

SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE
Governing Body – Education Committee (the “Committee”)
Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12th February 2020, 5.30pm, Lisburn Campus

Item No	Item
1.	<p>Chair’s Business</p> <p>a) Attendance and Apologies</p> <p>Present: Mrs H Reid, Mr K Webb (Principal/CEO), Mr G Hetherington (Temporary Chair of the Governing Body), Mr J Mackell Items 2-10 only, Prof A Woodside, Mrs K Fraser, Mr N Bodger, Mr S Pollard, Mrs C King, Mr D Stanley</p> <p>Apologies: Mr A Corbett</p> <p>In Attendance: Mrs. H McKee (Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support) (the “Director of SPQ&S”), Dr M Malone (Director of Curriculum & Information Services) (the “Director of C&IS”) Mrs. C Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body) Mr. N Parfitt (Boardroom Apprentice), Ms. S. Woods (Temporary Secretary to the Governing Body), Mrs. E Finney, (Acting Commercial Contracts Manager) (the “Acting CCM”) Item 4A only , Mr. W Greer, (Chief Training and Contracts Officer) (the “CT&CO”) Item 4A only, Mr. P Walsh (Head of Learning Support) Items 5A only</p> <p>In the Chair: Mrs. H Reid</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to Ms. Woods who will be employed as Temporary Secretary to the Governing Body to cover Mrs. Williamson’s maternity leave.</p> <p>b) Declarations of Conflict of Interest</p> <p>No conflicts of interest were made in relation to the presented agenda items.</p> <p>c) Minutes from meeting 21st November 2019</p>

The Chair invited members to review the minutes from the previous meeting. The Secretary confirmed there had been no feedback received on the circulated minutes prior to the meeting. The Committee agreed the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Chair highlighted the importance of the detail of the Education Committee minutes as, along with the QIP/SER, they play a valuable role in demonstrating the Committee’s overview of the curriculum and delivery.

Proposer: Neil Bodger

Secunder: Gareth Hetherington

d) Chair’s Update

The Chair thanked the Principal and the Head of Quality, Excellence and Development for taking time recently to brief her on the upcoming inspection. She advised the Committee that staff briefings have taken place and she is content that preparations are progressing well, and she took the opportunity to wish all staff involved in the Inspectorate Evaluation well on behalf of the Governing Body.

e) Committee Terms of Reference

The Chair directed members to the amended ToR and advised that an amendment had been made to include the Committee’s role in developing the Strategy and to ensure there is clarity around attendance at meetings.

Agreed; The Committee agreed the amended Terms of Reference and recommended these for adoption by the Governing Body

Proposer: Alan Woodside

Secunder; Karen Fraser

2. Matters arising:

a) Action Points from meeting 21st November 2020

The Chair asked members to note that most actions had been completed or were addressed on the meeting’s agenda. The Principal provided a verbal update on the Committee’s request to display a year-on-year comparison in the application and enrolments report. He advised that it is

difficult to provide a like-for-like comparison as there are various factors that can affect the overall numbers at points in the year; such as the launch of the Prospectus, the dates that open days are held, when holiday periods fall and, this year specifically, the impact on the transition from TFS to traineeships.

The Principal continued by advising that the management team has endeavored carry out this analysis, but it has not produced any meaningful results. He advised the Committee that applications and enrolments are monitored closely, and reported to the Committee, and if they were not growing at the expected rate this would be concerning. The Principal reminded members that applications do not necessarily translate into enrolments.

The Director of C&IS advised that the College would lose an element of control over the figures with the new LMS system and the changes to the Education Report Card (ERC). He advised that the proposed draft of the ERC does not seem to show a simple and clear display of the information. The Principal advised that he will be meeting Departmental officials in February to discuss changes to the ERC and the overall College Development Plan report card, as there is an increasing use of KPIs and a further move away from an OBA approach.

The Chair thanked the Principal and the Director of CI&S for the update and noted that the key issues for the Committee are to monitor application and enrolment trends and to ensure that we are aligned to the skills strategy. She advised that the Chair of the F&GP Committee will also be monitoring the trends from a financial perspective.

At this juncture Mr. Mackell joined the meeting.

