

SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

Governing Body – Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19th October 2016 in the Boardroom SPACE,
Bangor Campus.

Item No	Item
1.	<p>CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS</p> <p>a) Attendance and Apologies</p> <p>Present: Mrs H. Reid, Mr K. Webb, Ms. S Corbett, Mr S Pollard, Mr D Sagar, Ms K. Scott, Ms. C Meharg, Prof. A Woodside, Ms B Larkin</p> <p>Apologies: None</p> <p>In Attendance: Dr M. Malone (Director of Curriculum & Information Services), Mrs M. McLeigh (Acting Secretary to the Governing Body); Ms K Ledgerwood; Mrs H Miller; Mrs C Henderson; Mr P Walsh</p> <p>In the Chair: Mrs H. Reid</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting particularly new committee members.</p> <p>b) Declarations of conflicts of interest</p> <p>The Chair asked if members had any conflicts of interest with the agenda items. There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.</p> <p>c) Minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2016</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that no amendments had been received by members, no changes were requested, and the minutes were accepted to be presented at the next full GB meeting.</p>
2.	<p>MATTERS ARISING:</p> <p>a) Education Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Chair thanked members for their previous recommendations and advised that the GB Chair recently met with the subcommittee Chairs to review and agree Committee Terms of Reference for 2016/17. The seven agreed terms of reference for the Education Committee are listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Curriculum;2. Development of the CDP;3. Teaching Quality;4. Enrolment & Marketing;5. Pass Rates and Student Destinations;6. Student Companies and Customer Satisfaction;7. Pastoral Care and Safeguarding. <p>Members agreed with the Terms of Reference outlined.</p>

	<p>b) Programme of Work for 2016/17</p> <p>The Chair stated that the Terms of Reference outlined will inform the Education Committee's Programme of Work going forward in 2016/17, as well as issues discussed at the recent Governors' Strategy Day held on 10th October 2016. This is dealt with under Item 4.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>a) Letter from ETI regarding submission of SER/QIP</p> <p>The Chair referred members to the commissioning letter received from DfE and highlighted the deadline for submission as 18th November 2016.</p> <p>H Miller confirmed that the scrutiny inspection is built into this process. H Miller explained that due to timing of the next Governing Body she had requested an extension for submission but this was not granted citing operational reasons. The Chair confirmed with the Governing Body Chair that the SER/QIP will be approved at the Education Committee of 15th November 2016. K Webb commented that the full Governing Body will also receive the SER/QIP submission.</p> <p>H Miller advised that there was a slight change to the process in respect of the new HE Quality Model which will be detailed later in the meeting.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS:</p> <p>a) GB Strategy Day Follow-up</p> <p>The Chair asked members for reflective feedback on the Strategy Day in respect of the Education Committee which is summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) College Development Plan – consider a framework for measuring impact of the Plan. Members commended the long-term strategy of the CDP which endorses the College's 2020 Vision. ii) High Level Projects – these would be projects in addition to CDP targets, for example, Community Planning, the Academy Model, and Internationalisation. The role of the Education Committee would be to consider the nature of these projects and how they interact and provide support to the CMT in the outworking of these. iii) FLU Targets – suggested that the tight targets/constraints set by the Department may be challenged using sector-wide momentum discussion with the Department. The Education Committee could support the full Governing Body in this respect. iv) Pastoral Care and Resilience Building – members suggested that the Committee could use their experience to give more proactive support in the role of pastoral care, rather than receive updates on statistics. Resilience building should be a focus in the sense of helping students deal with pressure and misfortune and ensuring the necessary resources are in place to support student mental health and well-being. <p>The Chair thanked members for their feedback and said that comments discussed are built into the Terms of Reference and Programme of Work for 2016/17.</p>

5.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

a) Student/Trainee Disciplinary and Behaviour Policy

The Chair commented that the Policy had been previously circulated to the Education Committee for comment as well as the full Governing Body. The Chair welcomed P Walsh to the meeting to clarify and address concerns raised at the Governing Body meeting.

The Chair outlined the concerns round 3 key areas as follows:

- i) Section 75 Discrimination
- ii) Procedures in place to implement Policy and who it applies to
- iii) Responsibility lines in terms of Governors approving the Policy and implementation of the Policy, particularly in respect of serious disciplinary cases.

P Walsh explained that he undertook an in-depth review of disciplinary procedures to feed back into changes in the Policy and advised that a wide range of consultation took place with students and staff during his recent review of the Policy. K Webb clarified that the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is operational and agreed by CMT, whereas the Policy is high level with details contained in the SOP.

