

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 9.00 am
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT: Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
Mrs Gillian McDowell (Committee Chair)
Mrs Monica McGeary
Mr Michael Skuce (*Items 1.0 to 10.0 only*)

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
Mrs Joanne Lucas, Risk & Compliance Officer (*Item 10.0 only*)
Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
Ms Jacqueline McElhill, Raising a Concern Champion (*Item 10.0 only*)
Mr Pdraig McNamee, Head of Faculty (Automotive, Computing & Engineering) (*Item 9.0 only*)
Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body
Mrs Eimear Rushe, Head of Human Resources

1.0 PRELIMINARIES

The Committee Chair, Mrs McDowell, acknowledged Mr McAlister's last attendance at a Staffing Committee meeting and wished him a long and happy retirement on behalf of the Committee.

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 9 June 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

Members were advised that 94 staff and 136 learners had reported positive Covid-19 diagnoses since September 2020 and that the recent spike reflects the high case numbers in the region. The DfE guidance on mitigation measures was referenced as was the need for a review of delivery arrangements in late October 2021.

5.2 Centre for People and Workforce Development

It was noted that updates on the Centre for People and Workforce Development would be provided through the Management Report.

5.3 Review of College Management Structure

It was noted that the review of the College's management structure will be covered by the Committee Chair in due course.

5.4 Collaborations (including Shared Services)

Mr McAlister advised that a number of issues have been encountered with the EBS platform sectorally and that work is ongoing to find resolutions. In response to questions from members, he explained the rationale for consolidating the Training and FE / HE management systems and commented on the potential impacts on income of the issues encountered with EBS.

5.5 Impact and Resourcing of New Initiatives

Mr McAlister referenced the update provided in paper 05.01.

5.6 Staff Retention and Recruitment

Mr McAlister reported that negotiations with trade unions on lecturers' terms and conditions have stalled. He added that an options paper has been developed and that meetings with the Economy Minister have been scheduled.

6.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Management Report
- Paper 06.01 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report
- Paper 06.02 Equality Update
- Paper 06.03 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 06.04 Fixed-Term Contracts Report
- Paper 06.05 Summer Report
- Paper 06.06 2020/21 Sickness Absence Report
- Paper 06.07 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Paper 06.08 Dignity at Work Policy.

6.1 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

6.1.1 Health & Safety Update

Ref: Management Report Section 1.1 and Paper 06.01

The update provided in paper 06.01 was noted by the Committee.

6.1.2 Covid-19

Ref: Management Report Section 1.2

Mrs Rushe referenced the update provided on Covid-19 earlier in the meeting. She then reported on the vaccination clinics hosted by the College and on the distribution of Lateral Flow Device testing kits to staff and students.

6.1.3 Health & Wellbeing

Ref: Management Report Section 1.3

Mrs Rushe commented on the demand from staff for the SWC Flu Vaccination Programme due to be delivered on campuses in October 2021.

6.2 Equality

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 06.02

Mrs Rushe referenced the equality update provided in paper 06.02 and highlighted the review undertaken of the Dignity at Work Policy.

6.3 Human Resources

6.3.1 Appointments

Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.03

AGREED: that the appointments listed in paper 06.03 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 06.03

In addition to the proposed recruitment listed in paper 06.03, Mrs Rushe sought approval for expressions of interest for Skill Champions to support students in the SkillBuild competition as well as two Teaching & Learning Advisors, noting that the former is funded by SkillBuild. In response to a query regarding the request to recruit a Lecturer in Computing on a permanent basis, Mrs Rushe provided assurance on the sustainability of the post.

AGREED: that the staff requests listed in paper 06.03 and those noted above be approved by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body.

6.3.3 Resignations / Retirements

Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.03

The resignations and retirements listed in paper 06.03 were noted by the Committee.

In response to a query referencing the resignation of the Renewable Engine Programme Manager, it was noted that funding for this programme ends in January 2022 and that sufficient resourcing is in place to enable its continuation until this time.

6.3.4 Other Resourcing Issues

Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.03

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

6.3.5 Fixed Term Contracts

Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.04

Mrs Rushe highlighted the recommendations for transition to permanent contracts for a number of staff and added that these recommendations align with the discussion held at the June 2021 committee meeting on staff retention.

AGREED: that the fixed term contracts proposals detailed paper 06.04 be ratified by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body.

6.3.6 Summer Approvals

Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.05

Members noted the Summer Report detailing the appointments, staff requests, resignations, retirements, fixed term contract recommendations and other issues ratified by the Chief Executive under the authority delegated to him over the Summer period.

