



Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)

held on Tuesday 28th November 2023, Lisburn Campus and via Microsoft Teams

Agenda Item 1: Chair’s Business:

a) Attendance and Apologies for Absences:

Present:

Mr John Nugent (Chair of the Governing Body), Mr John Mackell Items 6-9 only, Mr Ken Webb (CEO/Principal), Mr Alan McCrum, Mrs Deborah O’Hare, Mr Derek Wilson, Mr Darren Stewart, Mr Mark Huddleston, Ms Majella Corrigan, Mr Samuel Hagen, Mr Andrew Corbett; Mrs Carolyn King, Mr Michael McQuillan Items 6-9 only, Dr Danny McConnell, Ms Vikki Pinkerton

In Attendance:

Mrs Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Mr Tommy Martin (Chief Finance Officer (CFO)), Mr Paul Smyth (Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)),

Apologies: Ms Wilma Fee

In the Chair: Mr Nugent

b) Declarations of Conflicts of Interest:

The Chair invited members to declare any known or perceived conflicts of interests.

- Mrs O’Hare advised she is employed by The Board of Governors of the Wallace High School (a NDPB) as Principal. The sponsor department for funding and development work and other applications is DENI supported by or delegated to the EA as appropriate. Is also current member of the College Advisory Group (Education) CAFRE DAERA CAFRE offers level 2 to level 6 + qualifications.
- Ms Corrigan declared she is employed by CCMS whose sponsor department is DENI. She is a current member of the Governing Body of Stranmillis College.

- Mr McQuillan declared he is Chief Executive of Enterprise NI and a board member of Invest NI.
- The CFO declared his daughter is employed as a lecturer at the College.

No action was taken in relation to the declared conflicts.

c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on 2nd October 2023:

The Governing Body reviewed the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2d October 2023 and agreed they were accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Carolyn King and seconded by Sam Hagen.

d) Matters Arising/Action Points from previous Meetings:

The Chair confirmed there were no outstanding actions from the previous meetings.

e) Chair of the Governing Body update

The Chair talked to the written report provided and highlighted some of the key points, he addressed the timings of meetings and members advised they would prefer a later start time. The Chair provided an updated on the upcoming recruitment competition for new members and advised that they should be in place by June 2024.

Action: GB and committee meetings will begin at 5.30pm from January 2024

f) Governing Body Self-assessment analysis 2022-23

g) Board Effectiveness Review

On the invitation of the Chair, the Secretary addressed the meeting and advised she would take these items together.

The Secretary highlighted some of the comments made in the Departmental exercise by members, she added that as they are anonymous it would be helpful for those members to speak to her or the Chair so that these matters can be progressed.

She went on to provide an overview of the action plan that she had developed from the internal effectiveness review, members noted that the plan would use a traffic light system to demonstrate the progress of the actions. The plan will be presented as a standard item on the agenda for the remainder of the 23/24 year.

Action: Members were asked to contact the Secretary regarding the comments in the self-assessment analysis

h) Meeting times in 2024

This item was discussed and agreed under agenda item 1E.

Agenda Item 2: Correspondence:

a) GB Correspondence Log

Members noted that no items of correspondence had been logged since the previous meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Principal and Chief Executive's report:

The Principal talked to the written report provided and highlighted the recent student and staff successes set out. He highlighted that SERC had won CMI provider of the year and Ross Harvey was awarded the prestigious David Clarke Award which is administered by the UK Security Commonwealth, and it recognised Ross' exceptional contribution to the UK security sector.

The Chair of the Governing Body commented that both these achievements were excellent for the College and individuals, and he asked that the GB's congratulations was passed onto all.

Agenda Item 4: Items for Approval

a) Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2023

The CFO addressed the meeting to present the final reports and began by advising that the cover sheet set out the following changes since the draft Report and statements had been submitted for audit:

- Events after the end reporting period disclosure has been updated to include reference to Principal & Chief Executive's communication to Unions and all staff regarding potential redundancies.
- Expanded disclosure in Note 27 to separately disclose and explain the bad debt write off exceeding £2k.

The CFO advised that clean audit was returned with one priority 3 recommendation. Members noted this was a sector recommendation which was around best practise as a significant number of assets are being held on the register at nil value and are still in operation.