P Walsh summarised the content of the SOP which gives clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour, outlines the range of issues which students may face and the disciplinary consequences and sanction levels if standards expected are breached. P Walsh confirmed that the procedure applies to ALL students.

The Chair enquired why sanctions in cases of gross misconduct didn't align with the staff version of disciplinary procedures. P Walsh and M Malone advised that due to background behavioural issues of some students, in contrast to professional background of staff, some flexibility is necessary within the student version of the SOP.

C Meharg enquired why references to gross and serious misconduct sanctions did not appear in the latest version of the Policy presented. K Webb advised that the key document for staff and students is the SOP, whereas the Policy is a guiding document.

K Scott asked if the SOP could be supplied to Governors for *noting* in line with the Policy. This was agreed.

P Walsh estimated 200 warnings were issued over the last year, with 10-15 serious cases of indiscipline. The Chair commended the culture within SERC for managing disciplinary issues. P Walsh agreed to arrange a reporting mechanism of cases for Governors.

The Chair thanked P Walsh for a comprehensive update and summarised that SOPs and Policies must be kept separate, with Governors approving Policies at high level, and operational responsibility lying with the CMT. The Disciplinary SOP is to be made available to Committee members for information on the GB teamsite.

6. Items for Noting

a) Update on Applications and Enrolment

M Malone advised that his report previously circulated is a rolling document and that updates will be provided to Governors over the next months as enrolments continue to settle. As of 10 October 2016 current FLU delivery is sitting at 93% of the full FLU target of 6994. This will change once PT and Essential Skills courses are added to the enrolment and FLU count.

The Chair thanked M Malone for the gender and religion breakdown provided in the report, which had been requested at an earlier meeting. M Malone explained that an analysis of applications and conversion rates is also detailed in the Appendix of the report.

A lengthy discussion followed and M Malone summarised some trends as follows:

- HE FT enrolments at MaSN – expansion only possible in HE PT courses.
- HE additionality still to be completed.
- Essential Skills likely to remain well under target, sector pattern.
- Pilot traineeship programmes are increasing, this will mean a further decline in standalone ES enrolments, as ES form a component of the traineeships.
- A decline in TFS and FT FE students is partly due to falling demographics and displacement to traineeships. This FT FE decline has a subsequent knock-on effect for ES enrolments and the FLUs generated.

Some other key points discussed are summarised as follows:

- Traineeship qualifications are not portfolio based but assessed by external testing. This will affect performance success levels and also will cause time lag of confirmation from Awarding Organisation on outcomes. These views have been relayed to DfE.
- Increased competition from local schools and 6th Form Colleges has a direct impact on FE Colleges enrolments. K Webb advised that SERC Schools Partnerships team are in constant dialogue with the school sector re collaboration. Prof. Woodside commended collaboration with Schools in the Lisburn area. K Webb advised that SERC hosted a Careers Convention on 18th October 2016, a regional event with Schools' Careers Advisors present, which gave an overview of Project-Based Learning, Technology Enhanced Learning and Work Placement opportunities available through SERC. Schools Partnerships Team are partly reassured and have a Communication's Strategy for 14-19 yr olds in place.
- K Webb advised members regarding his meeting with the Education Minister on 19th October and recent meeting with the Director of Education in the Education Authority. The Principal is hopeful that there will be some positives from these discussions and that inefficiencies within the current Schools/Education sector FLU model will be addressed. There are also some indications that DfE will engage with the sector on the existing model.

The Chair commended the Principal for his continued lobbying to political representatives, increased advertised campaigns, a clear Communication's Strategy, and influencing at sector level on behalf of SERC. K Webb advised that a big challenge remains to reach the 56% of the 16-64 yr old population who are only qualified up to Level 2. These groups need upskilled but historically it is difficult to engage these learners. C Meharg suggested targeting these groups through youth organisations or community groups.

M Malone commented that the SERC provision in these smaller campus/community areas is constrained by what will attract FLU funding. K Webb advised that Social Media is being used to gain feedback from the public on what courses are in demand.

The Chair asked M Malone to give an update on the Project Based Learning initiative he is coordinating across the sector. M Malone gave a summary of the PBL training completed over the summer which drew on the experience gained from exploring the BASQUE model. SERC PBL differs from the BASQUE model and focusses on achieving inter-connectivity between vocational areas and improving progression using blended learning and the support of PBL and Moodle mentors to ensure best practice.

PBL is currently being piloted in 2016/17 and started with a 2-week induction process underpinning PBL methodology. Students showcased their projects and the overall feedback from staff and students was very positive.