3. Correspondence

a) Update on The Department for The Economy's Vocational Education Provision 6 Jan 2020

Members noted the correspondence that had been provided as per the Committee's request from the November meeting.

b) ETI Inspection Notification 27 January 2020

Members noted that the ETI Inspectorate Evaluation will take place during the week commencing 2nd March. The Principal advised that this is an evaluation, that a grade will not be awarded, and that a report will not be issued until all 6 Colleges have been evaluated.

Action Point: The Committee requested a written summary of the oral feedback from the ETI Inspectorate Evaluation at the next meeting if an ETI written report is not available by that time.

4. Employers

a) Industry Consultation- Presentation from Business Services

Emma Finney, Acting CCM and William Greer, CT&CO joined the meeting at this juncture.

The Acting Commercial Contracts Manager presented an overview of Business Engagement within the College, afterwards the Chair opened the discussion to members for Q&A, the following points were noted:

- Mrs. Fraser enquired if the skills obtained by the students who take part in the travel academy are less transferable if the students are not subsequently recruited by either of the employers involved in the program. The Acting CCM advised that whilst elements of the package are bespoke to Jurys Inn and Selective (mainly around their internal booking systems) students will still obtain 2 qualifications and other transferable skills.
- Mr. Pollard enquired if the team could clarify what the obstacles seem to be in recruiting welders. The Acting CCM responded that there are barriers, firstly, in terms of salary as welders can earn a higher salary in Australia and, secondly, lack of interest. The Principal advised that recruitment has also been hindered by the delays in the provision of facilities at the PSC at Nutts Corner, which are directly linked to the issues with CPD and Properties Services. He advised that the welding booths across the campuses are operating at full capacity and the new set-up in the PSC has been delayed by over a year.
- Professor Woodside asked the Acting CCM how the team encourage the use of innovation vouchers. She explained that the team consists of seven business development managers who are focused on referrals through networking. She also advised that companies need to apply for vouchers themselves, however, many companies were not availing of this facility and, as a result, the sales team go out on the ground need to provide much needed support.
- In response to Mr. Mackell's enquiry on the rationale behind the Internal Business Engagement Collaboration Plan, the CT&CO advised that the team was conscious that staff were out with businesses every day and there was a need to bring cohesion to it. He

explained that by using Microsoft Team it enables staff to capture and record information that is not necessarily exclusive to the area they are working in, but it can then be followed up by the appropriate business development team.

- Mr. Mackell enquired if the visit to Dundalk Institute of Technology had been beneficial to the eSERC project. The Acting CMM advised that it had been useful to view the set up for the use of additional space. It has allowed the Estates Manager to ensure that eSERC presents a similar appearance, as the idea is that eSERC is a front door for employers.
- The Principal advised the Committee that SERC's outline business case is being funded by Lisburn Castlereagh Council as part of the Belfast City Region Deal and therefore, they will project manage and fund the build. The business case for the project will be submitted at the end of March and will be a facility for the whole of the Belfast region to avail of.
- In response to a question from the Chair on whether there is any capacity to do more business engagement, the Acting CCM advised that the team can always deliver more as the foundations are in place and this should see commercial income grow incrementally.
- The Chair thanked the Acting CCM and CT&CO for an informative and engaging presentation.

At this juncture Acting Commercial Contracts Manager and the Chief Training and Contracts Officer left the meeting and the Committee took a brief comfort break (6.25pm).

The meeting resumed at 6.30pm.

The Chair asked the Principal if the PSC in Dublin had made much progress. He informed members that the business case to establish two subsidiary companies in ROI had been submitted to the Department but had not progressed as quickly as the College would have liked.

The consequences of this lack of progression are that:

- i) SERC cannot employ the staff to deliver the courses until they have Departmental approval of the business case;
- ii) This meant the College could not deliver courses; and
- iii) This effectively means an estimated loss of £150,000

The Chair asked how this estimated loss will be managed. The Principal advised that, overall, this will be managed within the current budget and IMPMS monitoring.

