

**SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

**Governing Body – Education Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019, 5.10pm, Lisburn Campus**

Item No	Item
1.	<p><b>Chair’s Business</b></p> <p><b>a) Attendance and Apologies</b></p> <p><b>Present:</b> Mrs H Reid, Mr K Webb (Principal/CEO), Mr G Hetherington (Temporary Chair of the Governing Body), Mr A Corbett, Mr J Mackell, Prof A Woodside, Mr S Pollard, Mrs C King, Mr N Bodger</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Miss A Gallagher, Mrs K Fraser</p> <p><b>In Attendance:</b>, Mrs. H McKee (Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support), Mrs. C Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Mr. W Greer (Chief Training and Contracts Officer), Mrs. E Flynn (Commercial Contracts Manager), Mrs. P Philpott (Head of the Learning Academy)</p> <p><b>In the Chair:</b> Heather Reid</p> <p><b>b) Declarations of Conflict of Interest</b></p> <p>No conflicts of interest were made in relation to the presented agenda items.</p> <p><b>c) Minutes from meeting 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019</b></p> <p>The Chair invited members to review the minutes from the previous meeting. The committee reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting and agreed they were a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Proposer: Steve Pollard</b></p> <p><b>Seconder: Gareth Hetherington</b></p> <p><b>d) Chairs Update</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that the meeting of Chairs of Northern Ireland Further Education Curriculum, Quality and Engagement Committees in the 6 colleges has been organised for 6<sup>th</sup> June at Belfast Met and she will provide feedback on the meeting to this committee at their next meeting. She</p>

	<p>advised that the Director of Curriculum from Belfast Met would also be in attendance and she will raise a query on this on the committee's behalf.</p>
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <p><b>a) Action Points from meeting 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019</b></p> <p>The Chair asked members to note that all actions had been completed or were addressed on the meeting's agenda. The Chair advised that Mr. Pollard had submitted a paper to her that was relevant to the discussion and agreed actions on staff resilience from the February meeting. The Chair advised members that she would like to add this to the programme of work for 2019/20 and will discuss this under agenda 10 later in the meeting.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <p><b>a) Impact of Staff Mentoring on College Performance</b></p> <p>The Head of the Learning Academy (HoLA) began her presentation by thanking the committee for inviting her to share the work currently being carried out throughout the College. The HoLA gave a very detailed outline of the work that is being carried out in relation to staff mentoring and the impact that it has on the College's performance. The committee were advised that the mentoring programme has contributed to the College's achievements and has also received external evaluation from QAA and ETI, both of whom have noted that mentoring programme is an area of good practice that develops the ILT skills of lecturers, promotes effective learning, is used to share effective practice through the College's virtual learning platform and inform future CDP planning. The HoLA described how the College is able to share best practice with other Colleges and that the reputation of the College in this area now precedes itself as an outstanding leader in this field.</p> <p>The Committee Chair thanked the HoLA for her presentation and invited members to ask questions.</p> <p>Mr. Pollard complimented the HoLA on her presentation and stated that it was both professional and inspiring, other members echoed this view and agreed that staff would be inspired to take part in the programme due to the energy and enthusiasm the HoLA has for the projects.</p>

In response to a question from a member the HoLA gave the committee an overview of how the On Minute CPD emails are circulated to staff and how the topics are chosen for each one.

Mrs. Kerr advised that in her role with Catalyst Enc she is aware that there is an interest in industry for management training and enquired if the College is pursuing any external courses. The HoLA confirmed that she has previously worked with the business services team to market a level 5 course to industry and that there are plans to market a level 7 course to run in October, the intake will be a mix of SERC staff and external parties.

The Chair thanked the HoLA for her impressive presentation and noted that whilst it was very detailed the information is of value to the Governing Body and she would like all Governors to have the opportunity to hear the presentation. She concluded by conveying how proud she was to be involved with a College that is driving engagement and enhancement which in her view is more important than meeting targets and KPI's.

