

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**
held on Wednesday 11 January 2023 at 5:30 pm
in the Boardroom, Erne Campus

PRESENT:

Ms Siobhan Breen
Mrs Deborah Brown
Mrs Maureen Brunt
Dr Frances Campbell
Mr Jack Daly (*via MS Teams*)
Ms Elaine Grier (*via MS Teams*)
Mr Brian Ingram
Ms Alana Jones Campbell
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
Mr Seamus McCaffrey
Ms Celine McCartan, Chief Executive
Ms Anne McCleary
Mrs Gillian McDowell (*via MS Teams*)
Mr Michael McGuckin
Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chairman
Dr Lynsey Quinn

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body

APOLOGIES:

Mrs Sandra Isherwood

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Dr O'Shiel welcomed all present to the meeting and reminded members of the importance of maintaining focus on the best interests of students.

Apologies were then tendered on behalf of Mrs Isherwood.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

3.0 MINUTES OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 16 November 2022.

AGREED: on the proposal of Ms Breen and seconded by Ms Jones Campbell, that the above minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

4.0 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Review of the Further Education Delivery Model - Dr O'Shiel reflected on the priority placed by the Governing Body's on the Change Management process in recent years and spoke of the need to shift the focus to the review of the Further Education (FE) delivery model in light of the emphasis placed on this by the Department for the Economy's (DfE). An update on the progress of the review to date was provided and the importance of achieving the model which best meets the needs of students was highlighted.

DfE Personnel Changes - Dr O'Shiel informed the meeting of the appointment of Ms Louise Watson to the position of Director of FE, DfE, as well as of other key personnel changes within the Department and listed the engagements planned with Ms Watson in the forthcoming weeks.

5.0 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 FE Sector Activity in NI – Summary of Key Points for SWC.

5.1 **Students**

Return of Students - Ms McCartan commented on the recent return of students to the College following the Christmas break and on the focus placed on retention.

Open Days – Ms McCartan provided the dates of the planned Open Days in the Dungannon, Erne and Omagh campuses and issued an invitation to governors to attend. She noted that the Open Days mark the commencement of the marketing programme for 2023/24.

Higher Education Graduation – Ms McCartan reminded governors of the Higher Education (HE) graduation ceremonies taking place on 3 March 2023.

Schools Engagement – Ms McCartan commented on the opportunity to enhance partnerships with schools and advised that engagements are planned during the current term.

FE Sector Activity in NI 2017/18 – 2021/22 – With reference to paper 05.01, Ms McCartan drew attention to the summary of SWC related data from the statistical bulletin on FE Sector Activity in NI 2017/18 – 2021/22 highlighting the upward trajectory of student enrolments. The importance of striving for increased enrolments and decreased costs was noted.

5.2 **Staff**

Head of People & Culture – Ms McCartan confirmed the commencement of Mrs Camilla James as Head of People & Culture for a one year period.

Change Management - Ms McCartan informed the meeting of the composition of and progress made by the internal change team and invited Ms Breen and Mrs Brown, staff governors, to provide an update on the activities of the team.

Ms Breen and Mrs Brown then reported that the team had developed a staff pulse survey on culture to be undertaken on a regular basis from which progress will be measured, and that the College's values had been reviewed leading to a draft proposal, supplemented by a behaviours framework, to be presented to the Governing Body for adoption in due course. In response to questions from members, it was

noted that commitment to change is required from all members of staff, that the change process has already commenced, that the culture survey will measure change from this point forward and that feedback from it will inform the focus of the change agenda.

Dr O'Shiel explained that the forthcoming Governing Body workshop will include a review of the College's Mission, Vision and Values as well as a session on constructive challenge.

Ms McCartan advised the Governing Body of the opportunity to second a Change Manager through the Strategic Investment Board for a three month period to provide additional support to the change management process and progress the development of the Strategic Improvement Plan under the funding provided by DfE. She also advised that a management realignment proposal will be presented to the Staffing Committee at its February 2023 meeting for consideration.

AGREED: endorsement of the secondment of a Change Manager through the Strategic Investment Board as detailed above.

5.3 Stakeholders

Accountability Meeting - Ms McCartan advised that the Annual Accountability Meeting with DfE has been scheduled for late January 2022.

Budget 2023/24 – Ms McCartan reported that work is underway on the preparation for the 2023/24 budget and commented on the anticipated challenges in relation to this budget.

