

SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

Governing Body – Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14th June 2016 at 6:00pm in the Bangor Campus.

Item No	Item
1.	<p>Attendance and Apologies</p> <p>Present: Mrs H. Reid, Mr K. Webb, Mrs K. Scott, Ms K. Fraser, Prof A Woodside, Mr S Pollard, Mr Sagar (By Conference Call)</p> <p>Apologies: None</p> <p>In Attendance: Dr M. Malone (Director of Curriculum & Information Services), Mrs E. Bradley (Assistant Head of School, Access to Education), Miss C. McDermott (Acting Secretary to the Governing Body)</p> <p>In the Chair: Mr S. Pollard & Mrs H. Reid (Mrs Reid continued as Chair from 6:46pm)</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and expressed his regret that Ms. Smyth, Secretary of the Governing Body had passed away four weeks ago and passed on his condolences to her family and friends on behalf of the Education Committee.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of conflicts of interest</p> <p>The Chair asked if any member had an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.</p> <p>There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2016</p> <p>The following amendments were agreed by members:</p> <p>Item 4. To replace "where" with "were".</p> <p>Item 6. Minutes state that "Mr Pollard highlighted the tone of the document and his appreciation of the College perspective." Mr Pollard requested for this to be expanded upon and amended to: "Mr Pollard said that, in his opinion the FE strategy reflects an improved approach, responding more clearly to wider external strategies with FE clearly able to demonstrate its engagement with and the impact on these wider strategies. He added that previous strategies have leaned towards the focus on FE, without reflecting the need to respond to the broader context."</p> <p>Item 6. Following the Principal's comment on Data Sharing "Mr Pollard said effective data sharing across the sector is something that has the potential to bring significant benefit and is therefore something that we would wish to encourage management and the Department to pursue."</p> <p>Item 17. Additional comment to be added "Mr Pollard stated that in reflecting on the nature and volume of causes for concern he was concerned to ensure that we as a Board of Governors take adequate and appropriate steps. He noted that whilst the Board had received assurances that the volume and nature were broadly in line with what might be expected; reflecting the extent of these issues elsewhere. He further noted that these are referrals and that it is not necessarily the College's role to address the issues. However, he felt that resilience is an important life skill and wondered if it</p>

	<p>were addressed in much the same way as we address a desire to see students become more entrepreneurial could support to develop resilience have a positive effect</p> <p>With these amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record on the proposal Mrs Scott, seconded by Prof. Woodside.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation for Dr Kelly to attend Governing Body Meeting <p>Members agreed that the invitation to Dr Kelly should be postponed until the new academic year.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>7.1 Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (Get the Edge)</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum & Information Services outlined NI Curriculum Reform and SERC's new partnership with Colleges and the new Department for the Economy to review learning and assessment strategies. He highlighted these strategies as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills attainment - technical, enterprise and employability skills integrated • Project based learning (PBL) • Blended learning • Work based learning • Final end certification <p>The Director of Curriculum & Information Services updated the Committee on the details of the "Get the Edge" fortnight at the start of September 16 and discussed the Project Based Learning Plan 16/17 and the Project Based Learning Mentoring Programme. He updated members further on the Phases of the "Entrepreneur" – Whole Brain Learning" assessment strategy and concluded that a top down whole college approach supported by Senior Management was the most effective. The Director of Curriculum & Information Services said that SERC are now developing an App that will enable staff and students to assess themselves against entrepreneurial success factors and students will be assessed early in the year and progress tracked throughout the year.</p> <p>Mrs Scott said she believed that lecturers tend to be more left brain dominant, so would that raise issues The Director of Curriculum & Information Services said that it is possible to retrain and the Basque Model has achieved this. He noted the learning cycle of "unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence", and said there is a need to unlearn before one can learn the new model.</p> <p>Mrs Scott enquired about the time commitment for lecturers to prepare and plan for new method and if there have been any issues. The Director of Curriculum & Information Services said that they are taking a graduated approach, where some courses are going to adapt to PBL entirely, with Champions in place to mentor this period of change. He added that there are some lecturers who are adjusting at a slower pace.</p> <p>Prof Woodside gave his support entirely for PBL to be incorporated into the curriculum. He added there is known issue with tying in with industry.</p> <p>Ms Fraser agreed that PBL is excellent and asked if there is a risk of losing more passive students with PBL. The Director of Curriculum & Information Services said the groups will be structured and they won't be entirely PBL and furthermore, they will be monitored closely.</p>