6.3.7 Performance Management

Ref: Management Report Section 3.2 and Paper 06.06

Mrs Rushe highlighted the average sickness absence rate of 2.64% in 2020/21 and commented on this good performance. She also undertook to forward the sector statistics to the Committee when available.

6.4 Workforce Development

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0

Mrs Rushe referenced the update provided in the Management Report on workforce development, highlighting the CIT and PGCE training being undertaken by 23 staff.

6.5 Policy Reviews

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Papers 06.07 & 06.08

Mrs Rushe outlined the amendments proposed to the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy and the Dignity at Work Policy.

AGREED: that the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy and the Dignity at Work Policy be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

7.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF STAFFING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Staffing Committee Terms of Reference
- Paper 09.02 Amendments to Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

The Secretary to the Governing Body drew attention to the amendment proposed to the Staffing Committee's Terms of Reference to reflect the Committee's role in ensuring that workforce planning and staff development are undertaken to meet changing workforce requirements.

AGREED: that the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference be recommended to the Governing Body for adoption.

8.0 PROGRAMME OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS 2021/22

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

Paper 10 Programme of Staffing Committee Business 2021/22.

It was noted that the Programme of Business presented may be updated as the year progresses to incorporate emerging issues.

AGREED: acceptance of the proposed programme.

The meeting went into confidential session at this juncture.

9.0 RESOURCE PLANNING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AUTOMOTIVE, COMPUTING & ENGINEERING FACULTY

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Resource Planning and Workforce Development in the Automotive, Computing & Engineering Faculty.

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

Mr McNamee began by referencing the sectoral challenges encountered in recruiting staff to particular curricular areas. By way of mitigations, he proposed that pay increments are awarded for industrial experience, that overtime is permitted for full-time and associate lecturers, that a teaching academy is established to train college graduates to become lecturers, and that teaching secondments are offered to international partners. He acknowledged the potential barriers to the above proposals but highlighted the need to strive to recruit staff of a high calibre.

Mr McNamee then commented on the distractions of marketing and administrative tasks and on the need for academic staff to refocus the skills development and experience of students. He also referred to the review of Code of Conduct for students and proposed that a similar review is undertaken in relation to the behaviours expected of staff.

Members welcomed Mr McNamee's focus on the skills development and experience of students and commented on the value that industrial experience brings to lecturers in the FE sector.

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

The risk associated with Mr McNamee's proposal for academic staff to focus on the curriculum only was highlighted by a member and assurance was sought on the implications of this approach. Mr McAlister commented on the collegiate effort required in student recruitment across the College and Dr Cush undertook to raise the matter with the management team.

10.0 PRESENTATION FROM THE RAISING A CONCERN CHAMPION

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 Work in Confidence.

Mrs Joanne Lucas, Risk & Compliance Officer, and Ms Jacqueline McElhill, Raising a Concern Champion, joined the meeting for this item.

With reference to the presentation in paper 08, Mrs Lucas began by providing an overview of the Raising a Concern framework within the College including the development of a Raising a Concern Policy and the appointment of a Raising a Concern Champion. She went on to advise that the framework has been supplemented by the provision of the 'Work in Confidence' platform which allows staff to anonymously raise a concern through an electronic device. Mrs Lucas proceeded to take the Committee through the functions of the Work In Confidence platform as well as the plans to continue to raise awareness of this facility amongst staff.

A discussion then followed during which suggestions for amendments to the Raising a Concern Policy were made; further details of the operation of the Work In Confidence platform was provided; the importance of the Raising a Concern Champion and the independence of the role was highlighted; the team meeting structure was identified as the primary tool for capturing and addressing issues at an early stage; and it was suggested that Trade Unions are apprised of the key elements of the Raising a Concern framework. Mrs Lucas undertook to incorporate members' suggestions into the Raising a Concern Policy at the next review and to provide update reports on the impact of the Work In Confidence platform to the Audit & Risk Committee.

Mrs Lucas and Ms McElhill were thanked for their presentation and withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

Confidential session resumed at this juncture.

11.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Mrs McDowell took the opportunity to wish Mr McAlister well in his retirement on behalf of the Committee.

12.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 12 Outstanding Actions.

It was noted that the item listed in paper 12 had been actioned.

13.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Members commented on the Committee Chair's effective management of the agenda.

The meeting concluded at 11:25 am.

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
17 NOVEMBER 2021**

CHAIRMAN



DATE 17/11/2021

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
29/09/2021	6.3.7	Mrs Rushe to provide sectoral sickness absence statistics to the Committee when available.