K Webb advised that a recent visit to a College in Denmark introduced SERC to the journeyman test assessment scheme. SERC are currently exploring the methodology and considering how to implement this journeyman test approach on a smaller scale.

The Chair and S Pollard commented that these approaches are strategically in line with the SERC vision.

M Malone gave a brief overview of recent training delivered to academic staff by Dr John Kelly and the use of the EntreBRAINeur App. which is designed to explore entrepreneurial learning preferences and embrace “whole-brain” approach to learning. Using the App., a snapshot will be taken at the beginning and end of year to see if students learning style has changed as a result of PBL.

C Meharg suggested this innovative approach to learning should be used as part of our recruitment campaigns stressing the opportunity to “learn differently” at SERC. Prof. Woodside commented that CDIO Committee need to be advised of this developmental work being trialled at SERC. The Committee agreed and M Malone advised that an event to host the IT Institute is also being arranged.

The Chair thanked M Malone for a very comprehensive overview.

b) DfE Published Enrolment Statistics

The Chair asked if members had comments on the paper previously circulated. The Chair of GB commended the enrolments and achievements statistics.

c) New Operating Model for HE Quality Assessment

H Miller commented on the paper circulated previously to members and advised that DfE are aligning regulations closer to HEFCE which requires a slight change in the HE assurance process. Quality assurance process through annual submission of WCSER/WCQIP remains the same, however Governors will be required to sign an Annual Quality Assessment Return Form to confirm Governors’ approval. H Miller advised that as quality assurance processes continue to achieve a high grade on inspection, this extra level of assurance should not cause any issue.

d) Update on Part-time Lesson Observation 15/16

C Henderson summarised the background to the Lesson Observation 2015/16 report, previously circulated. In 2014/15 a pilot project was undertaken to improve the quality of the teaching, training and learning (T&L) provided by part-time lecturers in the SERC. This pilot identified key priorities for further development and in May 2015 CMT agreed a target to implement lesson observations and provide appropriate support for 70 part-time staff for inclusion in the 2015/16 College Development Plan.

C Henderson outlined the detail of support given and the positive feedback received and confirmed that the target was met with 74 staff having 83 observations and a programme of support implemented for both PT staff who required additional support and those PT who requested it.

K Webb advised that due to the significant level of PT staff delivering on programmes across SERC the decision was taken to invest in this level of CPD for PT staff. S Pollard commented that the proportion of PT staff requiring support is quite high. Prof. Woodside commented that this would be expected given that PT teachers often come from industry without classroom experience. C Henderson agreed with this.

C Henderson confirmed that this process is ongoing and a CDP target for 2016/17 has been agreed as implementing lesson observations for 70 part-time **and** full-time staff with 80% of lecturers not requiring further assistance or support.

The Chair and S Pollard commended the report commenting that the success of this process demonstrates a huge culture shift with lecturing staff showing commitment to engage. C Henderson confirmed that lesson observation is a supportive process, and advised that ILT Pedagogy Mentors have a “wish list” waiting list which further underlines the supportive nature of the process.

B Larkin and the Chair praised this proactive approach to improving teaching standards and in conjunction with the investment in Project-Based Learning remarked that SERC seemed to be ahead of the curve.

K Scott asked how PT lecturers were chosen for lesson observation and how feedback was collated. C Henderson advised that lecturers contracted for 8 hours or more were invited to an initial workshop, after which lesson observations were scheduled and dates agreed in advance. K Webb emphasised that there is an expectation on PT staff to engage fully to ensure expected teaching standards are met. C Henderson explained that the observer circulates a short feedback proforma at the end of the lesson to record comments.

The Chair thanked C Henderson for this detailed overview.

e) Widening Access and participation Plan-2017/18-2019/20 (WAPP)

H Miller commented on the paper previously circulated to members and explained that completion of the WAPP is a DfE requirement to allow for enhanced fees to be charged. She advised that over the last 4 years, SERC targets have been met, which is a reflection of the commitment of the College in widening access for the groups outlined within the Plan.

The Chair commended SERC's commitment to widening access. The Chair of the GB also commended the Plan but asked if efforts could be extended in this regard. K Webb explained that SERC already engages more widely than is reflected in the plan where groups to be targeted were specified by DfE.