Agreed: The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2023 were approved on the proposal of Alan McCrum and seconded by Andrew Corbett.

b) Audit Committee Annual Report

Mr. Hagen, Chair of the Audit & Risk committee presented the report for approval. He highlighted the report details the work of the committee over the year and provides a good summary of the risks and audit findings presented for consideration.

Agreed: The Audit committee Annual Report was approved on the proposal of Mark Huddleston and seconded by Darren Stewart.

- c) Audit Committee minutes from meeting held on 13th September 2023 and briefing from meeting on 16th November.

Mr Hagen, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the minutes for adoption. He asked members to note the written briefing he had provided on the meeting from 16th November.

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Mark Huddleston and seconded by Carolyn King.

- d) Education Committee minutes from meeting held on 26th September 2023 and briefing from meeting on 21st November.

Mrs O'Hare, Chair of the Education Committee, presented the minutes for adoption and asked members to note the written briefing from the recent meeting on 21st November.

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Andrew Corbett and seconded by Derek Wilson.

- e) Finance and General Purposes minutes from meeting held on 11th September 2023 and briefing from meeting on 14th November

Mr McCrum, Chair of the FGP Committee, presented the minutes for adoption. He advised a written briefing had been provided on the meeting held on 11th September.

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Sam Hagen and seconded by Derek Wilson.

6. Policies for approval

- a) Fees Policy

The CFO presented the Fees 24/25 Policy for approval, he gave members an overview of the fees and advised that there is a recommendation of an Inflationary increase of 5.27% across full time courses and this is consistent with the sector fees.

Agreed: The Fees Policy 24/25 was approved on the proposal of Mark Huddleston and seconded by Sam Hagen.

- b) Annual Review of HR Policies

The CHRO advised that the following policies had been reviewed in the annual review:

- Capability
- Flexible Working
- Dignity at Work
- Special Leave of Absence
- Stress Management Policy

He informed members that only the Dignity at Work policy requires any change and as this is a sector policy it is subject to legal review and will be first taken through the Principals Group for agreement and then onto the negotiating committees. He added once the policy has been through these channels it will come back to the committee as a CEF Circular for noting.

6. Items for Information

At this juncture Mr Mackell and Mr McQuillan joined the meeting.

a) Management Accounts (note-this replaced the previous Financial Governance Report)

The CFO presented an overview of the management accounts up to 30th September. He highlighted that for the six months ending 30th September, the College has an actual Resource Requirement of £21,324k compared with a budgeted Resource Requirement of £21,241k; the year-to-date result is therefore £82k worse than the original target.

Moving on to the full year forecast the HoF informed the committee the resource requirement is currently £1,159k higher than the target of £42,574k. This pressure can be considered as being made up of:

- Lecturers' & Senior Staff Sept 2023 assumed 3.5% pay award c.£517k.
- Impact of business services reduced funding c. £642k.

The CFO added that the College is continuing to work with the Department to mitigate the issues around the business services funding.

b) Staff Governor Reports

Members noted the written reports provided by the staff governors. Mrs King highlighted the recent staff training opportunities and the arrival of some goats in the Bangor campus. She added that Paddy, Brian, and Bob are pygmy goats who have been hired by the Animal Management team to come to the college four days per week from Cotton Tails Farm. They are clearing the half acre woodland beside the main carpark of overgrown weeds and ivy while naturally fertilising the soil.

Mr Corbett highlighted the concern among staff around the Reform to Save scheme but added staff have been reassured in the Principal's recent communication, particularly around the timescale of the scheme.

c) Student Governor Report

The Student Governor talked to the written report provided and advised of some of the recent work and initiatives taken forward.

Action: The Student Governor will provide the Secretary with a copy of the recent NUS-USI survey for the next education committee meeting.

d) Gifts and Hospitality Register

The Secretary presented the register for 2022/23 and advised that there had been no entries. She reminded members of their obligation to declare any items they may receive as per the agreed Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

7. Any Other Business:

At this juncture Mr Mackell was presented with a plaque on behalf of the Governing Body and CMT for his significant contribution to the College since 2016.

The Principal noted that Mr Machell had the balance right in holding management to account and being supportive. He added he had appreciated the wisdom Mr Mackell had brought to the college and wished him the very best of luck in his new role.

8. Confidential Business

A separate note was taken for this item.

Date of next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled for Tuesday 13th February 2024, 17.30, Lisburn Campus.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.54pm

Signed: 

Date: _13.02.24

John Nugent

Chair of the Governing Body