	<p>Mr Sagar thanked the Director of Curriculum & Information Services for an impressive presentation.</p> <p>7.2 Adult Returners to Education – Restart Education and University Access</p> <p>Mrs Bradley highlighted that approximately 300 Adult Learners a year enrol on School of Access to Education courses across the campuses and on one out-centre in Poleglass, West Belfast. She added the focus was previously on the QUB accredited Access to University course, but the Restart Education programme was introduced two years ago to cater for those not quite ready for the Access course. Mrs Bradley highlighted some Access Course success stories and noted the positive statistics of both courses in 15/16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Education : 98% Achieved a Level 3 qualification and 94% progressed to HE • Restart Education : 96% achievement at Level 2 <p>Prof Woodside asked if students can do a part time Access course, whilst on benefits.</p> <p>Mrs Bradley informed members that part-time students can do the course and stay on benefits, as the course is 9 hours and the rules state that they can do anything which is marketed as part time, whereas completing the course full time will have an impact on benefits.</p> <p>Mr Sagar thanked Mrs Bradley for a very good presentation and added he would like further information outside the meeting, given the importance of the subject.</p> <p>The Chair of the Education Committee arrived at 6:46pm and thanked Mr Pollard for Chairing the meeting and also thanked Mrs Bradley and the Director of Curriculum & Information Services for their very informative presentations.</p> <p>Mrs Bradley left the meeting at 7:03pm.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There were no items to be taken that are not considered elsewhere on the agenda.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Chairman’s Business:</p> <p>Education Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Chair reminded members that the Education Committee Terms of Reference were reviewed in 2013 and updated and reviewed in 2014 and in 2015. The Chair added that the Committee Chairs met with the Chair of the Governing Body and discussed how Committees and the Governing Body will operate in the future and how they will address strategic issues within the College and reflect and feed into those strategic strands.</p> <p>The Chair stated that no feedback has been received as yet from the Committee and asked for members to send any suggestions for amendments to the Terms of Reference by email, after the Governing Body Meeting on 28th June 16 and before the 15th August 2016.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members to send any comments or suggestions of amendment by email after the Governing Body Meeting on 28th June 16 and before the 15th August 2016.

	<p>Programme of Work 2016/17</p> <p>The Chair thanked members who provided feedback on the Programme of Work 16/17. She updated members of her meeting with the Principal and the Director of Curriculum & Information Services to review the cycle of items covered within the last three years by the Education Committee, for example, the cycle of the Whole College Review and the cycle for the College Development Plan. The Chair said they have produced a suggested Programme of Work for 16/17, which is subject to change and subject to input from Governors. She added it is a flexible document that can be amended to reflect any changes to articles or changes to DFE Strategy.</p> <p>Mrs Scott suggested a presentation from the New Department of the Economy to highlight the changes and how the changes impact the Governing Body. Mr Sagar suggested that with the Principal's support they could circulate a document highlighting the changes in practice. The Principal agreed that a concise document will be uploaded for Governors information to the Governing Body Team Site and Miss McDermott will email notification when this is actioned.</p> <p>Actions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal to upload a document that highlights any changes to the new Department and to note how the changes will impact the Governing Body. • Miss McDermott to notify Governors when this is uploaded.
<p>8.</p>	<p>College Development Plan</p> <p>The Chair thanked members for their feedback on the CDP and stated she received an extensive number of suggestions that were all considered individually. The Chair informed members that it was already agreed that they were moving forward with the existing format and presentation of the Plan, however, a change would be considered in future plans taking into account the suggestions given. She added that the Budget Allocation is likely to be finally confirmed in September 2016.</p> <p>The Principal said that the targets within the Plan have been refined and will be reviewed again in September with the possible opportunity to link in more closely with the Programme for Government. He also noted the two options for the front cover as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students of SERC • The New SPACE building <p>Members discussed and proposed for SERC students to be on the front cover of the CDP.</p> <p>Mr Sagar proposed for the Plan to be reviewed and discussed again by the Governing Body in June and then the Senior Management Team will have opportunity to finalise for September 16 based on the Programme for Government. The chair confirmed that referring back to the Governing Body would be normal practice.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDP to be reviewed again at Governing Body Meeting on 28th June 16. <p>Prof Woodside left the meeting at 7:16</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Curriculum Plan 2016/17</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum & Information Services informed members that they are driving a focus on an increase in Access to University and Restart Programme</p>