S Pollard commented that while this Plan reports on specific activity, as discussed previously, SERC is broadly committed to access issues generally.

f) Inspection Update: Essential Skills and Youth Training Programmes

C Henderson commented on the two reports previously circulated, - the Evaluation of the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative and the Youth Training Pilot Programme published in June 2016. These are sector-wide reports so have limited value. Specific SERC feedback was received in March 2016 and reported on to Governors. There were no further comments.

g) Cause for Concern Referrals

P Walsh made reference to the report previously circulated to members which reported 39 Cause for Concern referrals in 2016/17 up to 30th September 2016, broken down across concern issue, Campus, and Curriculum Area. Of the 39 referrals received to date, 36% fall under the broad heading of issues relating to Mental Health and Well-Being. K Webb added that some students could have multiple referrals.

A development for 2016/17 will be not only to record the primary 'presenting issue', but as the year progresses to pursue what other issues are linked to this primary issue. This will allow the Pastoral Care Team to tailor support to the wider student population at key points in the year. P Walsh advised that at this early stage of the academic year the concerns logged can be "for information" to highlight likelihood of risk if no action is taken.

Support available could include Carecall, Counselling, Youth Health Clinic facilities, as well as referral to SERC Finance for help with funding issues. K Webb advised that in the rare event of a serious cause for concern, R Duncan contacts the Social Services Gateway Team.

After a detailed overview of the support available and the processes in place was given by P Walsh, the Chair opened the discussion for comments.

The Chair advised members of an £11 million lottery funded project called "Together for You" launched in Northern Ireland to enhance linkages between different support organisations to improve the level of support given to vulnerable groups. She asked if SERC had seen a noted improvement in connection between external agencies in addressing gaps in support available to the 16-24 yr old age group.

K Webb and P Walsh both reported increased action on part of GPs and improved linkages between SERC and external support agencies but were unable to report on improved links between external agencies themselves. P Walsh reported on the excellent relationship SERC has with the local Health Trust. He advised that in addition to SERC mandatory online training modules to support staff in dealing with Causes of Concern, SERC had access to free training provided by the Trust for example, ASSIST training, to equip staff in dealing with causes for concern.

S Corbett commented on the low incidences of cause for concern within vocational area of training and suggested this could be due to support provided by Training Support Officers. K Webb advised that FE and HE students have access to support from SERC Extra.

S Pollard commented that the incidences of mental health concerns recorded re-emphasise the earlier discussion of the need for resilience building.

	<p>The Chair of GB commended the detail of the report and the assurance it gives and asked if there is a process for measuring outcomes. P Walsh advised that he will be tracking and analysing outcomes of support provided in terms of retention for example, as the 2016/17 year progresses.</p> <p>Prof. Woodside said that the statistics gave encouragement as they indicate the support mechanism in place is being used and readily available to students to allow necessary support to be given before concerns escalate to cases of self-harm. He suggested that the College draw down on the experience that the Governors can give in terms of enhancing the support network available. The Chair of the GB concurred with this and where possible felt Governors should be proactive to support the College Pastoral Care Team.</p> <p>In summary, the Chair thanked P Walsh and K Webb for the update on Cause for Concern referrals, and for the assurances given that the necessary processes are in place to provide support to students. Governors accepted the value of report but agreed that tracking and monitoring of outcomes would be very useful.</p> <p>h) DEL Health Check – Issue 4</p> <p>The Health Check had been circulated previously, members had no comments on this.</p>
7.	ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS - None
8.	<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The Chair sought agreement on the proposed start time of 6pm for the next meeting planned for 15th November 2016, Lisburn Campus. This was agreed, with 2 members giving apologies, S Pollard and C Meharg. The Chair advised that the WCSER will be circulated in advance to members for comments, to allow feedback from members unable to attend the meeting, when approval will be sought for the WCSER submission.</p> <p>It was noted that B Larkin requested receipt of the WCSER in hard copy. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and input to the meeting.</p>

	Time Arrived	Time Left	Duration	Entitlement to Payment
				Y/N
Corbett, Shirleen	5.00 pm	7.07 pm	2.07 hrs	N
Larkin, Barbara	5.15 pm	7.07 pm	1.52 hrs	Y
Meharg, Claire	5.00 pm	7.07 pm	2.07 hrs	Y
Pollard, Steve	5.00 pm	7.07 pm	2.07 hrs	Y
Reid, Heather	5.00 pm	7.07 pm	2.07 hrs	Y
Sagar, Deep	5.00 pm	7.07 pm	2.07 hrs	N
Scott, Kim	5.00 pm	7.07 pm	2.07 hrs	Y
Webb, Ken	5.00 pm	7.07 pm	2.07 hrs	N
Woodside, Prof Alan	5.00 pm	7.07 pm	2.07 hrs	Y