

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**  
held on Wednesday 23 March 2022 at 9.00 am  
via Microsoft Teams

---

**PRESENT:** Mrs Sandra Isherwood  
Ms Alana Jones-Campbell  
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey  
Ms Anne McCleary  
Mrs Gillian McDowell (Committee Chair)  
Mr Michael Skuce

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive  
Dr Barry McCarron, Senior Business Development Officer (*item 7.0 only*)  
Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body  
Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body  
Mrs Nicola Quinn, Business Development Support Officer (*item 7.0 only*)  
Mrs Eimear Rushe, Head of Human Resources

**APOLOGIES:** Mr Colin Lewis, Interim Chief Executive

**1.0 APOLOGIES**

An apology was tendered on behalf of Mr Lewis.

**2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

**3.0 SAFEGUARDING**

No safeguarding matters were raised.

**4.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04 Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 2 February 2022.

There were no matters arising.

**5.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 05.02 Key Strategic Issues Management Update

## **5.1 Staff Recruitment and Retention**

### **5.1.1 Exceptional Technical Services Action Plan**

With reference to paper 05.02, Dr Cush detailed the background to the development of an exceptional Technical Services Action Plan, noting the pressures caused by the vacancies within the Technical Services Team, the ongoing impact of the March 2022 IT incident and the challenge in providing remote systems access in a safe and managed manner. She then took the Committee through the strands of the Technical Services Action Plan including the use of new recruitment strategies to attract candidates to the six vacancies within the Technical Services team, the employment of ten student interns, temporary redeployments of staff with relevant skills from other business areas, offering overtime to relevant staff, the engagement of external technical consultancy services and the development of an integrated IT helpdesk.

A discussion then followed, during which members welcomed the development of the exceptional Technical Services Action Plan, considered the management structure of the Technical Services team, highlighted the need for continual professional development for technical staff in light of the pace of technology development, commented on the importance of positive staff and student experiences in protecting the reputation of the College and the morale of staff, and suggested that an overall strategic review of the IT infrastructure may be beneficial. Dr Cush welcomed the focus on the Technical Services resourcing challenges, provided assurances on the relevance of the skills of technical staff and spoke of her confidence that infrastructure and support issues can be addressed following the establishment of an appropriately structured and fully resourced Technical Services team. In response to a query on the monitoring of the impact of recruitment strategies, Mrs Rushe confirmed that such data is gathered and analysed on an ongoing basis.

As a result of the above discussion, it was agreed that a Technical Services resourcing proposal will be developed and provided to the Committee as soon as possible along with benchmarking data on the resourcing of Technical Services teams within the sector and information on the continual professional development of technical staff.

**AGREED: that a resourcing proposal for the Technical Services team is provided to the Committee as soon as possible.**

## **5.2 Impact and Resourcing of New Initiatives**

Dr Cush highlighted the need to ensure that the Human Resources team is sufficiently resourced to manage any additional workload arising from recommendations that may emerge from the Change Management Team.

Dr O'Shiel explained that the work of the Change Management Team will take place in parallel with normal college operations and that any recommendations made will be presented to the Governing Body for consideration. He cautioned against any change to the remit of the Change Management Team that may detract it from its core purpose.

## **6.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06                      Management Report
- Paper 06.01                Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report
- Paper 06.02                Equality Update
- Paper 06.03                Staff Resource Report

- Paper 06.04 Fixed-Term Contracts Report
- Paper 06.05 Sickness Absence Report
- Paper 06.06 CEF 2022-01 Pay Award for Lecturers.

Reporting by exception, Mrs Rushe, Head of Human Resources, took the Committee through the key elements of the Management Report focusing on the following papers and issues in particular.

## 6.1 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 06.01*

In response to a question regarding the death of an Apprentice, the meeting was made aware of the circumstances of the accident which took place at the employer's premises and was advised that the College has provided information to the Health & Safety Executive NI as part of its investigation into the incident. It was noted that the College bears no liability for the accident and that the health and safety of staff and students is its key priority.

## 6.2 Human Resources

### 6.2.1 Appointments

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.03*

**AGREED: that the appointments listed in paper 06.03 be ratified by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body.**

### 6.3.2 Staff Requests

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.03*

In addition to the staff requests listed in the report, Mrs Rushe sought approval to recruit to a Temporary Full-Time Lecturer in Creative Media and an Examination Assistant.

