

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of an Online meeting of the **Education, Quality & Performance Committee**
held on Wednesday 20 May 2020 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT:

- Mr Peter Archdale
- Ms Siobhan Breen
- Mr Zack El Marif
- Mrs Joanne Lucas
- Mr Michael McAlister, Chief Executive
- Mr Michael McGuckin
- Mrs Joanne Moore, Committee Chair
- Mrs Carol Viney (*Item 7.0 only*)

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mr Ciaran McManus, Assistant Chief Executive Industry Partnerships & Centres for Excellence
- Ms Claire O'Donnell, Secretary to the Governing Body
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel (GB Chair)

PRELIMINARIES

At the outset the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting would be recorded for minute taking purposes and that this recording would be deleted once the minutes had been agreed.

She acknowledged that the last meeting was suspended due to Covid-19 and expressed her appreciation to Mr McManus for uploading papers for this. She noted that the January meeting was a very positive one and expressed her appreciation to the Chief Executive and Mr McManus for their reports and the detail they had provided here. She also thanked Dr Cush for taking on board all the points members had raised in relation to the Disciplinary Policy. This meeting had focused on digital learning she advised, and she again extended her appreciation to the Management Team for their foresight in this matter particularly as remote learning was now critical.

The Chief Executive advised that a massive range of meetings were being carried out daily and assured members that staff were rising to the new challenges and that further detail would be provided in the course of meeting. He added that the infrastructure was in place and that it was now a case of managing these challenges. In doing so he acknowledged the huge effort of all staff adding that the main focus at this point in time was to get to the end of June. In taking this on board, the Chair advised that she intended to keep the meeting on schedule as far as possible.

1.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded from Mrs Margaret Martin.

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 22 January 2020.

NOTED.

4.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04 Management Update on Key Strategic Issues

4.1 The Student

The Chief Executive advised that the delivery of the majority of courses had been strong. In the current climate, he advised, staff were working to finalise assessments. He spoke of a number of remote learning guides which had prepared and were being used by students. In terms of recruitment activity, he spoke of two large campaigns. Webinars had taken place for HE provision the previous week and had went really well he reported. He also reported the potential for new HE courses in 2020/21. In terms of apprenticeship recruitment and furloughing, the Chief Executive advised that approximately 52% of students had been furloughed and a further 4.5% had been made redundant, although he noted that Mr McManus would update further on this later in the meeting. He also reported a new bursary for Level 6 programmes.

4.2 The Quality of Teaching and Learning

The Chief Executive advised that staff had been very engaged in learning new skills and techniques which had put some pressure on them but he acknowledged that expertise had developed hugely. He advised that the Quality Unit had been looking very closely at survey tools to ensure that the College got good quality remote learning feedback which they could be responsive to.

The Chief Executive further reported that ETI Inspection feedback had been very positive. He explained that the report was not yet available as two colleges did not manage to get through the process because of lockdown.

4.3 Curriculum

4.3.1 Higher Education

The Chief Executive advised that DfE had delayed submission of the College Development Plan to 30 June 2020. DfE had subsequently advised that they would retract the Commissioning Memo and issue a slimmed down version of this which would try to take account of the potential for recruiting and delivery.

The Chief Executive advised that a Covid-19 Recovery Team had been set up looking at the practicalities of setting up again. He also reported that the Department was setting up an oversight and governance group with representatives from the six colleges and also private training organisations.

4.3.2 Further Education

The key point on the key strategic issues update the Chief Executive advised was that Quality Assurance Manager was leading on the development of college procedures for internal assessment and grade calculation. This, he explained, would be fundamental to whether or not students could progress and was proving very difficult. He advised that things were very challenging with the regulator who had aligned again with OFCOL which would mean guidelines for vocational qualifications would likely arrive late which was putting huge pressure on staff.

4.3.3 Future Curriculum

The Chief Executive advised that the College had gained approval to progress with the new Open University programme validations which would hopefully be in place for September 2020.

4.4 Safeguarding

The Chief Executive advised that the safeguarding team had developed comprehensive guidance document for staff and students and that the College was encouraging staff to keep very alert at the present time. A top priority for the College at the moment he advised was trying to make sure students are as safe as they possibly could be.