	<p>enrolments. He added that bids have been submitted for apprenticeships and higher level apprenticeships.</p> <p>The members gave their support for the 2016-2017 Curriculum Plan and the Chair requested that the Plan is reviewed at the Governing Body meeting in June.</p> <p>The Chair informed the committee that the Staffing Committee held on 13th June had looked at proposals for the next cohort for VES. These proposals will go before the Governing Body on 28th June. The Chair reminded members that the Education Committee had previously monitored the effect of VES on the delivery of the curriculum and proposed that this is monitored again. She added that the Principal has given his assurance that the backfill of VES is required to deliver the curriculum plan that the Education Committee have supported. Members agreed with the Chair's proposal to monitor the impact of VES on the delivery of the curriculum.</p> <p>The Principal highlighted that an updated version of the Curriculum Plan to the next Education Committee in September, after enrolments levels have been determined, and a graphical presentation that illustrates how we are moving up the qualification value chain from Level 2 to Level 3 will accompany the updated Curriculum Plan. The Chair supported this proposal.</p> <p>Mr Pollard said he supported the Curriculum Plan 16/17 and would like to acknowledge the considerable work carried out by senior management and the Department on the Plan. He added that on the basis of the plan presented, the Committee is reassured by the fact that the Department allocates FLUs based on economic priorities. E.g. STEAM. Mr Pollard noted that he would welcome a better understanding of the bases for allocation of FLUs by the Department and a review of the FLU funding model plus rationale on which FLUs are allocated.</p> <p>The Principal said they are currently in discussions with the Department and are proactive towards achieving a more rational approach to FLU allocation. The Director of Curriculum & Information Services added that there is very little negotiation in relation to FLU allocation at present and the bid process no longer applies.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Enrolment Update</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum & Information Services informed the Committee that the Department have suspended any callback of underdelivered FLUs and at this point in the year, the majority of FT withdrawals have been processed with the corresponding reduction in FLUs for both HE and FE. He said that since the last FLU snapshot there will have been further withdrawals in FE, HE and ES as is normal, which will reduce the FLU total. He added that SERC is within 3% of target.</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum & Information Services said the sector will be moving from the existing FLU delivery model to new model and SERC were providing rationale for the Department. He added the Department are encouraging an increase in apprenticeships and youth traineeships and meeting Essential Skills targets remains an issue not just for SERC but the sector as a whole.</p> <p>Mr Pollard noted that it is a challenging and unpredictable environment when given a target to achieve that displays no reality of what the College needs to deliver and Essential Skills was a good example of this.</p> <p>The Principal added that the net overall numbers for full time students in HE, FE, Apprenticeships, TfS and Traineeships at SERC was ahead by 68 students this year over last.</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p>Student Survey Results</p> <p>The Principal informed members that the second full time student survey (Impact Survey) has been carried out. He highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All results reported at School level and actions addressed in QIP • Focus groups were held to gain an insight into Induction Week which was the main concern from First Impressions • Changes to Induction Week will be made, using Project Based Learning and also extending the Induction period from one week to two weeks. <p>The Principal discussed the part-time survey and noted that it is more difficult to get part-time students to complete the survey and a review of that area was necessary to try to uncover ways to improve the response rate. He added that the results have revealed the need to improve part-time student awareness of student services and feedback opportunities which will be incorporated into the Quality Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Ms Fraser noted the satisfaction rate on employability as being lower than others and queried if that could be related to students not recognising what an employability skill is and the Principal agreed that it is a possibility.</p> <p>Mrs Scott enquired in relation to Employability Skills, what was asked relating to work placement and work experience. The Director of Curriculum & Information Services confirmed that the students were asked if they were able to avail of a work placement.</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum & Information Services left the meeting at 7:40pm.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Update on CDP Targets 2015/16</p> <p>The Principal updated members on the CDP targets 2015/16. He noted the Red status target of Business Services, to achieve an income target of £1.4m and confirmed it will not be achieved. He added that there will be various changes within Business Services so that next year the target will be met. He further noted the Amber status target already discussed, to meet the CDP FLU target of 1,308 for HE, 5,218 for FE and 453 for Essential Skills and added that this is marginally below target and will not have any financial impact.</p> <p>Mrs Scott asked if the teaching costs have increased, in relation to Business Services. The Principal said that within Business Services, the College would allow for a certain level of costs to deliver that original target and if they did not the target then the budgeted teaching costs were removed proportionally in line with the under-delivery.</p> <p>Members noted the report</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>DEL Health Check – Issue 2</p> <p>The Principal presented the Health Check to the members of the Education Committee to include financial ratios and the performance against FLU targets based on the January FLU lift, which is for the year end of 31st July 2016.</p> <p>Mr Pollard gave his support for the report noting SERC's positive performance. He noted the concern that the College has suffered a drop in income in the employer engagement, Training for Success and Steps2Success as well as reduced non-EU grant income. Mr Pollard said the report reinforces the need for a strategic response to student enrolments and displays a need for structural change on how the College engages with schools within the wider population and how we relate to the Department.</p> <p>The Principal added that the College needs to move towards a professional and technical qualification route that is clear, progressive and meets the needs of industry.</p>