Schools and Industry Engagement – Ms McCartan noted the planned engagements with schools and industry.

Mid South West Growth Deal – Ms McCartan advised on a forthcoming meeting of the Mid South West Growth Deal hosted by the Makers' Alliance.

Erne Campus – Ms McCartan commented on the work underway on the Post Project Evaluation of the Erne Campus development to be submitted in March 2023.

Cookstown Campus – Ms McCartan apprised the Governing Body of meetings held with the Education Authority and a local post primary school in relation to potential collaborations to enhance utilization of the Cookstown Campus. Mr McGuckin declared an interest in relation to the post primary school in question and it was noted that there was no need for him to withdraw from the meeting in this instance.

In response to questions and comments from members on the opportunities afforded through structured engagements with industry in all sectors, Ms McCartan highlighted the College's engagements with industry through formal and informal partnerships and other fora and acknowledged a potential gap in the sectors represented.

6.0 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 DfE Letter on Draft Partnership Agreement
- Paper 06.02 Draft Partnership Agreement between DfE and SWC.

Ms McCartan explained that the Partnership Agreement will replace the current Management Statement & Financial Memorandum with DfE which sets out the governance arrangements within which the College operates. She advised that the

draft Partnership Agreement in paper 06.02 represents a template to be tailored for each college upon sectoral approval and may be subject to change.

Ms McCartan then drew attention to paragraph 4 of paper 06.01 and noted the deferral of DfE's risk assessment of the College until a further report on the progress of the Change Management process is made to the Department, contrary to the risk assessment arrangements for other colleges. She also drew attention to the additions required to the Annual Engagement Plan in Annex 2 to identify lead personnel.

A number of queries were then raised by a member in relation to specific clauses within the Partnership Agreement, which Ms McCartan undertook to consider. In response to further queries Ms McCartan confirmed that the version presented had been subject to sectoral review by a Task & Finish group at an earlier stage and that no significant additional returns / engagements are proposed in the new Annual Engagement Plan from those already required.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McCaffrey, seconded by Mr Ingram, approval of the template Partnership Agreement subject to Ms McCartan's consideration of the queries raised.

7.0 2021/22 GOVERNING BODY SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 DfE Letter on 2021/22 SWC GB Self-Assessment
- Paper 07.02 Report on Analysis of 2021/22 SWC GB Self-Assessment.

With reference to paper 07.02, Dr O'Shiel welcomed feedback from governors on areas for improvement with a view to incorporating learning into the forthcoming Governing Body workshop.

8.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 23 November 2022
- Paper 08.02 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- Paper 08.03 Learning Resource Centre Policy
- Paper 08.04 Student Attendance Policy
- Paper 08.05 Self Evaluation Report 2020-22 and Quality Improvement Plan 2022-24 .

Dr Quinn, Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee, drew attention to the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting held on 23 November 2022 as well as the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, the Learning Resource Centre Policy and the Student Attendance Policy. She also commented on the ongoing review of the Committee's terms of reference and confirmed the submission of the Self-Evaluation Report 2020-22 and Quality Improvement Plan 2022-24 in December 2022 as required.

In response to queries from members, Ms McCartan quantified the Continuing Professional Development hours undertaken by academic staff on an annual basis, outlined the functionality of the EBS student management system and explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had affected FE student work placements to a greater degree

than HE student work placements. The focus placed on student attendance as outlined in the Student Attendance Policy was welcomed by a member.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr Quinn, seconded by Ms Jones Campbell, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. The minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

9.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 6 December 2022
- Paper 09.02 Workforce Development Policy
- Paper 09.03 Recruitment & Selection Policy.

With reference to paper 09.01, Ms Jones Campbell, Chair of the Staffing Committee, highlighted the Committee's discussion on its key strategic issues, the industrial action currently being undertaken by academic staff due to a pay dispute and the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Workforce Development Policy and Recruitment & Selection Policy.

Dr O'Shiel provided further detail on the pay negotiations with Trade Unions and, in response to a query, confirmed the good relations between parties.

AGREED: on the proposal of Ms Jones Campbell, seconded by Dr Quinn, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

10.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 14 December 2022
- Paper 10.02 Annual Report & Financial Statements 2021/22
- Paper 10.03 NIAO Letter on Report to Those Charged with Governance
- Paper 10.04 Report to Those Charged with Governance
- