

## SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

### Minutes of a meeting of the **Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee**

held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 5.00 pm

in the Boardroom, Dungannon Campus

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- PRESENT:**
- Mrs Maureen Brunt
  - Mr Tom Corr (*via MS Teams*) (*from item 4.1*)
  - Mrs Sandra Isherwood (*via MS Teams*)
  - Ms Celine McCartan, Chief Executive (*from item 5.3.3*)
  - Ms Anne McCleary (*via MS Teams*) (*items 4.2 – 5.3.4 only*)
  - Dr Lynsey Quinn, Committee Chair
- IN ATTENDANCE:**
- Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
  - Mr Pdraig McNamee, Director of Curriculum
- APOLOGIES:**
- Mrs Deborah Brown
  - Dr Frances Campbell
  - Mr Liam Curran, Head of Higher Education

#### **1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES**

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mrs Brown, Dr Campbell and Mr Curran. It was noted that Mr McNamee would lead on the Review of Higher Education agenda item in Mr Curran's absence.

#### **2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

Dr Quinn noted her employment with the Open University as well as her husband's employment with Ulster University.

#### **3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17 January 2024.

There were no matters arising.

#### **4.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 List of Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.02 Management Update on Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.03 College Curriculum Vision
- Paper 05.02 Essential Skills Review and Action Plan
- Paper 05.05 Review of Special Educational Needs Provision Terms of Reference.

#### **4.1 Curriculum Profile**

Mr McNamee reported on the regular submission of funding bids to finance the delivery of curriculum to meet local needs, noting the risk that such investments in curriculum development will not attract long term funding. He also reported on collaboration with the Strategic Alliance Group on the feasibility of the development of a number of All Age Apprenticeships for commencement in September 2024.

***Mr Corr joined the meeting at this juncture.***

#### **4.2 Student Experience**

Mr McNamee reflected on the continued awareness raising of the College's new values and on the next steps in the translation of these values into the behaviours expected of staff and students as well as the practical integration of these into college operations. He referenced the draft College Curriculum Vision in paper 04.03 outlining the vision for the college experience afforded to students in terms of skills, progression and personal development and thanked members for the feedback already received on this document.

Members commented favourably on the contents of the College Curriculum Vision document and undertook to provide further feedback to Mr McNamee following the meeting.

***Ms McCleary joined the meeting at this juncture.***

At a later stage in the meeting, it was agreed that the College Curriculum Vision is presented to the Governing Body at its April 2024 meeting.

**ACTION: College Curriculum Vision to be presented to the Governing Body.**

#### **4.3 Essential Skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

Mr McNamee reminded members of the challenges in Essential Skills and ESOL success rates. He advised of the change to a modular ESOL delivery model in an attempt to address the success rate challenges and, in response to a suggestion from a member, undertook to consider an online model to support potential students who are unable to participate in on-site programmes.

In response to a query from a member on the challenges in Essential Skills success rates, Mr McNamee advised of the College's relatively high delivery volume in this area as well as of its decreasing success rates. He went on to explain the factors identified as contributing to the decreasing success rates including the change to the assessment model set by the awarding organisation, the placement of Essential Skills within the college structure and low attendance due to timetabling matters and advised of the changes implemented to address the factors under the College's control. In response to members' suggestions, he undertook to consider the introduction of an option for a fast track Essential Skills programme and to categorise the actions in paper 05.02 into themes with associated milestones.

#### **4.4 Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Mr McNamee referenced the proposed Terms of Reference for a Review of SEN provision for discussion under the Management Report agenda item.

