeholder Advisory Group. He listed the work strands being undertaken and advised that the final report is scheduled to be available in April 2022.

4.5 Safeguarding

Mr McAlister reported that five referrals to college Safeguarding Assistants had been received during March and April 2021 and that 92 students had received support from Learning Mentors in the same period. He confirmed that no referrals to Social Services had been required. He also commented on the safeguarding issues to be considered with respect to remote working and learning.

Members then reflected on the Committee's key strategic issues noting that some had become operationalized. A discussion ensued on emerging strategic matters as well as on the internal channels through which such matters are identified and considered. It was

agreed that a review of the Committee's key strategic issues be undertaken during the October 2021 meeting informed by management insight into emerging issues.

AGREED: that an insight into emerging strategic issues be provided by management at the October 2021 committee meeting to inform a discussion on the Committee's Key Strategic Issues.

5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01 Centres for Excellence Report
- Paper 05.02 Safeguarding Report
- Paper 05.03 CDP Update
- Paper 05.04 Report on Externally Funded Projects
- Paper 05.05 Annual Student Engagement Report
- Paper 05.06 Student Charter
- Paper 05.07a Draft Digital Strategy 2021-24
- Paper 05.07b Draft Digital Strategy 2021-24 Action Plan
- Paper 05.08 Sub Regional Skills Barometer West
- Paper 05.09 Full-Time Courses Information Document
- Paper 05.10 SWC Response to Peace Plus Consultation
- Paper 05.11 Engineering Skills Innovation Centre Concept Paper
- Paper 05.12 NIHE Proposal
- Paper 05.13 Queen's Anniversary Prize Application
- Paper 05.14 Careers Information, Advice & Guidance Policy
- Paper 05.15 Personal Tutoring & Academic Support Policy
- Paper 05.16 Policy for Students with Caring Responsibilities
- Paper 05.17 Marketing Strategy 2021-24.

5.1 Higher Education

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 05.01

Mr McManus reported the successful validation of the Open University Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) in Professional Practice and Management in Culinary Arts and advised that assessment for validation of the proposed Open University Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) in Hair & Beauty Management will take place later in the week. In relation to the former, it was noted that no such provision currently exists on the island of Ireland and that significant interest may therefore develop from ROI students.

Mr McManus also reported on DfE approval of a BEng (Hons) in Engineering as well as HLAs in Cyber Security, ACCA (Accountancy) Applied Skills, Advanced Technician in Engineering (Maintenance) and Advanced Technician in Engineering (Advanced Manufacturing). It was noted that the HLAs in Engineering provide a complete pathway for engineering within the College and that the HLA in ACCA Applied Skills provides accountancy training from levels one to seven.

Mr McManus quantified the number of applications to 2021/22 HE programmes to date noting the congruence with application numbers at the same point last year.

He added that applications for Chief Executive's Scholarships are now open and that, in recognition of the opening of the Erne Campus located in the Devenish Electoral Ward, three scholarships have been ring-fenced for students from this area.

5.2 Further Education

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Papers 05.01 & 05.08

With reference to the Committee's request for an analysis of the alignment of the College's FE provision with the regional skills barometer, Mr McManus referred to the UU Report on the Future Skills Needs of the Mid Ulster and Fermanagh and Omagh Council Districts in paper 05.08 as well as to the table in page 3 of the Management Report listing the relative projected growth of each area of college provision. It was noted that the College is well placed to deliver skills in the areas predicted to have increased job opportunities in the forthcoming years.

Mr McManus went on to make the Committee aware of developments in cascading learning from InnoTech Centre industry projects to FE Engineering and Construction students as well as of the number of applications received for 2021/22 FE programmes, noting the rise in applications from the same point last year.

In response to a comment on the preparations required to achieve the Carbon Zero 2050 target, the College's plans for the expansion of curriculum in construction retrofitting and zero emission vehicles was outlined.

5.3 Work Based Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.01

Mr McManus confirmed the relocation of Welding Academy provision to the new Industrial Training Facility in Cookstown. He explained that two Welding Academies have been held in the current academic year with funding committed from DfE for a further seven in 2021/22. In response to a query on resourcing of the facility, Mr McManus confirmed the appointment of a Trainer and the ongoing recruitment exercise for a Technical Mentor.

He also highlighted the College's receipt of the SME Partnership Award in conjunction with Taxi Bus Conversions in the Apprentice of the Year Awards and acknowledged the three South West College apprentices shortlisted in other award categories.

5.4 Digital Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Papers 05.01, 05.07a & 05.07b

Mr McManus drew attention to the draft Digital Strategy 2021-24 noting that the strategic objectives and actions within had been developed following extensive consultation using the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Digital Elevation Model as a tool to guide engagement.

5.5 Social Inclusion

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Papers 05.01 & 05.10

Mr McManus referenced the College's response to the consultation exercise on the Peace Plus Programme, adding that it is hoped to build on the success of the Peace IV funded Youthscape Programme. He went on to inform the Committee of the Welding Academy delivered for participants of the SUSE+ Programme as well as of the nomination of the programme for an OCN NI Learning Endeavour Award in the Advancing Learning through Innovation category.

5.6 Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 6.0

Mr McManus explained that Internal Assessment Panel meetings are ongoing to conclude the Teacher Assessed Grading process.

5.7 Economic Engagement

Ref: Management Report Section 7.0 and Paper 05.11

Mr McManus referenced the earlier discussion on the proposed Engineering Skills & Innovation Centre and noted that the proposal had been co-designed with industry.