In response to earlier comments about CCEA aligning to OFCOL, Mr Archdale then queried the impact for students. In response the Chief Executive advised that students had done a lot of good work to date which would be validated and would help to calculate a grade for those students. However, he explained that it was not clear what the awarding organisations would accept for those students sitting in the middle. In explaining, he advised that a lot of good work had been done for essential skills students. Looking at Btech students he advised the situation would be fairly similar to A level students. The third group were vocational students where the evidence was not as clean cut. He advised that there were strong calls for clarity on this issue at the moment. Mr Archdale suggested that the College should try to highlight the impact a failure to decide would have on students.

Mr McGuckin pointed out the College Development Plan included a fair degree of estimate each year in terms of recruitment and noted that this estimate would be more challenging this year. He also queried how the 43,000 households targeted in week commencing 11 May were identified. In response Mr McManus explained that this was by postcode, with Dr Cush advising that there had been a slight delay in the postal system. In response to a further query from Mr McGuckin, the Chief Executive clarified that the new HE bursaries would be targeted at South West College students.

5.0 ANNUAL MARKETING PLAN UPDATE

The Chief Executive again advised that the College Develop Plan had been postponed to June 2020, adding that, in partnership with the Department, they were now proposing that this would be pushed back even further. This was due to the uncertainty around the position around September enrolments and the uncertainty around return. The Department's advisory oversight group would take this forward, preparing for a phased safe return. He reported a lack of clarity around this but noted that there would be one representative per college plus a principal sitting on this group. He advised that terms of reference for the group had just been circulated, but that the group had not yet met and the timeframe for the work had yet to be detailed. He noted the intricate link between the College's Annual Development Plan and Marketing Plan.

The Chief Executive again advised that the Department had agreed to a slimmed down version of the College Development Plan in these special circumstances. He explained some of the variables in this, adding that clarification would be needed on these before the College could produce a Development Plan. He also noted that the Marketing Manager had moved on, and that as the new postholder was currently on maternity leave, the College were now in the process of appointing a temporary manager to cover the maternity.

The Chief Executive also noted that the sector had developed high level principles to plan for the coming year which would feed into the marketing strategy. He explained that in the current circumstances, a marketing strategy would need to be built off a clean slate. He also noted that the College was continuing to work through a range of strands and streams with the Department to get to the intake for September. He therefore explained that the Marketing Strategy was unlikely to be in place for June.

The Chair then queried the impact of reduced student numbers sectorally as, she explained, schools and colleges would not be required to reduce student numbers. The Chief Executive advised that this had been raised with the Department and that the high level principles to inform the planning going forward was to give the Department a sense of what colleges could deal with. He outlined a transformed model of delivery for the incoming year, noting that a lot of planning yet had to be done.

Mr Archdale then commented that the Marketing Strategy was a fundamental document, setting out what the College had to offer and the needs of business as the College perceived them which could be reviewed as things became clearer. The Chief Executive advised that the Department was still working through a lot of the issues but gave assurance that College marketing activity to date had been effective. Mr McManus added that he would provide further detail on this later in the meeting.

The Chair then queried through Mr El Marif if he felt the class sizes were fine at the moment. In response Mr El Marif advised that he was content with the current arrangement but added that the new model may make it difficult for first year students to get the bedrock of their studies.

6.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Management Report
- Paper 06.01 CfE Higher Education Report
- Paper 06.02 Higher Education Supplement
- Paper 06.03 CfE FE Report
- Paper 06.04 CfE Work based learning Report
- Paper 06.05 CfE Digital Learning Report
- Paper 06.06 Guidelines to Deliver and Record Online Lessons and Meetings Safely
- Paper 06.07 CfE Social Inclusion Report
- Paper 06.08 Teaching and Learning Report
- Paper 06.09 Internal Assessment Process
- Paper 06.10 Business Development Update
- Paper 06.11 ERASMUS+ KA2 Application Summary
- Paper 06.12 Engineering Hub Report
- Paper 06.13 SMART Region Concept Paper
- Paper 06.14 Safeguarding Update
- Paper 06.15 COVID-19 Safeguarding Guidance for Staff and Students
- Paper 06.16 Report on Externally Funded Programmes as at 30 April 2020
- Paper 6.17 Student Engagement and Support Service Annual Report
- Paper 06.18 Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy
- Paper 06.19 Policy Review: Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy
- Paper 06.20 FE Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy
- Paper 06.21 Policy Review: FE Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy

Mr McManus took the Committee through the key elements of the Management Report focusing on the following papers and issues in particular.