For this to be achieved in NI a Technical and Professional Awarding Body needed to be set up involving the FE Colleges and industry thus providing a clear and progressive qualification route that met the needs of students and the economy.

Ms Fraser asked if there is a common curriculum at HE level. The Principal said there is currently two delivery routes, to be the Pearson HNC/HND route and also the Foundation Degree Route which is validated by University of Ulster. The Foundation Degree route was more aligned to progression into an academic degree than directly meeting the needs of industry. I

The Committee noted the Health Check report.

14. Cause for Concern

The Principal gave an update on the Cause for Concern referrals, noting that most of the issues relate to mental health and/or depression. He added that further mental health / depression analysis was required to determine the finer detail, in order to improve the direct support for students. The Principal added that the total referrals for 2015/16 is 301 up to 31st May 2016, but noted that some students have more than one issue and this was reflected within the table.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 (up to 31st May 2016)
Total Referrals	286	266	259	301
Social Services/PSNI	33	46	32	24
Mental Health/Depression	51	86	129	144
Self-Harm	36	25	27	26
Thoughts of Self-Harm	18	39	35	23
Suicide	0	2	1	1
Homelessness	Not recorded	29	22	25
Bullying	Not recorded	Not recorded	15	17

The Chair added that she valued these report as we monitor the Cause for Concern referrals and discussed the rise in mental health issues with young people reported in the Press and would like to see an emphasis on developing resilience and coping strategies in young and vulnerable people. She added it is always a challenge in FE with such a short timeframe, however, it would be beneficial to compare this data contextually against other FE Colleges.

Mr Pollard stated that he would welcome more detailed analysis, for example, around age, gender, stage of study, area of study and geographical area, by campus. He added that it would be useful to understand the campus breakdown better and the analysis may further indicate an issue in a particular campus.

	<p>Mr Pollard referred to an assertion within the report that “increase in numbers is due to the robust processes that are currently in place, and the fact that the Cause for Concern referral system is now firmly embedded within the College” and asked if this is anecdotal or supported by evidence?</p> <p>The Principal commented that many referrals were actually preventative measures and gave his assurance that the statements were not subjective in nature.</p> <p>Mrs Scott suggested a column is added to the data report that would show the total number of students on each campus against the number of referrals.</p> <p>The Principal said that the total number of students of each campus can be added.</p> <p>Mr Sagar agreed with the comments made and added that it would be useful to review a sample of these referrals over a period of time, in relation to outcome measures and resolution.</p> <p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of students on each campus to be added to the data in the report.
<p>15.</p>	<p>Inspection Updates:</p> <p>There are no updates to be considered</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>Any other notified business</p> <p>16.1 Mr Sagar informed the Committee that Miss Mc Dermott has been appointed as Acting Secretary of the Governing Body from 13th June 2016. Mr Sagar expressed his appreciation to Ms Healy for all the work that she has done for the Governor’s and himself.</p> <p>16.2 The Chair suggested that the Education Committee review the equality balance of students across the campuses to raise any possible strategic actions that are required.</p> <p>Members approved this suggestion that student equality data should be reviewed by the Education Committee.</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting was scheduled for 20th September 2016 at 5pm in the Bangor Campus.</p> <p>There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8:00 p.m.</p>

Attendees	Time Arrived	Time Left	Duration	Entitlement to Payment Y/N
Heather Reid	6:46pm	8:00pm	1:14	Y
Steve Pollard	6:00pm	8:00pm	2:00	Y
Karen Fraser	6:00pm	8:00pm	2:00	Y
Professor Alan Woodside	6:00pm	7:16pm	1:16	Y
Kim Scott	6:00pm	8:00pm	2:00	Y
Ken Webb	6:00pm	8:00pm	2:00	N
Deep Sagar (Via Conference Call)	6:00pm	8:00pm		N/A

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chair of Governing Body