**AGREED: that the staff requests listed in paper 06.03, as well as those verbally reported above, be approved by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body.**

### 6.3.3 Other Resourcing Issues

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.03*

Mrs Rushe clarified that the Technical Services Manager has requested approval to work from home twice per week under the Carers' Policy.

**AGREED: that the recommendations made in this section of the Staff Resource Report, be noted / supported as appropriate.**

### 6.3.4 Fixed Term Contracts

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1 and Paper 06.04*

Mrs Rushe highlighted the proposal to extend the contracts of the ten Digital Learning / Technical Services student interns in order to alleviate pressures within the Technical Services team.

**AGREED: that the fixed term contracts proposals detailed paper 06.04 be ratified by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body.**

### 6.3.5 Performance Management

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.2 and Papers 06.05*

Mrs Rushe highlighted the decrease in the sickness absence rate in January 2022 and advised that the focus on Return to Work interviews has contributed to this reduction. She also drew attention to the statistics provided on staff appraisals noting that four lecturing staff appraisals remain outstanding to be completed before 31 March 2022 and that good progress has been made on the support staff appraisals which must be completed by July 2022.

### 6.4 Other

*Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Paper 06.06*

Mrs Rushe advised that the lecturers' pay award and arrears will be paid in March 2022 payroll. In response to a query from a member Dr O'Shiel confirmed that the agreed pay award covers 2019/20 and 2020/21 and that negotiations will commence regarding the 2021/22 and future years' pay awards.

## 7.0 RESOURCE PLANNING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT UNIT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Resource Planning and Workforce Development in the Business Development Unit

***Dr Barry McCarron, Senior Business Development Officer, and Mrs Nicola Quinn, Business Development Support Officer, joined the meeting for this item.***

With reference to paper 07, Mrs Quinn began the presentation on resource planning and workforce development in the Business Development Unit by outlining the resourcing challenges facing the Unit including the complexities associated with the management and delivery of projects from multiple funding sources, workload pressures due to staff vacancies and the need to invest in professional development to acquire skills relevant to industry requirements. She also listed the EU funded projects currently underway and explained that these will complete by September 2023.

Dr McCarron then provided a breakdown of revenue generation within the Business Development Unit and drew attention to the achievement of all strategic KPIs. He listed the new EU funded projects approved or under development, including a successor to the Renewable Engine programme, as well as the awards recently received, including the Queen's Anniversary Award, the Green Gown Award and the College's designation as a member of the United Nations' High Performance Buildings Centres of Excellence.

In response to a question on the impact of the loss of access to some sources of funding due to the UK's exit from the EU, Dr McCarron explained that the EU funded projects currently in operation will complete over the next 18 month period, that significant opportunities are presented by the Peace Plus Programme and the Turing Scheme and that the skills within the Business Development team will facilitate a transition to enhanced delivery of research and development work if required. It was then noted that a Staff Development Plan will be drafted to action the staff development requirements emerging from appraisals and that the Connected programme offers some opportunities in this regard.

In response to a query on the adequacy of IT systems for business development staff and students, the meeting was made aware of the successful virtual delivery of programmes, of the digital inductions provided to students and of the good access to specialist software but reported some retention and achievement issues. The increasing appetite for face to face delivery from industry clients was noted as was the proven ability to flex to a virtual delivery model at short notice should circumstances require it.

***Mr McCarron and Mrs Quinn withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.***

**8.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

No further business was raised.

**9.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09 Outstanding Actions.

It was noted that the Interim Chief Executive had advised that the implications on resourcing of DfE's requirement for more frequent data returns is no longer a priority issue. Following a review of the outstanding actions it was agreed that all actions can be removed from the list. A revised list of outstanding actions is provided in Appendix A.

**10.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING**

No comments were made under this heading.

***The meeting went into confidential session.***

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY  
27 APRIL 2022**

**CHAIRMAN**



**DATE** 27/04/2022

## SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
23/03/2022	5.1.1	Technical Services restructure proposal to be developed and provided to the Committee as soon as possible along with benchmarking data on the resourcing of Technical Services teams within the sector and information on the continual professional development of technical staff.