## 5.0 **MANAGEMENT REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01a FE Sector Report for 2018-19 to 2022-23
- Paper 05.01b Student Performance and Destination Data 2022-23
- Paper 05.02 Essential Skills Review and Action Plan
- Paper 05.03 Costs per eFTS
- Paper 05.04 Level 2 Traineeship Reform for September 2024
- Paper 05.05 Review of SEN Terms of Reference
- Paper 05.06 All Age Apprenticeships Options
- Paper 05.07 Social Inclusion Report
- Paper 05.08 Report on Internal Audit Review of Quality Management Process Governance
- Paper 05.09 Quality and Student Engagement Report
- Paper 05.10 SWC Quality Improvement Plan
- Paper 05.11 Data Collection and Reporting Terms of Reference
- Paper 05.12a Brockenhurst College Quality Improvement Plan 21-22
- Paper 05.12b Colchester College Quality Framework Strategy
- Paper 05.12c Croyden College Quality Improvement Strategy
- Paper 05.12d East Riding College Quality Improvement Strategy 2019-20
- Paper 05.12e Lambeth College Quality Improvement Policy 2021-23
- Paper 05.12f Nelson and Colne Quality Strategy and Framework
- Paper 05.12g Summary of College Quality Improvement Plans by Microsoft CoPilot AI Tool
- Paper 05.12h Summary of Quality Improvement Planning and Strategies from other Colleges
- Paper 05.13 Safeguarding Report
- Paper 05.14 Business Development Report
- Paper 05.15 Engineering Hub Report
- Paper 05.16 Marketing Strategy Update
- Paper 05.17 Mobile Device Management Policy
- Paper 05.18 Plagiarism Policy
- Paper 05.19 Accuracy & Completeness of Published Information Policy
- Paper 05.20 Feedback on Assessment Policy
- Paper 05.21 Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education
- Paper 05.22 Learning Resource Centre Policy
- Paper 05.23 Centre Assessment Policy 2024 -25
- Paper 05.24 Higher Education Assessment Policy
- Paper 05.25 Exams Malpractice Policy
- Paper 05.26 Exams Conflict of Interest Policy
- Paper 05.27 Exams Word Processing Policy.

## **5.1 College Development Plan Performance**

### **5.1.1 College Outcomes - Enrolments**

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.1.1 and Papers 05.01a & 05.01b*

Mr McNamee drew attention to the good enrolment performance evidenced to date in 2023/24 as illustrated in the Management Report and commented on the actions taken to enhance enrolments to part-time Higher Education programmes.

### **5.1.2 College Outcomes – Success Rates**

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.1.2 and Papers 05.01a & 05.02*

In response to questions from members, Mr McNamee informed the meeting of the development of curriculum in the area of sustainability, detailed the definition of success as set by the Department for the Economy (DfE) and explained that factors leading to the decrease in overall success rates include low success rates in Essential Skills and other entry level programmes, the accuracy of curriculum administration and lost learning due to action short of strike. He advised that Awarding Bodies have not agreed to any formal mitigations for students affected by the action short of strike and that additional classes have been put in place to support students where necessary.

In relation to reviews of performance, he explained that an updated Further Education (FE) Sector Activity Report incorporating 2023/24 data will be compiled in 2024/25, that the fourth 'We're Listening' staff survey will issue in a number of weeks and that an external evaluation of the effectiveness of the Change Programme is underway.

Responding to a question from the Committee Chair at a later point in the meeting on actions required in response to the FE Sector Activity Report, management explained the importance of this data in curriculum planning and identified the key issues as recruitment of students aged 25 or over, recruitment of females to apprenticeship programmes and Essential Skills achievement rates.

### **5.1.3 College Outcomes – Efficiency**

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.1.3 and Paper 05.03*

Mr McNamee reflected on the request to provide an analysis of cost per student per curriculum area, referenced the information provided in paper 05.03 and suggested that the cost per equivalent full-time student model is used to measure the efficiency of curriculum delivery going forward.

## **5.2 Curriculum Development**

### **5.2.1 Traineeships**

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.2.1 and Paper 05.04*

Mr McNamee reported on the challenge in transitioning all non-employed level 2 provision to traineeships by September 2024 to align with sectoral policy, noting the College's commitment to support this policy where possible.

### 5.2.2 Further Education

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.2.2 and Paper 05.05*

Mr McNamee spoke of the increasing demand for SEN provision and referenced the terms of reference for a planned review of such provision to ensure alignment with community need and the College's mandate.

