

Minutes of Governing Body (GB) Meeting
Monday 12th March 2018, 5.00pm, Conference Room, Lisburn Campus

Agenda Item 1: Chair's Business	<p>Members present Mr Deep Sagar (Chair) , Mr Ken Webb (CEO/Principal), Professor Alan Woodside (<i>Items 1-4g only</i>), Mr Andrew Corbett, Mrs Barbara Larkin, Mrs Carolyn King, Ms Christine Goodwin, Mr Ed Jackson, Mr Gareth Hetherington, Ms Heather Reid, Mr John Mackell, Mrs Kim Scott, Mr Neil Bodger, Miss Rachael Heaney (<i>Items 1-5 only</i>), Ms Shirleen Corbett, Mr Steve Pollard.</p> <p>Apology for absence Mrs Karen Fraser.</p> <p>In attendance Mrs Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Mrs Claire Henderson (Head of International, Quality, Excellence and Development - HIQED) (<i>Items 1-2c only</i>), Mr Colin Atkinson (Deputy Head of School, School of Applied Science and Sport), Mrs Elaine Flynn (Commercial Contracts Manager - CCM) (<i>Items 1-2c only</i>), Mrs Heather McKee (Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support - DSPQS), Mr Tommy Martin (Chief Finance Officer - CFO), Mr William Greer (Chief Training and Contracts Officer- CTCO) (<i>Items 1-2c only</i>).</p> <p>The Chair welcomed in particular Mr Atkinson who was observing as part of the College's Bridging the Gap course. The Chair said as usual all papers would be taken as read so that time for discussion could be maximised. He suggested that comments on the One Corporate Plan and College Development Plan (CDP) could be sent by email after the meeting, as a GB workshop in April was planned for the latter; this was agreed.</p>										
a) Attendance and Apologies	<p>The Chair invited members to declare any known or perceived conflicts of interests. Mr Pollard drew attention to the presentation at 2b which referenced Entry to Management and Leadership & Management Courses and advised that this may cause a conflict. The Chair asked him to continue participating as the conflict, if arose, could be dealt with. Four named governors had interest in the part of Chair's report relating to Lead Governors and would not participate in its discussion at agenda item 1c.</p>										
b) Declarations of conflicts of interests	<p>The Chair referred members to the written report he had provided. It was noted. The Chair proposed Lead Governors for the remaining four campuses.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="236 1323 1437 1503"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Decision: The GB agreed the chair's proposals for Lead Governors as follows:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ballynahinch: Ed Jackson</td> <td>Secunder: Shirleen Corbett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bangor: Christine Goodwin</td> <td>Secunder: Rachael Heaney</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Holywood: Gareth Hetherington</td> <td>Secunder: Steve Pollard</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lisburn: John Mackell</td> <td>Secunder: Barbara Larkin</td> </tr> </table> <p>The Chair led discussion on Colleges Northern Ireland (CNI) where a letter from Department for the Economy (DfE) was included in the Principal's report, he advised that ahead of the CNI Board Meeting on 26th March the GB needed to authorise him and the Principal with a mandate on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Should the College continue its funding of about £100,000pa, considering the DfE request that it be reconsidered? Should CNI be maintained, given DfE's impending plans <p>Members had a robust discussion around the issue and advised that it would be difficult to see a role going forward for CNI if they are unable to continue the advocacy role as previously agreed. The Principal provided the Governors with a brief overview of the Office of National Statistics decision to classify CNI as a public body and having to apply to DfE to be adopted as a Non-Departmental Public Body stating that this would remove the independent lobbying role that CNI was able to undertake on behalf of the sector. Governors advised that in recommending the closure of CNI that another informal arrangement for collaboration across colleges should be sought but continuing to fund CNI as an NDPB which could not represent the sector was not acceptable. The Chair advised that the Employers Forum is a good model of an informal arrangement that the Sector can look to. The Chair advised Governors that if at the CNI Board</p>	Decision: The GB agreed the chair's proposals for Lead Governors as follows:		Ballynahinch: Ed Jackson	Secunder: Shirleen Corbett	Bangor: Christine Goodwin	Secunder: Rachael Heaney	Holywood: Gareth Hetherington	Secunder: Steve Pollard	Lisburn: John Mackell	Secunder: Barbara Larkin
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c) Chair's report											