He confirmed that circa £500k has been committed by DfE for delivery of the Skills Focus and InnovateUs programmes in 2021/22 and advised that the STEM Centre will evolve to support Project Based Learning in the Traineeship Programme and Level 3 FE provision as a result of a review of the services provided by the Centre.

5.8 Safeguarding

Ref: Management Report Section 11.0 and Paper 05.02

Mr McManus referred to the report on safeguarding provided earlier in the meeting and commented in the invaluable support provided by Learning Mentors as well as on the focus on student wellness.

5.9 Policies

Ref: Management Report Section 14.0

AGREED: that the FE Personal Tutoring & Academic Support Policy, the Policy for Students with Caring Responsibilities and the Careers Education, Information & Guidance Policy be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

5.10 Other Business

Ref: Management Report Section 8.0, 9.0, 10.0, 12.0, 13.0 & 15.0 and Papers 05.03, 05.04, 05.05, 05.06, 05.09, 05.12, 05.13 & 05.17

The updates provided in the Management Report and associated papers on the following were taken as read and noted by the Committee:

- Internationalisation (Curriculum);
- the Engineering & Manufacturing Hub;
- the Erne Project;
- the Update on the Implementation of the 2020/21 Annual Development Plan;
- the Update on the Implementation of the 2018-21 College Development Plan;
- Externally Funded Projects;
- the Annual Student Engagement and Support Service Report;
- the Student Charter;
- the Full Time Course Listing 2021/22;
- the NI Housing Executive Collaboration Proposal;
- the Queen's Anniversary Prize Application; and
- the Marketing Strategy 2021-24.

6.0 REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANS OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES FACULTY

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Performance & Strategic Plans of the Professional & Social Sciences Faculty.

Ms Carol Viney, Head of Faculty (Professional & Social Sciences), joined the meeting for this item.

Ms Viney began her report by referencing the structure chart of her faculty and advising that more lecturers are employed within compared with last year due to the delivery of additional courses. She listed the new degree and HLA courses validated or awaiting validation since last year and detailed developments in proposed further provision. She also informed the meeting of the introduction of Traineeships and Project Based Learning.

Ms Viney went on to present statistics on staff deployment, register marking, student attendance and retention and to provide an analysis of enrolments, identifying Part-Time FE as having the largest proportion of enrolments and noting that 28 students are currently pursuing HLAs within the faculty. She commented on the challenges presented by campus closures particularly in the areas of Special Educational Needs, Hairdressing, Beauty and Catering.

Regarding Industry Engagement, Ms Viney reported that Industry Advisory Boards are in place for each curriculum area and that industry needs and corresponding curriculum demand is identified through these fora. She also updated the meeting on faculty delivery of Skills Focus training, representation on external agencies and professional bodies, and engagement with health trusts and local councils.

In response to questions from members, the meeting was then made aware of the role and composition of Industry Advisory Boards as well as of the factors influencing decisions on the delivery location of courses and of the increasing irrelevance of location due to the expertise developed in remote curriculum delivery.

Ms Viney withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

7.0 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S PERFORMANCE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Partially Completed Review of Committee's Performance in 2020/21.

With reference to paper 07, it was noted that the review had been partially completed by the Secretary to the Governing Body where a factual response was available. She then sought members' views on the self-assessment with the resulting review attached as Appendix A.

8.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2021/22

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 Schedule of Meetings 2021/22.

AGREED: acceptance of the proposed schedule of Education, Quality & Performance Committee meetings for 2021/22.

9.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Mrs Moore commended management and staff for meeting the extraordinary challenges faced by the College in 2020/21 and thanked members for embracing the new online meeting format.

Mr McAlister commented on the Committee’s close monitoring of the College’s operations and thanked Mrs Moore for chairing the Committee through a difficult year. He also expressed his appreciation for the support provided to management by the committees.

10.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10 Outstanding Actions.

It was noted that both outstanding items had been actioned. One item has been added as a result of discussions held during the meeting and is listed in Appendix B.

11.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Members conveyed their satisfaction with the proceedings of the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7:00 pm.

CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021

CHAIRMAN _____ **DATE** _____

**REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE OF EDUCATION, QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
2020/21**

		Yes	No	Comments
Terms of Reference				
1	Does the Education, Quality and Performance Committee have written terms of reference?	✓		
2	Were the terms of reference reviewed by the Committee and approved by the Governing Body?	✓		Reviewed by the Committee in October 2020 and approved by the GB in November 2020.
3	Has the Committee complied with the provisions of its terms of reference in its proceedings throughout the year?	✓		
Programme of Business				
4	Did the Committee agree a programme of business for the academic year?	✓		Agreed by the Committee at its October 2020 meeting.
5	Did the Committee cover all business listed in the programme of business?		✓	Presentation of 2021/22 Annual Development Plan deferred until September 2021 due to new DfE submission timeline.
6	Have all actions identified by the committee been satisfactorily delivered?	✓		
7	Is there any business that members feel do not need to be covered next year?		✓	
8	Is there any additional business that members feel should be included next year?		✓	
Skills, Knowledge and Competences of Members				
9	Does the appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and competences exist within the Committee to perform most effectively?	✓		It was noted that committee membership is likely to change in the next academic year.
Governing Body Key Performance Indicators				
10	Did attendance levels at Committee meetings average at least 65%?	✓		100% attendance at all meetings.
11	Did Committee meetings generally last no more than two hours?		✓	Average two hours 15 mins.

Additional Comments	
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12	It was suggested that updates on Further Education are reported in advance of updates on Higher Education.
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SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

#	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	26/05/2021	4.5	Management to provide an insight into emerging strategic issues to inform a discussion on the Committee's Key Strategic Issues.