### 5.2.3 Work Based Learning

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.2.3 and Paper 05.06*

Mr McNamee reported on collaboration with the Strategic Alliance Group on the feasibility of the development of a number of All Age Apprenticeships for commencement in September 2024.

### 5.2.4 Higher Education

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.2.1.1*

Mr McNamee advised on the investigations underway into the introduction of a Dental Health Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) and a Sustainability Degree in September 2025.

### 5.2.5 Social Inclusion

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.2.1.2 and Paper 05.07*

Mr McNamee drew attention to the data provided in paper 05.07 on recruitment to the Rural Economic Accelerator (REAP) and the Step-Up programmes noting his satisfaction with performance against targets to date. He also advised of the development of funding applications to the PeacePlus Programme for additional projects in the fields of Green Skills, Entrepreneurship and Renewable Technology.

## 5.3 Quality Assurance

### 5.3.1 Compliance

*Ref: Management Report Section 2.1 and Paper 05.08*

Mr McNamee reported on the satisfactory assurance awarded following an internal audit review of Quality Management Processes noting that this represents the highest rating possible under the internal audit assessment framework.

### 5.3.2 Student Engagement

*Ref: Management Report Section 2.2 and Paper 05.09*

Mr McNamee commented on the concerns regarding success rates and in particular on the number of absences from planned examinations. He explained that success, attendance and student feedback is closely monitored and that the reasons for non-participation in examinations is under investigation.

He also reported on the College's achievements at a recent HE GAA competition and as well as on the social media traction generated by this event. He noted the opportunity to expand the extra curricular activities offered by the College and to use these as a marketing tool in the recruitment of students.

### 5.3.3 Teaching & Learning

*Ref: Management Report Section 2.3*

Mr McNamee advised of the mainstreaming of the work of the Project Based Learning Co-Ordinator into the Teaching and Learning Advisor Team.

***Ms McCartan joined the meeting at this juncture.***

### 5.3.4 Quality Improvement

*Ref: Management Report Section 2.4 and Papers 05.10 – 05.12h*

Mr McNamee reported on the ongoing implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan including the delivery of a Data Management, Control and Reporting Project to ensure the integrity of data.

He went on to reference research undertaken into quality improvement plans in other colleges, noting the common elements within as well as the scope to build on the initiatives already in place in the College.

***Ms McCleary withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.***

### 5.3.5 Student Support

*Ref: Management Report Section 2.5 and Paper 05.13*

Mr McNamee informed the Committee of the high demand for counselling services amongst students and sought its endorsement for further investment in this area to reduce waiting times for such services. Members supported the principle that funding is re-allocated from other areas to support students in need of counselling services, where possible.

## 5.4 Business Development

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.14*

Mr McNamee commented on the activities planned to forge closer integration between business development and curriculum teams. He also referenced the ongoing recruitment activity for student mobilities and the development of funding applications to the PeacePlus Programme for additional projects in the fields of Green Skills, Entrepreneurship and Renewable Technology.

## 5.5 Strategic Partnerships

*Ref: Management Report Section 4.0*

Mr McNamee updated the Committee on a meeting held with Ulster University with a view to strengthening relationships between the College and the University. He also drew attention to the activities of the Advanced Manufacturing Hub, led by the College on behalf of the sector.

## 5.6 Resourcing

*Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Paper 05.11*

Mr McNamee advised of the staff resourcing challenges in relation covering staff sickness absences, of a review of timetabling processes to achieve optimal efficiencies in physical resource allocation and of the delivery of a Data Management, Control and Reporting Project to ensure the integrity of data.

## 5.7 Events and PR

*Ref: Management Report Section 6.0 and Paper 05.16*

Mr McNamee spoke of the increased engagement with the College's marketing platforms in 2022/23 and of the workshop held with the Senior Management Team to commence the development of a refreshed Marketing Strategy.

## 5.8 Curriculum Projects

*Ref: Management Report Section 7.0*

Mr McNamee provided an overview of the Artificial Intelligence Project to investigate the potential for the use of artificial intelligence in areas such as teaching and learning, data analysis, college processes and engagement with industry and schools. He noted the scope for governor involvement in this project and undertook to circulate further information to the Committee.