Action Point: The Committee asked that the F&GP Committee are made aware of the loss of commercial income of £150k due to the delays in establishing subsidiary companies in RoI

b) Entrepreneurship and Employability delivery

The Chair noted that entrepreneurship and employability had been discussed during the recent Strategy Day. She invited members to reflect on those discussions and offered an opportunity to seek clarity on any points or give feedback. Members advised they were content and had no further queries at this point. The Director of C&IS advised the Committee that it will be a focus for the inspection, and he is hopeful that the strength the College is demonstrating in this area will come through in the inspection.

5. Social Inclusion

At this juncture the Head of Learning Support joined the meeting.

a) SEN Student Journey Presentation

The Head of Learning Support gave the Committee a presentation that included case studies of the type of different support the College has provided to students based on different needs, a brief discussion took place and the following points were noted:

- The Chair thanked the Head of LS for his presentation and explained the context in which the Committee are reviewing SEN was from a governance perspective; she advised that the Committee's focus was on receiving assurance that the College is compliant with all relevant SEN and Disability legislation. She enquired what the drivers of need are and how are they identified.
- The Head of LS explained that it works best when the College has the information as soon as possible, this can be captured at the enrolment stage where students are asked to self-declare on their application or through transition plans shared by the EA in early May. He advised there is currently a team of 5 working in Learning Support along with 27 learning support assistants for FE and 4 for HE, there is also some support for TFS students that comes with the Departmental contract.

- Mr. Pollard advised he had no questions but would like to commend the presentation and the professionalism, sensitivity and compassion that came across from the Head of LS.
- In response to Mr. Mackell's query on how students are identified if they do not self-declare the Head of LS advised that students are encouraged by their tutors to speak to Learning Support staff. All staff receive training which is crucial, parents are approached to try to get further information and support, case conferences are held in October, January and March and a follow-up list is prepared after that.
- The Temporary Chair noted that early declarations are important and enquired if there is anything else that could be done to ensure that as many as possible are made. In response the Head of LS advised that he meets with sector colleagues three times per year to share information and best practice. The College has also focused on communicating with students during the application process and there is an on-going focus to quash the myth amongst students that self-declaration would mean they would not receive a place on the course of their choice.
- The Chair asked the Head of LS about two key risk areas: i) students off-site and ii) older students. The Head of LS advised that older students do not tend to come forward for support straight away, but a number are identified each year and they are mainly identified through the course team. In terms of students off-site on placements, he advised that staff ensure the placement suits the particular student and the risk can then be managed.
- Mr. Parfitt enquired if the LS team has any safeguards in place to prepare other students in order to assist those in need. The Head of LS advised that this is done on a needs-arise basis and often external agencies will be asked to come in and speak to staff and students. He highlighted that SERC students have demonstrated they are nurturing and adaptable to a student who requires extra support .
- The Chair noted that there are multiple levels of compliance to meet for SEN and Disability legislation and observed that the College had evidenced a culture of inclusion. She enquired if any students have been identified with the potential to pose a significant risk to other students and/or staff and, if so, how this is managed. The Head of LS advised that at present there are no students who have been identified as posing a significant risk

	<p>to other students and/or staff. He advised that, in the event that a student is identified, they would be monitored through the staff team and he would be alerted quickly through the Cause for Concern referral to ensure a management plan was created for that particular student. The Principal indicated that Management Plans are produced and approved by CMT when any student or potential student who may pose a risk is identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair thanked the Head of LS for a very informative presentation and the Committee members agreed they were content that the level of information provided them with an assurance that there is a culture of inclusion and that individuals with particular needs are identified and accommodated within the requirements of the relevant legislation. <p><i>At this juncture the Head of Learning Support left the meeting.</i></p> <p>b) Engagement Report</p> <p>The Director of SPQ&S presented the Engagement Report and advised that, as per the Committee’s request, a section had been included on engagement with the post primary sector. She highlighted the new initiative: Pathfinder: Community Hub which was created in response to the increasing demand for Restart and Access courses. Mr. Pollard noted that the initiative seems to be very successful with a focus on the economically inactive, he asked the Director if the current capacity of the courses is temporary or if they could be expanded. The Director advised they could be expanded, and an event will be held in Radius Housing in March to promote the initiative in other housing associations in the College’s geographical area. She advised that she is looking at a strategy around meaningful engagement and planning around a growing need.</p> <p>The Principal asked members to note that the College is 300 above target for overall enrolments and therefore new cohorts cannot be started as the College would then go over budget, however, planning for next year can be done and infills into current cohorts can continue.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>College Development Plan</p> <p>a) College Development Plan 2019/20 Progress Report</p> <p>The Director of SPQ&S asked members to note the progress report and advised that the Department hadn’t previously confirmed the template and so this report is different to the one</p>

