

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Education, Quality & Performance Committee**
held on Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 5.00 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)
- Miss Clara Jane Whitley

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mr Barry McCarron, Senior Business Development Officer (Item 7.0 only)
- Mr Ciaran McManus, Assistant Chief Executive (Industry Partnerships & Centres for Excellence)
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body
- Mrs Nicola Quinn, Business Development Support Officer (Item 7.0 only)
- Mrs Shirley Patterson, Acting Secretary to the Governing Body
- Mrs Elizabeth Shackels, Quality Assurance Manager (Item 5.0 only)

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Mrs Moore opened the meeting by welcoming all committee members, she thanked the College on behalf of the Committee for their continued work during the difficult circumstances due to the ongoing pandemic. In relation to the letter recently received from Minister Dodds she commented on the excellent leadership from Mr McAlister and noted how nice it is to see recognition for the College. Members supported Mrs Moore's comments and noted appreciation of the letter from the Minister. Mr McAlister thanked members for the comments on behalf of staff. It was then noted that all members were present.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Dr O'Shiel noted his involvement in the regeneration project at Omagh Health Centre as part of his employment with Omagh Enterprise Company.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of 25 November 2020 Education, Quality & Performance Committee Meeting.

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 Management Update on Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.03 College of the Future Article
- Paper 04.04 College of the Future UK Wide Final Report
- Paper 04.05 College of the Future England Report
- Paper 04.06 College of the Future Scotland Report.

4.1 Covid-19 Recovery and Resilience

Mr McAlister reported that 11 staff and 6 learners had been diagnosed with Covid-19 in the 18th December 2020 to 8th January 2021 period. He added that for the first time staff numbers exceed student numbers, and that this may be due to the fact students are currently not on campus and may not be reporting their status to the College. Mr McAlister also reported that all staff and students are now working and learning remotely and have been advised that there will be no access to college campuses over the next period, unless for a purpose which is both exceptional and essential. He further detailed the processes in place for approval to access a campus.

Mr McAlister apprised members that an additional funding allocation of £268k for IT was received from DfE and that this will be spent on items to support remote learning. He further reported on the Colleges' Principals meeting with the Director of FE and apprised members of several additional sums which have been allocated to SWC in the January monitoring round.

In response to members' queries regarding students that do not have access to IT equipment for remote learning, Mr McAlister advised that the recent funding received will be spent on this and that there is a process in place for students to access the LRC for remote learning if required.

4.2 The Student

Mr McAlister informed members of a group of SWC Foundation Degree students that were to take part in the Tri Nations Seminar in Madison Wisconsin, USA. He explained that the students involved paid £800 to cover flights and, due to Covid-19, the trip was cancelled and rescheduled. Students have since contacted the College to say they no longer wish to take part in the seminar due to financial hardship. Mr McAlister explained that the College will refund the students and that it is likely the College will receive a refund from the flight carrier.

Mr McAlister also reported on a query received from an MLA SPAD, explaining that the query related to the number of full-time students at SWC, in particular, the number that are undertaking degree level courses and whether the college provides accommodation for those living away from home.

4.3 The Quality of Teaching and Learning

Mr McAlister commented that Mrs Elizabeth Shackels would be providing a more detailed update on quality later in the meeting. He reported that all examinations were either

cancelled or postponed in January and that the college will be working with awarding organisations to agree appropriate mitigations.

He then made the Committee aware of the upcoming Annual Accountability Review and detailed the curriculum issues that will be discussed at the review as estimated retention, achievement and success rates for 2019/20; progress against outcomes within the Programme for Government; 2020/21 in-year performance; skills interventions; and curriculum hub performance.

Mr McAlister also explained that at the request of Education Minister, Peter Weir, MLA, DE have setup an expert panel on educational underachievement, linked to socio-economic background.

4.4 The Curriculum

Mr McAlister apprised members that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has put in place a Pro-Vice-Chancellors' Briefing for 22 January to share some of the key challenges impacting on the HE and 'HE in FE' Sectors and discuss potential solutions related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr McAlister also reported that as part of the Review of Higher Education a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) has been setup and that he is one of three nominees selected to represent the FE Sector.

He went on to inform the Committee that the formal assessments for CCEA's Occupational Studies have been cancelled and replaced with alternative arrangements. He advised that more information on this will be available in the coming weeks.

Mr McAlister then provided an update on the current situation around Erasmus+ and a summary on the new Turing Funding Scheme. Members commented on their disappointment at the loss of Erasmus+ and noted the opportunities Erasmus+ had brought to college students and staff over the years.

4.5 Safeguarding

Mrs Brown commented on the importance of safeguarding services available within the college, particularly for young people in the current pandemic. She informed members of the online services available and how this is communicated with students and staff. She also apprised members of recent safeguarding training delivered to approximately 60 members of staff. Members thanked Mrs Brown and her colleagues on the diligent work continued in this area. In relation to suicide, members requested a better understanding of how it directly effects the college annually.