**b) Student Survey**

The Director of Strategic Planning Quality and Support directed members to the written report provided detailing the results of the Student Survey carried out in January 2019. The Director highlighted that results are very positive however in comparing numbers with other Colleges there is a question over how robust the benchmarking exercise can be as there is a discrepancy in the sample sizes used for each College.

**4. Employers**

*At this juncture the Commercial Contracts Manager and Chief Training & Contracts Officer joined the meeting.*

**a) Business Services**

The Commercial Contracts Manger presented an update of the Business Services work; she highlighted the portfolio of Business Services Provision, the areas in demand and the increase in income per year that the unit has generated. She also advised the committee that the College performance in the Curriculum Hub areas has been successful in supporting companies across the board and not just within the Construction area which is SERC's designated hub. The CCM

concluded her presentation by advising the committee of some of the challenges facing the unit such as SERCs allocation for both Skills Focus and InnovateUs is significantly less than the college can deliver and ensuring there are mechanisms to enhance curriculum development.

The Chair thanked the CCM for her presentation and invited members to ask questions, the following points were noted in discussion:

- In response to a question from the Chair the CCM advised that the blocks the team faced with the Bridge to Employment programmes was because of requirements DfE have placed on the programmes, with the particular one highlighted during the presentation 16 applications were received for 11 roles and the requirement for DfE is to have 3 times as many applications as the post advertised.
- The committee noted that the College has performed extremely well in other areas of the Curriculum hubs outside of the specified area that has been assigned to the College, the Principal further highlighted that this is also separate to the commercial income that is being generated in these areas. The Chair suggested that this success should be highlighted with DfE.
- In response to a comment from a member on the hub for Health and Social Care the CMM acknowledged that there is a mismatch between students leaving with a level 2 qualification and those going into employment in this area. She advised that issues such as poor pay and working conditions is something that is a barrier to employment in this area for many people and it is something, she can liaise with the careers service on to address at entry level.
- In response to a query from a member the Chief Training and Contracts Officer confirmed that both the UK and Rol governments have committed to further funding for FUSION post Brexit.
- The CMM advised that in terms of the Innovate Us scheme collaboration across the sector is useful when the College does not have the in-house expertise to deliver a course or a private company can be sourced, both of which DfE are open to using.

The Chair thanked the CMM for her presentation on behalf of the committee.

*At this juncture the Commercial Contracts Manger left the meeting.*

**b) TFS and Apprentices Update**

The Chief Training and Contracts Officer presented the committee with an update on Training for Success and Apprenticeship NI, he began by providing the committee with an overview of the portfolio of training programmes and highlighted the recent trends in enrolments for both TFS and apprenticeships. The CT&CO concluded his presentation by highlighting the challenges in this area for example, the inclusion of an exam in essential skills and advised the committee of the several new initiatives planned for this area. In discussion the following points were noted:

- In response to a question from the Temporary Chair of the GB, the CT&CO gave an overview of the pathway that is available to students to get to HLA. He advised that most students come through the FE route and that is why he is keen for the College to shape the apprenticeship framework in construction with industry.
- The CT&CO responded to a members query on foundation degree by advising that the issue in this area is that there is no flexibility with the degrees as they need to tie in with the university year and therefore the College is unable to accept any late comers onto the course even by the end of September.

The Chair thanked the CT&CO for his presentation on behalf of the committee.

*At this juncture the Chief Training & Contracts Officer left the meeting and the Head of the Learning Academy joined the meeting.*

**5. Social Inclusion**

**a) Update on Learning Support Services**

In presenting the report the Director of Strategic Planning Quality and Support highlighted section 5 of the report that detailed the sources of funding available to the College to assist students with additional needs. She then directed members to section 7 of the report that has set out the key issues facing the College in this area namely the high demand for services and the regulation of the funding sources. The Director informed the committee that budgets are tightly managed by the Learning Support team however, despite this the cost of interpreters has come over budget.

