

**Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”)
held on Tuesday 1st February 2022 at 17:30, via Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

Item No	Item
1.	<p>Chair’s Business:</p> <p>a) Attendance and Apologies</p> <p>Present: Mr K Webb (Principal/CEO), Mr G Hetherington (Temporary Chair of the Governing Body), Mr J Mackell, Mrs K Fraser, Mr A Corbett, Mr J Lee, Mr S Pollard, Mrs D O’Hare, Mr M Huddleston Items 3-11 only, Mr A McCrum, Mr D Stewart, Mr D Wilson, Dr D McConnell, Ms M Corrigan, Mr S Hagen, Mr M McQuillan, Ms G Diamond</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), Ms A Frazer (Boardroom Apprentice), Ms E Flynn (Commercial Contracts Manager) Items 1-4 only, Mrs C Henderson (Chief Officer Quality, Excellence and Development) Items 1-5 only</p> <p>Apologies: None</p> <p>In the Chair: Mr Pollard</p> <p>b) Declarations of Conflict of Interest</p> <p>The Chair invited members to declare any known or perceived conflicts of interests, none were declared.</p> <p>c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16th November 2021.</p> <p>The Chair invited members to review the minutes from the previous meeting. The Committee agreed the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>Agreed: That the Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November and that the minutes be tabled for approval at the next meeting of the Governing Body.</p> <p>Proposer: Andrew Corbett</p> <p>Seconder: Derek Wilson</p> </div>

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	<p>d) Q&A Session with CMT re Covid-19 Activities and Student Support</p> <p>On the invitation of the Chair the Principal began by providing an update on the College’s Covid response. He advised that the College has not changed its delivery model and the 50/50 approach remains in place. The number of infections has increased with the Omicron variant and the College are now submitting a weekly return to the Department with these numbers. The Principal confirmed there had been no significant impact on the classes as most staff had not been physically sick and had been able to continue working successfully through their isolation period.</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum & Information Services added that the College had planned an online week for the first week of February and it had been working very well. He confirmed there are few mitigations planned for examinations, however the College is remaining cautious and continuing to bank assessments.</p> <p>The Chair thanked CMT for the update and noted that the approach remains very reassuring.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Correspondence:</p> <p>a) CDP 2023 Update to Principals</p> <p>b) CDP 2023 Task and Finish Group</p> <p>The Principal referred members to the enclosed correspondence which sets out the Department’s plans and likely timescales in respect of the 2022/23 CDP process. The Principal advised that a short review of the process is due to be completed by April and he would feedback on that as Chair of the Principal’s Group. He added that it is unlikely there would be any significant change to the process by April as the Department are currently short of staff resources to oversee such a review.</p> <p>The Temporary Chair commented that with the task and finish group set up it would suggest that an interim format could be in place despite the shortages within the Department.</p>

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	<p>In response to a query from Mr McQuillan on sectoral collaboration the Principal advised that as Chair of the Principal’s Group he would work together with the other Principal’s to present proposals in response to the review, he added the group may form their own task and finish group to put these proposals forward and help the Department.</p> <p>At this juncture on the invitation of the Chair, the Temporary Chair of the Governing Body addressed the meeting. The Temporary Chair informed members of the untimely death of Gerard Finnegan, Chair of North West Regional College. The Temporary Chair advised that Mr Finnegan had passed away on 30th January after a short illness. He added that he had known Mr Finnegan for many years having worked together previously and all Chairs and Principals had seen him dedicate a lot of time to the sector through his work at CEF as well as to NWRC. The Temporary Chair said he was very saddened to learn of Mr. Finnegan’s death and that he will be sorely missed. The Principal advised that he had sent a letter to Mr Finnegan’s family on behalf of staff and the Governing Body expressing their condolences.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Presentation-Business Services Success in supporting the Economy and the value of Strategic Partnerships</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the Commercial Contracts Manager to the meeting and invited her to present an overview of the work within the Business Services team, the following points were highlighted in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commercial Contracts Manager provided the committee with an overview of the portfolio of the Business Service provision within the College and how this supports the local economy, she highlighted that there is currently a growth in the area of construction and the industry is pushing for greener technologies. The College has responded to the demand by investing in staff and strategic partnerships for the industry. • Members noted the success of the ASOS data engineering academy, the CCM advised this is a new company to Northern Ireland and the College have responded to their needs by providing a very professional service and they are in discussions with ASOS to host future academies. • The Chair thanked the CCM for an excellent presentation of the business services portfolio, he commented that on a few occasions he has referred colleagues to the Business Services team, and he has always been impressed with the professionalism and responsiveness of the team.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr McQuillan added the presentation was extremely informative and he was impressed with the work being carried out by the team, he noted that there maybe a gap the team could look into with cyber security. The CCM advised that development work on cyber security is taking place and the College are working in collaboration with the Department and Cyber NI to deliver a Level 5 qualification and so it is hoped this gap can be plugged within the next year. <p><i>At this juncture the Commercial Contracts Manager left the meeting.</i></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Quality Monitoring and Evaluation Return</p> <p>The Chief Officer Excellence, Quality and Development presented the return to the committee, she advised that it had been submitted to the Department’s Quality Improvement team on 8th December. The Chief Officer gave members an overview of the contents of the return and provided some detail on the programmes delivered, she asked the committee to note that an interim return had been submitted on some of the newer programmes so that progress could be reviewed, the team will be meeting the Department for feedback on these areas.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Chief Officer for attending the meeting to present the return, he commented that he was struck by the detail the course teams are delivering and the excellent retention rates in all the programmes.</p> <p><i>At this juncture the Chief Officer Excellence, Quality and Development left the meeting.</i></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>College Development Plan</p> <p>a) CDP Progress Report</p> <p>The Director of Strategic, Planning, Quality and Support presented the latest CDP progress report, she highlighted the new reporting format as provided by the Department to the committee. The Director highlighted that the RAG status relating to HE enrolments is red as the College has not met the MASN target which has been reported to the committee previously. All other targets are on track to be met.</p> <p>b) Applications and Enrolments</p>