4.6 College of the Future

With reference to papers 04.03, 04.04, 04.05 and 04.06 Mr McAlister provided a summary of the UK-wide final report from the independent commission on the College of the Future. He referenced the overarching report for the UK and explained that England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will each have their own nation specific report. Mr McAlister advised that once the Northern Ireland College of the Future Report is available, he will share it at this committee.

5.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 Quality Assurance Presentation
- Paper 05.02 Quality Manager's Report
- Paper 05.03 Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan
- Paper 05.04 FE & WBL Quality Improvement Plan
- Paper 05.05 Report on Enhanced Focus Groups
- Paper 05.06 Revised Quality Improvement Planning Process (2020/21).

Mrs Elizabeth Shackels, Quality Assurance Manager, joined the meeting for this item.

Mrs Shackels began by thanking members for the invitation to present to the Education, Quality and Performance Committee. She drew attention to paper 05.01, a pre-recorded quality assurance presentation, and opened the floor for questions. Mrs Moore thanked Mrs Shackels for her work over the pandemic, particularly in relation to student assessments and noted it had been a major challenge for the College. Mrs Moore continued by asking Mrs Shackels for detail on Essential Skills outcomes and how performance across the three schools is recorded. Mrs Shackels provided a detailed summary of how Essential Skills is delivered across Further Education and Work Based Learning. She then explained how the Quality Unit tracks and monitors students with the aim that every student leaving the college achieves a qualification in Essential Skills in Literacy, Numeracy, and ICT if they do not already have a GCSE in these subjects. Mrs Shackels commented on the benefits of the recent college restructure, explaining that this has provided a blend between Further Education and Work Based Learning for Essential Skills.

In relation to the 2019/20 assessment process, Mrs Martin commented to commend Mrs Shackels and her team, noting that the systems put in place were very robust. Mrs Shackels then provided a summary of the assessment process and explained that this year it will be teacher assessed grading, she explained it will follow four principles and a confirmation of standards.

In response to a query from Miss Whitley regarding universities reducing admissions criteria and the impact this may have on the overall performance of the courses, Mrs Shackels confirmed that South West College have not reduced admission criteria in Higher Education, she explained that this is to maintain academic standards of the college. Ms Breen commented to support Mrs Shackels assertions and noted this is reflected in the retention and achievement data.

Mrs Shackels went on to explain processes in place for the student voice, she detailed the importance of the snatch and grab survey and apprised members that the National Student Survey (NSS) and sector survey on learning and teaching are due in February 2021. In conclusion, Mrs Shackels noted that the quality unit has a triangulated focus on data, quality of learning and teaching and the student voice.

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

6.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Management Report
- Paper 06.01 CfE Management Report
- Paper 06.02 Safeguarding Update
- Paper 06.03 Christmas Social Media Messaging Campaign
- Paper 06.04 FE Recruitment Media Campaign August September 2020
- Paper 06.05 Report on the Destination of Leavers
- Paper 06.06a Student Union Constitution
- Paper 06.06b Summary of Changes
- Paper 06.07 HEAR and Tutorial Policy.

6.1 Higher Education

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 06.01

Mr McManus commented on the challenges in securing placements for the Work Based Learning modules due to the pandemic. He apprised members that the Centre for Excellence staff continue to engage with Higher Education Institutions to secure mitigations, which includes 11 paid internships within the College. He continued his report by updating members on proposals for three new Open University programmes in the areas of Salon Management, Culinary Arts and Youth and Community.

6.2 Further Education

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 06.01

Mr McManus reported on the current Further Education recruitment plans, he informed members that a recruitment stakeholder working group has been set up and preparations are at an advanced stage for the college Open Days. He explained that the recruitment campaign will be approached in two phases. Phase one will include fully online engagement and phase two will be based on campus activities in May if restrictions permit.

6.3 Work Based Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 06.01

Mr McManus commented on the sectoral Apprenticeship Mentoring Programme, and informed members that South West College has direct responsibility for developing the online mentoring module and digitising the content. He reported on the challenges presented with remote learning for work based learning and explained that staff are providing a range of initiatives to support young people. He informed members of funding to support the delivery of skills competitions and the development of additional resources to support asynchronous learning.

6.4 Digital Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Paper 06.01

Mr McManus informed the Committee of a project to consolidate all college data using Power BI. He provided examples of dashboards currently in use and explained how these are used across the college to identify trends.

6.5 Social Inclusion

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Paper 06.01

Mr McManus reported that Steps to Success is scheduled to cease operation in April 2021 and that the successor will be Employability NI. He informed members of two Confucius tutors who are delivering Mandarin provision remotely to several schools.