	<p>meeting there is stalemate in how to take this issue forward he will consult with Governors to seek their views again. The Principal said that Southern College had decided it would recommend CNI not be funded anymore and be closed down; further that if other colleges did not agree this course they would walk out. The Principal suggested the same for SERC. However, the Chair said that while he would carry out the collective mandate adopted by the GB he was not recommending such an aggressive course as it would not help long-term relationships and collaboration with the other colleges. The GB agreed with this.</p> <p>Decision: The GB agreed to recommend the closure of CNI at the CNI Board meeting on 26th March, it was further agreed that as soon as reasonably practical the College should cease to fund CNI but that informal arrangements for collaboration including possible joint funding be then sought.</p>
d) Minutes of the GB meeting on 15/1/18	<p>The Chair invited members to review the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2018. The minutes were accepted by GB as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Proposer: Ed Jackson; Seconder: Andrew Corbett</p>
e) Action points/matters arising from previous meetings	<p>Members reviewed the action points from previous meetings and noted the report. The Chair highlighted that all actions were complete or had a completion plan. Secretary will check that definitions related to the Quality Improvement Plan were emailed separately and the Principal will provide a short report on the Systems Technology and Services project in the next meeting.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 2: CEO's business</p> <p>a) CEO's report including Balanced Scorecard etc</p>	<p>The Principal and CEO asked members to note the written report provided and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors to note that the tables in the Draft College Development Plan with enrolment figures for 2016/17 are incorrect and not to consider these. The Programme for Government diagram was also out of date. • SERC catering students recently took part in the National Country Range Student Chef Challenge, in which they took second place. <p>The Chair noted that the Balanced Scorecard is a comprehensive snapshot of the college's performance. The Principal acknowledged the suggestions made to include the number of students in employment/learning when leaving SERC, he advised that he will include but will take something else off so that it remains brief. GB asked that instead of statements such as "SERC is best of all colleges" numbers should be presented. Governors were provided with an update on the recent Open Days, the Principal advised that applications are at 1866 compared to 605 in the same week last year. He advised that the focus is to translate the applications into enrolments. The Chair commended the College on the successful Open Days and noted that they had been very well advertised.</p> <p>Action point: Governors will email to Principal cc GB Secretary comments on the Value for Money study, One Corporate Plan and CDP presented so that they can be used before finalisation.</p>
b) Business engagement and income	<p>CTCO and CCM led a discussion around the presentation included in the papers. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTCO said the target for next year's income is likely to be around £2m. • A Bid Writer has joined the team and will focus on generating new commercial income. • Mr Jackson enquired if there was any room to increase the 25% contribution to overheads. CTCO said they hope to generate more efficiencies towards this. • In response to a query whether the audit committee reviewed the risk of this income, Mr Hetherington advised that the committee regularly reviews the whole College's financial viability with the strategic risk register. CFO said the management team regularly review this as part of their management review system with unit managers. • The Chair enquired how the share of non-DfE funded income could be increased. CTCO said this was a priority with the Bid Writer. <p>The Chair noted that the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) committee had asked for such a discussion in the GB. He commended management's efforts on raising business income but said opportunities such as the recent networking workshop with chamber of commerce could be leveraged with governors.</p>

<p>c) Careers advice</p>	<p>HIQED led a discussion around the presentation she had circulated; the following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career hubs were better resourced than previously, had private space for consultation and were open not only to students but the community. • 469 students had been taken through the University and Colleges Admissions Service process for Higher Education last year and 65% of students had used one-to-one advice. The • Satisfaction rate is high as indicated by the testimonials. Governors suggested moving to measuring outcomes: was the right outcome achieved for each student? • Access to some schools such as grammar schools remains an issue. Professor Woodside said W5 regularly issue a list of schools asking for help and management should contact him for that list or his help. <p>The Chair noted that expansion of the Careers Service is a most promising innovation by SERC.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 3: Items for Approval a) Complaints and compliments policy</p>	<p>Mr Jackson (chair of F&GP) presented the Complaints and Compliments Policy for consideration and approval subject to comments the Chair had. The Chair asked members to note that as the policy is recommended just now they are delegating full implementation to management with two internal stages of consideration of complaints and if anyone was still unhappy their only recourse was to the Ombudsman. He said that if serious complaints arose along the lines for example of collecting political views that a job applicant and politician complained of recently, or a parent complaining of their daughter being bullied or a group of students complaining that their examination was not properly conducted (both complaints in a recent report), or there was public criticism or Ombudsman finding, governors remained accountable for all policies' delivery and the Chair would have to acknowledge publicly that they had ruled themselves out of a role. DSQPS advised that the current policy is based on seven standards that were developed with the DfE and the Ombudsman standards and the policy was approved by the Permanent Secretary of DfE and the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) in 2016. She said that any changes in the policy would have to be approved by both DfE and the Ombudsman. The Chair said he was not aware that DfE had given a direction to the College on this policy or that the Ombudsman had authority overriding that of the GB in approving a policy, although he was aware that it was developed as a sectoral policy by all six colleges the last time, which is a voluntary forum. He therefore suggested to the GB he would postpone discussion of this policy to examine this documentation and then bring it up to the GB in the next meeting or by email. DSQPS noted that the current policy is robust in processing complaints: last year 77 complaints were received, 4 went to appeal, all were resolved; this year there have been 55 complaints, 2 have gone to appeal, 1 has been referred to NIPSO, all being resolved. DSQPS advised that the College Management Team deal with the operational element of complaint management and the GB have oversight and governance (and the GB have oversight, governance and ultimate responsibility for) of the policy. DSQPS cautioned that amending the policy to give the GB a role in the process would mean that the policy does not meet the requirements of the UK Quality Code B9 which the policy also complies with. The delineation of roles complies with the UK Quality Code.</p> <p>The Principal said the Ombudsman had requested a sector policy which had been established and he had signed a declaration of compliance to the Permanent Secretary and changes to the policy would mean SERC would not comply. If the Governing Body wished to change the policy in order to become involved in dealing with complaints, they would have to seek approval from NIPSO and DfE. The Chair noted his account on DfE did not align fully with Ms McKee's. The Principal further advised that the Governing Body should not be involved in this process as operations is management's role and governors' role is to monitor and hold management to account on the operations. The Chair said delegations by GB to management might not be easily drawn in some grey areas and thus the definition of operations is sometimes not easy. Ms Goodwin noted that the GB are involved in some stages of staff disciplinary and grievance policies; that could be classed as operational. The Principal advised that it is cleaner to have a clear separation of roles as there can be issues around tribunals and court cases. The Chair suggested parallels should not be drawn and complaints policy should be focused on just now. Mrs Reid said examination standards were governed by a different policy. The Chair agreed that should be examined and the executive agreed to review which aspects of the complaints policy the GB could affect.</p>