	<p>The Chair advised that she would like to focus on this area in the next academic year as part of the programme of work as there are various strands that need to be reviewed including the changes being made to disability legislation, she noted that the Governing Body need to understand these wider issues so that they can provide the appropriate strategic support and direction to the management team to address them. The Chair added that this is not only an issue for this committee but also the Finance and Audit committees and she committed to working with the other Committee Chairs to ensure the Governing Body has oversight of the key issues and risks as they evolve.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>College Development Plan</b></p> <p><b>a) Draft College Development Plan 2019/20</b></p> <p><b>b) College Development Plans/Budget Update 2019/20</b></p> <p>The Chair began this discussion by setting the context of the College Development Plan and informed members that the DfE Guide for Governors 2019 sets out the role of the Governing Body and highlight that all strategy documents should feed into the Departmental Strategy FE Means Success. She then highlighted that the guide specifically sets out the Outcome Based Accountability approach that Colleges have been asked to adopt to complete their College Development Plans and based on the information which will be presented to the committee there is clearly a distinct lack of dovetailing on all these elements. The Chair then invited the Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support to update, members on the progress of the CDP 2019/20.</p> <p>The Director of SPQ&amp;S began her presentation of the draft report by providing the committee with an overview of the timeline the College has worked to as set by DfE to produce a draft CDP. She advised that the commissioning note received on 12<sup>th</sup> February had been followed in drafting the plan. A few days after these two further instructions were received from the Department asking for other information to be included such as reference to Brexit. The original submission date had been 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The draft CDP was then presented to the committee and the Governing Body at their meetings in February. She highlighted at this stage of the process the College had not yet received a budget for the and further requests were made from DfE to</p>

include data on social inclusion and KPI's which the College debated with the Department and the revised CDP was agreed in principle by the Governing Body at their meeting in March.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March the College received indication of a budget and the Chair of the Education Committee approved the draft plan in tandem with the indicated budget. At the bi-lateral meeting with the Department in April further cosmetic changes were requested and it was then that the College were advised that further cuts would be made to the budget, but no exact figure was disclosed. The notes the Principal received of this meeting have not indicated an exact amount either.

The enclosed letter which was received on 3<sup>rd</sup> May indicated that £216k will be cut from the College's budget and the Director advised the committee that she is still working through the requested changes.

The Principal informed members that a further submission has been requested by DfE for Wednesday 15 May and it seems that two scenarios have been requested by DfE. He further advised that he communicated with the FE Director on the lack of coherence in the approach to the CDP by the Department at the bilateral meeting. He highlighted to members that whilst the College's MaSN numbers have been reduced Belfast Met have had their MaSN funding increased because they appeared to meet their MaSN 2018/19. However, SERC have been allocated less money for Skills Focus and Innovate Us having over delivered on these two programmes. Therefore, in his communication to DfE the Principal advised he will request the same approach is taken with SERC in this area as there had been an inconsistency of approach by DfE with Belfast Met and their delivery of Higher Education.

The Principal highlighted that the College is not in a position to start reducing the provision that is currently delivered and if this matter is not resolved by the Department it will make it increasingly difficult for the College to manage its budget. Two CDP's will be submitted that cover both scenarios i.e. one that includes the budget cuts set out in the communication of 3<sup>rd</sup> May and one that does not.

The Chair informed members that procedurally this leaves the Governing Body and Education out of sync again as neither is able to fully approve this draft CDP. The Principal reminded members that the Permanent Secretary will approve the CDP and it will remain draft until then, however, further changes may be requested again during the June monitoring rounds.

The Chair noted that the committee are content that the College Management Team have followed the direction given to them by DfE to produce the draft College Development Plan 2019/20 and the committee are therefore content with the strategic direction of the CDP.

**Action Point:** The College will submit two draft College Development Plan's that cover both scenarios in terms of the budget allocation

**Action Point:** The Principal will communicate with the Director of FE to request a fair approach to funding for SERC and provide an update to the FGP Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June

#### **c) College Development Plan 2018/19 Progress Report**

Members noted the recent progress report and commented that it was a good piece of work which they were content to accept. The Chair noted there were no outstanding measures and the report details the positive work of the College.