At the outset he explained that the last committee meeting had taken place in January and while work had been completed for the April meeting, this meeting was suspended due to Covid-19. He advised however that an update was provided at the Extraordinary Governing Body Meeting in April 2020.

Mr McManus the explained that current work was focused on the continuation of remote delivery, work to find a fair and equitable processes for awarding grades and a renewed focus on recruitment in the new circumstances.

6.1 Higher Education

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Papers 06.01 & 06.02

Mr McManus outlined a three phased approach in relation to higher education. The Centres for Excellence and curriculum staff were very heavily involved in closing out the year and agreeing contingency methodologies to ensure students received qualifications he explained. He advised that this was working very well. He also advised that staff were very heavily involved in increasing products, with validations to commence remotely on 11 June and finish on 30 June. This work he advised would hopefully result in the validation of six new foundation degrees for the College. Mr McManus explained that there was a significant

amount of work ongoing here and he complimented all Centre for Excellence staff and staff across the faculties for their input.

Mr McManus further advised that the Higher Education at Home Strategy was rolled out week commencing 11 May 2020. He explained that Covid-19 would represent a significant challenge to the College but would also present an opportunity for students and their parents. He outlined a potential blended model which would differentiate the College from universities. He further advised that an Innovation Support Network had been established to overhaul the marketing strategy and drive innovation and outlined some of the initiatives which had resulted out of this. He advised that the strategy was currently at the end of phase 1. As a result, Mr McManus reported that the College had 1,500 new visitors to social media platforms and during the week of HE at Home. He added that they had registration details for those who took part and this would be passed to a keep warm telemarketing team for follow up.

6.2 Further Education

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 06.03

Mr McManus explained that he had included some content from the March 2020 papers for information. He outlined the positive feedback received from the ETI inspection in February 2020, advising in particular that colleges had been asked to work with sectoral partners to continue to influence the strategy for post 16 education across the province and to continue to work on essential skills.

6.3 Work Based Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 06.04

Mr McManus outlined the Aim Further, Stay Connected campaign which was being developed. This campaign moved through a four stage cycle – a landing page on website, podcasts and tick tok videos, launch with a key influencer, and webinars. While Work Based Learning activity remained challenging in the circumstances, he assured members that this campaign would dovetail with the HE at Home Strategy into the keep warm telemarketing campaign.

Mr McManus reported that only 44% of trainees were currently working, although he suggested that more up to date figures would suggest that around one third of apprentices were currently furloughed. He also advised that the traineeship programme had been deferred for one year.

In finishing this section Mr McManus advised that student Colleen O'Boyle had been awarded the Higher Level Apprentice of the Year and that South West College along with Sandvik were runners up in a large employer innovation award.

6.4 Digital Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Papers 06.05 & 06.06

Mr McManus outlined some statistics from 23 March to end of April 2020. He advised that 1,700 requests for assistance (60% from staff, 40% from students) had been received

through the integrated support service. Canvas student engagement had risen from 18,000 to 26,000 as of this week. Similarly, Blackboard Collaborate figures had risen from 28,000 to 34,000. Centre for Excellence Digital Learning staff had provided a key role in supporting this upturn in engagement he advised.

Mr McManus also advised that the Centre for Excellence Manager had led a team which had secured £24k from UFI to deliver the From Online to Frontline programme. He added that an application had also been submitted to the Department for £74k to support online delivery for furloughed and redundant workers.

6.5 Social Inclusion

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Paper 06.07

Mr McManus reported that all 2019/20 social inclusion targets had been achieved. He advised that the standard of care and commitment from staff had been outstanding.

6.6 Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 6.0 and Papers 06.08 & 06.09

Mr McManus advised that the Quality Performance Manager had contributed to the work of the task and finish group to ensure students were not disadvantaged. This group had produced a very comprehensive internal assessment process which was now being used internally. The preparation for the calculation of grades was ongoing he advised and staff were beginning to move into internal assessment panels, before communicating grades to the awarding organisations from 5 June 2020 onwards.