6.6 Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 6.0

It was noted Excellence in Teaching and Learning was addressed in item 5.

6.7 Economic Engagement

Ref: Management Report Section 7.0

Mr McManus commented on the upskilling and employment opportunities through academies and informed members of additional funding secured to deliver two welding academies.

6.8 Internationalisation (Curriculum)

Ref: Management Report Section 8.0

Noted.

6.9 Engineering and Manufacturing Hub

Ref: Management Report Section 9.0

Noted.

6.10 Erne Project

Ref: Management Report Section 10.0

Noted.

6.11 Safeguarding

Ref: Management Report Section 11.0 and Paper 06.02 and 06.03

Mr McManus drew attention to the Christmas social media messaging campaign and the Wellbeing Wednesday Campaign.

6.12 Update on Implementation of 2020/21 Annual Development Plan/Report Cards

Ref: Management Report Section 12.0

Mr McManus provided a summary update of the report cards.

6.13 Additional Items

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0 and Papers 06.04 and 06.05

Mr McManus provided a summary of paper 06.04, FE Recruitment Media Campaign, and paper 06.05, Report on Destination of Leavers.

6.14 Policy Reviews

Ref: Management Report Section 14.0 and Papers 06.06a, 06.06b and 06.07

AGREED: that the Student Union Constitution and HEAR and Tutorial Policy be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

7.0 PRESENTATION ON THE PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANS OF THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SECTION

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Performance and Strategic Plans of the Business Development Section

Mr Barry McCarron, Senior Business Development Officer, and Mrs Nicola Quinn, Business Development Support Officer, joined the meeting for this item.

Mr McCarron began the presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation to present an update on the Business Development Department. Mr McCarron handed over to Mrs Quinn to provide an update on Skills Focus and Innovate Us. Mrs Quinn apprised members that through the Innovate Us programmes 60 projects have been delivered at a value of £277,600, she noted that the ICT area continues to be busy and that an increasing number of projects have been coming forward in sustainable construction. She then went on to detail that 63% of the skills focus budget has been claimed and that an extra £30k budget was successfully claimed. Mrs Quinn informed the Committee that it is expected the remaining skills focus budget will be spent through online delivery, however, some of the courses need to be delivered onsite.

Mrs Quinn went on to report on the skills intervention academies, she provided an overview on the Future Leaders and Management Academy which started in November 2020, and informed members a second phase with 17 applicants started in January 2021. She also informed members of progress on the Cyber Academy which started in October 2020 and the Future Construction Leaders Academy which is due to start at the end of January.

Mr McCarron continued the Business Development presentation by providing a summary update on Fusion. He drew attention to projects in the area of PassivHaus, with companies MosArt and Span Wright. He also referred to the KTP projects that are ongoing and a number that are under development. Mr McCarron apprised members of a new area of modular construction for the college and noted that the KTP started in January 2021 with Keystone.

In relation to European projects Mr McCarron reported that the College has five new projects, he apprised members that the new projects are: Climate Action in Rural Communities (CARE); 21st Century Students; Social Finance Lab; FASTER Project; and Hyskills. He also informed members that all other European projects are on track and that Microgrids now has a hydrogen aspect.

In relation to the Business Development KPIs for 2019/20, Mr McCarron provided an update to the Committee. He informed members that all KPIs have been overachieved and the total revenue generation was £2.7M.

Members congratulated the Business Development team on their achievements and commented on how the strategic projects have benefited from European funding. In response to queries regarding the future, Mr McCarron advised ongoing planning is in place, he informed members that some of the avenues the College is looking to further explore is Horizon, Peace Plus, Turing Scheme, Innovate UK and international projects. He also commented on the opportunities that will arise in the area of PassivHaus and links to the Erne Campus.

Mr McCarron and Mrs Quinn were thanked for their presentation and withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

8.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

9.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09 List of Outstanding Actions

It was noted that the provision of digital skills training for Governors was achieved. The Erne Campus marketing strategy was presented at the Governing Body meeting and the Marketing strategy will be presented to the next Governing Body meeting in March 2021. Dr Cush advised that a draft paper for Embedding Sustainability in Curriculum will be circulated after the meeting.

A list of outstanding actions is provided in Appendix A.

10.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Discussion took place on the length of the meeting and suggestions were made by members to review the number of items on the agenda and to remind speakers of the time allocation. Mrs Moore agreed to review the agenda with the Secretary to the governing Body.

The meeting ended at 7:35 pm.

CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH 2021.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

#	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	20/01/2020	4.5	Mr McManus to provide a statistical update on safeguarding.
2	20/01/2020	4.6	Review of the Northern Ireland College of the Future Report once it becomes available.