#### **d) Applications and Enrolments**

The Principal directed members to the written report and highlighted that the College will meet its enrolment target and a new process is planned for applications to tighten up the process and ensure that all applications are serious and not being used as a backup plan. Members commented that they were reassured by the report as it had been a red area for the College. The Chair noted that all three committees are monitoring this issue as a decline in enrolments will also have financial implications.

#### **e) Student's Union CDP Poster**



	<p>In the absence of the Student Governor the Secretary to the Governing Body read an email to members from the Student Engagement Manger confirming that the Students' Union worked collaboratively across the four main SERC Campuses through focus groups to develop the CDP poster. The student body have provided feedback that they are very happy with the poster and that this makes the CDP more accessible and easier to understand for them.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Higher Education</b></p> <p>The Chair asked members to note that there is no update on Higher Education for this meeting.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Policies Review Schedule</b></p> <p><b>a) Safeguarding Policy</b></p> <p>The committee noted the changes to the policy and on the recommendation from Mr. Mackell the Director of SQP&amp;S agreed to include an enhanced definition on 'Financial or material abuse' as he advised that financial abuse is prevalent.</p> <div data-bbox="209 1070 1477 1191" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Action Point:</b> Further amendments will be made to the Safeguarding Policy to include an enhanced definition of 'Financial or material abuse'.</p> </div>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Items for Information</b></p> <p><b>a) Cause for Concerns</b></p> <p>The Director of SPQ&amp;S presented the Cause for Concerns written report and advised that section 3 of the report has been added to highlight the actions that have been taken since the previous report; including the arrangements that have been with Safeguarding Board NI to deliver Tier 1 Trauma Awareness training for all staff which was discuss at the last meeting and will form part of the broader piece of work on staff resilience.</p> <p>The Chair enquired if there any spikes across the Sector that the College need to be aware of to ensure sufficient support is in place and in response Mr. Pollard advised that the biggest issue is early childhood trauma which when viewed in its entirety is staggering. The Chair noted that the committee received a presentation at their previous meeting on the support in place and were</p>

	<p>content that the College have not only support in place but also further plans to support staff and build resilience.</p> <p><b>b) Annual Provider Review 2018-19</b></p> <p>The Principal asked the committee to note the enclosed correspondence which is formal notification advising the College has met the APR standards.</p> <p><b>c) Effectiveness of Quality Improvement Planning 2018/19</b></p> <p>The Principal asked the committee to note the enclosed correspondence which is formal notification advising that following the ETI scrutiny of the QIP in February 2019 the College is planning effectively to sustain improvement.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated the Principal and his team on both these achievements.</p>
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Plan of Work 2019/20</b></p> <p>The Chair requested that all members consider the plan of work for the next academic year and advise which particular themes or topics they would like to review at each meeting, during a brief discussion the following areas were agreed:</p> <p><b>September meeting-Special Educational Needs and Building Resilience</b></p> <p><b>September meeting-Project Based Learning (on interaction questions)</b></p> <p><b>November meeting-Results/Performance</b></p> <div data-bbox="209 1597 1477 1715" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Action Point:</b> Members were asked to advise the GB Secretary or the Chair of further areas for review by the committee in 2019/20 by midday on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019</p> </div> <p>In concluding this discussion members of the committee commented on the three presentations that they had received during this meeting and stated that they were both impressive and professional.</p>
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p>

**a) Engagement Report April 2019**

The Director of SPQ&S presented the report to members and highlighted the wealth of engagement that has been undertaken by the College since the last meeting, She advised that the introduction of Restart Light as a taster has engaged 59 people with the College and there are further plans to enhance these numbers with the development of a creche in the Newcastle campus, for which funding has been applied for to accommodate these plans.

The Chair thanked members for their contribution during the meeting and also for changing the venue of this meeting.

**Date and time of next meeting:**

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019, 5.30pm, Lisburn Campus

**The meeting concluded at 19.49**