presented to members at the November meeting. She advised that a meeting is scheduled with the Department to discuss the format as they are aware the College is not content with the direction of travel of the report away from OBA.

b) Applications and Enrolments

The Director of C&IS asked members to note the report outlining the current position of applications and enrolments, he advised that there has not been much change since the Committee last reviewed the figures in November. He highlighted the full-time enrolments are 289 above target and the College is confident that the target for part-time enrolments will be met by the end of the year.

c) FE Update

The Director of C&IS advised the Committee that traineeships will be a focus for FE next year and good progress had been made with the Department to deliver on this. He advised that some of the issues raised by the Sector had been addressed by the Department including the initial policy on qualifications on entry and the inclusion of over 24s in traineeships. He further highlighted the importance of a 'Level 1.5' for students not ready for level 2 which has also been recognised and requires a unified approach by the Sector. He advised that the Inspectorate Evaluation will also have an influence on the transversal skills that go into traineeships. The Principal concluded by advising that the College is keen to introduce diagnostic testing on entry that will ensure students are placed on the appropriate provision for them and that they are not being set up for failure.

d) Progress Update on QIPs 2019-20 – FE, Work-Based Learning, and HE

The Committee noted the report and specifically that all targets achieved a 'green' status as plans have progressed as scheduled. Members commented that it was extremely positive.

<p>7.</p>	<p>Higher Education-For Information</p> <p>a) Awarding Body Status Update</p> <p>This item was discussed under item 9B.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Policies Review Schedule</p> <p>There are no policies for review.</p>

9. Items for Information

a) Safeguarding, Care and Wellbeing Report

The Director of SPQ&S presented the report and highlighted the introduction of the Rucksack Care package that helps students that are presenting as homeless, she advised that this is run solely on staff donations and is very discreet in helping students who need assistance. The Chair commended staff for their efforts and invited the Committee members to also donate what they can for this initiative.

Mr. Pollard noted that the referrals for Cause for Concerns did not seem to decrease from report to report and he enquired if the Committee could review some data to satisfy them that this is in line with the provincial trends. He remarked that some research regarding regional mental health would be beneficial for the Committee and the Governing Body. The Chair noted Mr. Pollard's comments and advised that mental health is a growing issue and accepted the concept to challenge this as a norm. Professor Woodside highlighted that the increase can also be attributed to the success of the team in raising awareness and therefore more students are seeking help.

The Director of SPQ&S asked members to note that not all colleges record data in the same way as SERC does and so it may be difficult to obtain comparative information. Mr. Pollard suggested that other data such as demographics may be able to inform what other factors the College can focus on to address the issue.

The Principal noted that a correlation between demographics and poverty may be linked, but as mental health is much more in the public domain with lots of high profile people raising awareness around it, it has encouraged people to come forward and seek help much sooner. He also highlighted that the College has the Wallace Fund to provide assistance to students in financial distress.

Action Point: The Committee requested comparable data on mental health to review how the College data presents provincially

b) Transition of Young People Into Careers (14-19) Project

Members were asked to note the summary enclosed of the workshop held on 14 November 2019, with key personnel from the Further Education sector and the Department for the Economy, the Director of SPQ&S asked members specifically to note the discussions that had

	<p>taken place around Awarding Body Status for FE Colleges which would allow the Sector to be more flexible. The Principal advised the summary was a fair reflection of the workshop and will hopefully translate into a draft strategy document. Mr. Bodger noted that an options papers is not expected until October 2020 which was disappointing.</p>
10.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>No other business was discussed.</p>
	<p>Date and time of next meeting:</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 4th February 2020, 5,30pm, Lisburn Campus.</p>

The meeting concluded at 7.48pm