	<p>Action point: The Chair of the GB will be provided by Principal and DSQPS with the documentation related to approvals required from DfE, NIPSO and Quality Code; and documentation showing that governors having any role would mean getting into operations and conflict with code or authority. After review of these he will bring the complaints policy back to GB.</p>
b) Terms of reference for the Education committee	<p>Ms Larkin (chair of the education committee) presented its terms of reference for approval. She advised the committee had reviewed and approved these at their meeting in February; minor changes had been made to the language and to the committee's role in the development of the CDP this year. Ms Reid noted that these were reviewed in October 2017 and should be added to the document. The GB approved the terms.</p> <p>Proposer: Steve Pollard; Seconder: Andrew Corbett</p>
c) Staffing committee minutes of 11 th December 2017	<p>Ms Goodwin (the chair of staffing committee) presented minutes from its meeting held on 11th December 2017 for approval. Members confirmed they were content to accept.</p> <p>Proposer: Gareth Hetherington; Seconder: John Mackell</p>
d) F&GP committee minutes of 22 nd November 2017	<p>Mr Jackson (the chair of F&GP committee) presented minutes from its meeting held on 22nd November 2017 for approval. Mr Hetherington asked that it was noted that the Complaints policy was proposed to be approved by Audit committee, but he had not considered it appropriate and hence it went back to F&GP. Subject to this record being noted, members confirmed they were content to accept the minutes.</p> <p>Proposer: Andrew Corbett; Seconder: Barbara Larkin</p>
Agenda Item 4: Items for Information	<p>Members noted the document and were content with the cycle.</p>
a) Annual cycle of GB business	
b) Financial results to date	<p>CFO presented the Financial Governance report which forecasts the financial position of the College at 31 March 2018, the financial year-end, and 31 July 2018, the academic year-end. CFO advised that results emphasise the Resource Requirement. Members were asked to note that the forecast outcome for year to 31 March 2018 is a Resource Requirement of £32,275k. This is a change of Resource Requirement of £215,000 on the original budget. This is attributed to lower Higher-Level Apprenticeship funding, a shortfall in tuition fees and an unexpected underspend in staffing costs. DfE have accepted and the college is on target. The Chair commended the budget controls.</p>
c) Estates management accounts	<p>CFO presented the monthly Estates Management Accounts as the GB had requested to view one unit or department's results in each meeting. CFO advised that the monthly budgets are updated monthly to keep focus and budget holders are asked to explain variances at the regular management monitoring meetings.</p>
d) Student governor's report	<p>Ms Heaney's written report was noted. Mr Jackson enquired if issues around Personal Independence Payments for students could be explained. The Chair said issues such as car parking in Lisburn had been reported for two years and the student governor could work with the students' union and management to find at least a partial solution.</p> <p>Action point: The student governor will provide more information on the issues for students around Personal Independence Payments and will work with students' union and management to find at least a partial solution for car parking in Lisburn.</p>
e) Staff governors' reports	<p>Mr Corbett (academic staff governor) highlighted the successful Open Days that had been held on 7th March across the four main campuses. He advised that work will continue across the College to translate the number of applications into enrolments. Mr Corbett highlighted the importance of a student achievement award for all students but particularly for level 1 & 2 students. He therefore requested that consideration is given to moving the Excellence Awards ceremonies to a later date in the year so that nominations by staff follow greater knowledge of students and more nominations might follow. Ms King did not have a report; the Chair invited her to email later if she wished to.</p> <p>Action point: The Principal agreed to review the dates of the Excellence Awards in order to encourage more nominations and nominations based on better staff knowledge.</p>