**ACTION: Information on the Artificial Intelligence Project to be circulated.**

## 5.9 Policy Reviews

*Ref: Management Report Section 8.0 and Papers 05.17 – 05.27*

Mr McNamee commented on the increased consultation on policy development and review in order to enhance their relevance and buy in amongst staff. He acknowledged the feedback already received from members on the policies and undertook to make the amendments suggested.

**AGREED: That the following policies are recommended to the Governing Body for approval, subject to the incorporation of the feedback previously provided by members:**

- **Mobile Device Management Policy**
- **Plagiarism Policy**
- **Accuracy & Completeness of Published Information Policy**
- **Feedback on Assessment Policy**
- **Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policy**
- **Learning Resource Centre Policy**
- **Centre Assessment Policy 2024/25**
- **Higher Education Assessment Policy**
- **Examinations Malpractice Policy**
- **Examinations Conflict of Interest Policy**
- **Examinations Word Processing Policy.**

## **6.0 REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Mr McNamee provided an overview of the development of the College's HE provision highlighting STEM subjects, business, accounting, sport and media as areas of specialism and sustainability as an area of growth and paying tribute to staff for upskilling to enable delivery of level 6 degrees.

He advised the Committee of the ongoing review of FE in HE, explained that colleges had traditionally collaborated with local universities and expressed concern that the advocacy for increased HE places in Ulster University's Magee Campus may impact college provision. He confirmed the College's commitment to HE in FE and cited the benefits as affordability, smaller class sizes, good student support, modern facilities and equipment, links with industry and opportunities for international study.

Looking to the future, Mr McNamee noted the assurances to be sought on the reasons for the lesser demand amongst HE students for access to mental health services, advised that modularising programmes to facilitate study over a longer period is being explored and commented on the development of a HE brand for marketing purposes to include the identification of alumni to act as ambassadors for the College.

## **7.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 List of Outstanding Actions.

A review of the status of each of the actions listed in paper 07 was undertaken. It was noted the 2024 Skills Barometer is under development, that the final Whole College Self-Evaluation & Quality Improvement Impact Interim Report is available for circulation and that members will receive an invitation to the launch of the YouthScape Plus programme, scheduled to take place on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024 in the Erne Campus.

A revised list of outstanding actions is included as Appendix B.

## **8.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

No further business was raised.

## **9.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING**

It was noted that the next committee meeting will take place on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in the Dungannon Campus.

*The meeting concluded at 6.50 pm.*

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11 APRIL 2024**

CHAIRPERSON



DATE 11/04/2024



## POLICIES RECOMMENDED TO THE GOVERNING BODY FOR APPROVAL

#	Policy
1	Mobile Device Management Policy
2	Plagiarism Policy
3	Accuracy & Completeness of Published Information Policy
4	Feedback on Assessment Policy
5	Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policy
6	Learning Resource Centre Policy
7	Centre Assessment Policy 2024/25
8	Higher Education Assessment Policy
9	Examinations Malpractice Policy
10	Examinations Conflict of Interest Policy
11	Examinations Word Processing Policy

## SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

#	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	17/01/2024	4.1	Management to present an analysis of sub-regional skills needs when available.
2	17/01/2024	5.1.3	Management to report on the outcome of investigations into the below sector average enrolments from the over 25 age group.
3	17/01/2024	5.9	Management to further review the Anti-Bullying Policy for students to outline the support available to students impacted by bullying.
4	17/01/2024	5.11.1	Management to circulate the final Whole College Self-Evaluation & Quality Improvement Impact Interim Report when available.
5	17/01/2024	5.11.1	Management to undertake a review of policies to ascertain their sufficiency in setting the framework for the use of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning.
6	17/01/2024	7.0	An invitation to the launch of the YouthScape Plus Programme to be extended to committee members.
7	12/03/2024	4.2	College Curriculum Vision to be presented to the Governing Body.
8	12/03/2024	5.8	Information on the Artificial Intelligence Project to be circulated to the Committee.