6.7 Economic Engagement

Ref: Management Report Section 7.0 and Paper 06.10

Mr McManus advised that through business development, the third strategic marketing initiative, the collaborative working group came together to develop a fully online fully funded skills focus offer of ILM and ICT provision with 47 enrolments to date. The Connected fund had been secured for 2020/21 he advised and the College were supporting Robotics Industry 4.0 and sustainability. Finally, Mr McManus explained that Innotech were also providing support to the NHS with 1,100 face masks produce and distributed.

6.8 Internationalisation

Ref: Management Report Section 8.0 and Paper 06.11

Mr McManus advised that a mobility programme had been cancelled this year and staff were working to recover expenditure. He also advised that five applications had been submitted to Erasmus+ supporting the curriculum as we emerge from the Covid-19 crisis.

6.9 Engineering and Manufacturing Support Hub

Ref: Management Report Section 9 and Paper 06.12

Mr McManus advised that the Welding Academy finished up just as Covid-19 hit, with ten participants entering employment, and the challenge now would be pick it up again as the companies came back to full productivity.

He also advised that the Get Engineering Event on 8 February 2020 was very powerful and went very well.

6.10 Erne Project

Ref: Management Report Section 10 and Paper 06.13

Mr McManus advised that the Erne Academy was a component of the SMART region economy. Some very original and innovative thinking was emerging from this paper he advised and he outlined just some of these for the Committee.

6.11 Safeguarding

Ref: Management Report Section 11.0 and Papers 06.14 & 06.15

Mr McManus advised that staff were being very proactive as regards safeguarding. Referrals to staff were down but staff were signposting students back to work and safeguarding help available. A new Covid-19 Safeguarding Guidance for staff and students was launched before Easter he advised.

6.12 Update on 2019/20 Annual Development Plan

Ref: Management Report Section 12

Noted.

6.13 Additional Items

6.13.1 Report on Implementation of College Development Plan 2018-21

Ref: Management Report Section 13.1

Referring to the report cards, Mr McManus advised that PT FE was down slightly but assured governors that out of the skills focus offer 17 HE enrolments in ILM had been received to date and the College was confident that this would grow.

6.13.2 Report On Externally Funded Projects as at 30 April 2020

Ref: Management Report Section 13.2 and Paper 6.16

NOTED

6.13.3 Annual Student Engagement and Support Service Report

Ref: Management Report Section 13.3 and Paper 6.17

Mr McManus outlined some very significant work being undertaken with 236 students supported by Learning Mentors and 184 students supported in learning support. He added that the Inspire Hub saw 1,400 engagements with the support available and 200 courses undertaken.

6.14 Policy Reviews

6.14.1 Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

Ref: Management Report Section 14.1 and Papers 6.18 & 06.19

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McGuckin, seconded by Dr O'Shiel, to recommend the policy for approval by the Governing Body.

6.14.2 FE Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy

Ref: Management Report Section 14.2 and Papers 6.20 & 06.21

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McGuckin, seconded by Dr O'Shiel, to recommend the policy for approval by the Governing Body.

Ms Breen praised the support provided by the wraparound services, and in particular she extended high praise to curriculum staff who moved to online delivery very quickly and very effectively. She noted that staff were also undertaking assessment panels while still teaching and marking and many were also involved in validation work. The staff input to the HE at Home event was phenomenal she advised at a time when they were under immense pressure. The Chair echoed this sentiment. The Chair also extended appreciation to Mr McManus and Mrs Shackles. Mr McManus also echoed Ms Breen's sentiments.

Mr McGuckin commended Mr McManus's reports but queried if he could identify any of the issues associated with the changeover to remote delivery. In response, Mr McManus explained that the biggest challenge was fear of the unknown on the part of staff but that everyone was adapting well to the new normal. The Chief Executive endorsed Ms Breen's support for lecturing staff, adding that staff were stepping up, facing untold difficulties and making things work.