f) Education committee briefing; meeting of 21 st February 2018	Ms Larkin's (chair of the education committee) written report was noted. Ms Larkin drew attention to the recent NI Science Festival workshops she had attended in the Bangor Campus which she found useful and impressive.
g) F&GP committee briefing; meeting of 6 th March 2018	Mr Jackson's (chair of the F&GP committee) written report was noted. He drew attention to his correspondence with DfE highlighting the issues the College faces with the mandatory use of Properties Division. He advised that the committee had agreed to push this matter further and had agreed to contact other Colleges to try and seek a mutually beneficial meeting with DfE.
h) Staffing committee briefing; meeting of 8 th March 2018	Ms Goodwin (chair of the staffing committee) advised that the committee had reviewed the staffing priorities for 2018/19. Topics under consideration include the human resources structure, the collaboration and shared service model, employee relations, workforce planning, attraction and development, leadership and management, succession planning and diversity and social inclusion. Long-term sick absences remain a concern and numbers have risen recently. Ms Goodwin noted this was disappointing as a robust plan has been put in place to aim for a preventative approach, the Chief Human Resources Officer has been asked to conduct a benchmarking exercise on sick absence outside of the sector. The recent recruitment campaign for additional independent investigators resulted in one successful candidate. Whilst the College had hoped to appoint more than one investigator, the current list of investigators can accommodate the current volume of discipline and grievance cases.
Agenda Item 5: Discussion Time	<p>Ms Scott led the discussion on students leaving school and how to attract them. She highlighted the following factors applying: (i) The share of school-leavers coming to further education (FE) has remained stable at 34% for many years but demographic decline means that numbers have reduced. (ii) Legislative change meant that schools have to offer "applied" courses, typically 7 of 21 listed. (iii) Schools' sixth-forms were encouraged to be at least 100-strong and financial constraints apply. She said the college's relationship with each school and repeating the message about FE to students are important. Members had a detailed and animated discussion.</p> <p>Action points: The Chair summarised consensus action points as follows for the college:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening the college's relationship further with more schools. The offer of the new careers service could help here. 2. Increasing revenue-sharing projects with schools, understanding the constraints that apply on them. 3. Addressing the continuing "Tech" image by first devising a booklet on what FE offers which could be leveraged on the internet and social media first, and doing more direct with parents. 4. Influencing the 14-19 strategy with DfE and Department for Education.
Agenda Item 6: Any other business	<p>Ms Goodwin enquired if some of the work from the Art and Photography students that had been displayed at the Excellence Awards could be displayed across the campuses.</p> <p>Mr Mackell said the themed Movie Nights being held in the College were a good initiative. The Principal and Ms McKee informed the GB that another student had died that day; he had been suffering from pneumonia. The GB expressed condolences.</p> <p>The Chair reminded Governors that if they have any comments on the meeting or the agenda or suggestions to improve they should contact him.</p> <p>Action point: The Principal agreed to check if more wall space can be utilised across the campuses for student art/photography work subject to costs of the public-private partnership contracts.</p>
Date of the next meeting	<p>The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 30th April 2018, 5pm, Lisburn Campus.</p> <p>The Governing Body Workshop is scheduled for Wednesday 11th April 2018 09.30am, Newcastle Campus.</p>

The meeting concluded at 8.08pm

Signed: _____



Date: _____

27/6/18

Deep Sagar, Chair of Governing Body

Abbreviations used:

SERC: South Eastern Regional College
GB: Governing Body
CEO: Chief Executive
HIQED: Head of International, Quality, Excellence and Development
CCM: Commercial Contracts Manager
DSPOS: Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support
CFO: Chief Finance Officer
CTCO: Chief Training and Contracts Officer
CDP: College Development Plan
CNI: Colleges Northern Ireland
DfE: Department for the Economy
pa: per annum
m: million
%: per cent
F&GP: Finance and general purposes
NIPSO: Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
NI: Northern Ireland
FE: Further education