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	<p>The Director of Curriculum & Information Services presented the latest report to the committee, he highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director provided an overview of the current data, he advised the committee that applications will continue to change throughout the remainder of the year. • In response to a query from Mr Huddleston the Director advised the biggest challenge for enrolment figures will be for the business services course if funding is cut, it is likely the impact will be felt next year. Mr Huddleston enquired if EMA is cut would this also have an impact on the social inclusion numbers? • The Director advised that while it is difficult to predict it is likely as many families rely on EMA, the College will endeavour to support students through other means such as hardship funds if EMA is cut and will continue to load out equipment to help those students that need it. • The Principal added that students are already struggling financially particularly in rural areas because of issues around transport and fuel costs, he noted if EMA is cut it has the potential to significantly reduce the enrolment figures. • Ms Corrigan asked the Director if he had any concerns regarding the recent number of staff who have left the College. The Director advised that as the College have several initiatives in place for succession planning including an aspiring managers programme he was not concerned and the College have had more retirements this year than they would normally have.
<p>7.</p>	<p>Higher Education:</p> <p>a) HERB Minutes</p> <p>The Director of SPQS advised that the minutes and presentation that had been reviewed were included for the committee’s information, she highlighted that the board had reviewed the external examiners report which was very positive and also sharing good practice across the teams.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Director of SPQS for the comprehensive report and praised the team for their evident commitment to quality.</p>

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Agreed: The committee reviewed and approved the HE Review Board minutes from the meeting held on 21st January 2022

Proposer: John Mackell

Seconder: Gareth Hetherington

b) HE in FE review update

The Director of C&IS referred members to the Foundation Degree Policy paper that had been presented and discussed at the Stakeholder advisory group; he highlighted there is no distinctive programme in Higher Education in FE and the sector have no flexibility with the current arrangements. Members noted the proposed amendments that were discussed by the group at their last meeting, notable a distinct offer in HE, the need for a higher technical qualification and seeking partnerships with Universities outside of Northern Ireland.

In discussions the Principal advised members that the College would like to offer a potential cash bursary as an incentive to students in effort to encourage level 3 students to remain with the College and progress to level 4. The Principal advised that in terms of options this was most favourable amongst students, as they do not see the benefit in a fee reduction as they pay by loan and there is also the risk that the product is deemed inferior to others because it is less expensive. The Principal advised members that this is a critical situation for the Sector.

Mrs O’Hare commented that whilst this is a frustrating and complicated area, she is pleased that the College have advised the consultation is not wide enough and she would welcome the views of young people particularly on movement from levels 3 to 4. In response to a comment by Mrs O’Hare on issues with UCAS the Director of C&IS explained that UCAS can be problematic for the College, if they overrecruit the College will face a fine from the Department mor going over the MASN target, the College are only given a 5% tolerance in terms of the MASN target.

Mr Huddleston commented that this issue goes to the heart of the future of the Colleges, he advised that the challenges around this need to be addressed and so as Vice Chair of the Skills Advisory Group he has written to the Department advising they are seeking a pathway on levels 3,4 and 5 to provide young

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	<p>people and employers with choices. He went on to stress the importance of level 4 and 5 and highlighted the dynamic is very much changing in these levels.</p> <p>The Principal informed members that UCAS is being reviewed and sector representatives will be meeting with UCAS and Departmental officials to do so however he stressed that it is crucial to refine the product first.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p>Action Point: HE in FE review and proposed cash bursary to be presented to the Governing Body for consideration at the meeting on 1st February</p> </div>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Items for Information:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Report</p> <p>The Director of SPQ&S referred members to the report that been circulated, she advised that the team are commencing an internal review of the support systems and she would bring any recommendations back to a future committee meeting for review.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Policies for Review/Approval:</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>The Temporary Chair of the Governing Body advised members that the competition to recruit new Chairs for SERC and SRC will be publicly advertised on 3rd February, the Secretary would forward details to all members of the Governing Body when they were available.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Confidential</p> <p>A separate note was taken for this item.</p>
	<p>Date and time of next meeting:</p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 12th April 2022, at 17:30, venue TBC.</p>



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The meeting was concluded at 6.59pm