7.0 PRESENTATION ON THE PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANS OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES FACULTY

Mrs Carol Viney, Head of Professional and Social Sciences Faculty, joined the meeting for this item.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Performance and Strategic Plans of the Professional and Social Sciences Faculty

Through her presentation, Mrs Viney advised that the Faculty contained 50 full-time lecturers, 30 associate lecturers and 80 part-time lecturers. She also outlined the Faculty's provision including social inclusion, FE full time, WBL and HLA and FE part-time which she noted made up the largest percentage of delivery. The new provision included

BSc Hons Corporate Law and Finance and ILM Level 7. She also outlined other courses under development. She reported staff deployment of 92.92%. Register marking currently stood at 70% which she noted was very good for remote delivery. Student attendance since lockdown was very good at 81.3%. She noted that staff found online delivery quite challenging but were working very hard. Assessments had started in line with awarding organisations. Mrs Viney outlined high retention figures her Faculty before outlining the industry engagement which was being undertaken by staff. Mrs Viney finished by outlining student enterprise activity. Mrs Viney also spoke of innovative initiatives which were planned to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

The Chair and Mr McGuckin congratulated Mrs Viney on a very comprehensive workload and report. The Chief Executive also extended his appreciation to Mrs Viney for all the work she was carrying out.

Mrs Viney was thanked for her presentation and withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

8.0 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S PERFORMANCE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 Partially completed review of Committee's Performance

Members extended appreciation to the Chair for her work throughout the year.

9.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09 Schedule of Meetings

NOTED.

10.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

10.1 ETI Inspection

Mrs Moore extended congratulations to all staff in the College for the excellent results from the recent ETI Inspection. She explained that the ETI Inspector had asked both Mr McGuckin and herself about the level of information governors receive. She extended her appreciation to Dr O'Shiel and to the Management Team for their work to keep all reports strategic, which she noted was something which the Inspector had been keen to see.

10.2 Disciplinary Policy

The Chair noted that the Disciplinary Policy had been deferred to September 2020 in the current circumstances. Dr Cush explained that the document was currently at final draft stage but required more consultation to finalise. She suggested that the document could be

shared informally with the committee once these consultations had concluded and noted that it would then be presented to the Committee for formal approval in September 2020.

10.3 Staff Resilience

Mr Archdale commented that while the College had a lot of support in place for staff, staff were working very hard and holidays were not quite holidays. He sought some assurance that staff resilience was being addressed and in particular, he pointed out that staff could not continue to deliver at the rate they had been in the long term. He suggested that this should be discussed at the June Governing Body Meeting. The Chief Executive advised that this was being discussed and addressed by the Management Team.

In response to further query from Mr Archdale, Dr Cush advised that Celebration of Success events for FE and WBL students would be going ahead virtually in June. Other upcoming events she advised were currently under review.

Dr O'Shiel then added his concern about staff resilience, suggesting that we should communicate with staff to explain that this would be a long term event and that staff should use the summer to take a break, noting that we were not facing a position where people would lose jobs. Mr Archdale suggested that there was a strong case for increased resources to sustain delivery. In response the Chief Executive advised that laptops had been issued but that a bid had been made for more funding for IT. Ms Breen added that a number of managers had undertaken LLP5 training which included a module on time management.

11.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11 List of Outstanding Actions

In relation to the Marketing Strategy, the Chief Executive advised that this would be firmed up in conjunction with the College Development Plan.

In relation to the National Student Survey, Dr Cush confirmed that the College did participate each year. The participation rate this year was 54% she advised and data would be made available from this which would feed back into the curriculum. She noted that the Quality Performance Manager reported these figures to the Committee annually.

It was noted that all other outstanding actions had been progressed where possible. The resultant summary of outstanding actions is attached at Appendix A.

In response to a query from Mr Archdale about the sustainability strategy, Dr Cush advised that work was progressing and the group would meet again in June 2020. Mr Archdale suggested that a short summary paper to include the structure and programme for the Sustainability Strategy should be included in the June 2020 Governing Body agenda.

12.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING

Members conveyed their satisfaction with the proceedings of the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7:13pm.

CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020.

CHAIRMAN _____ **DATE** _____

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
23/10/2019	6.4	Marketing Strategy to be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 25 March 2020
22/01/2020	6.13.5	Disciplinary Policy to be reviewed and presented to the May 2020 Committee meeting
20/05/2020	10.2	Disciplinary Policy to be shared with Committee in final draft format before being presented to Sept 2020 Committee meeting
20/05/2020	11.0	Sustainability Strategy – paper outlining the structure and programme to be presented to the June GB meeting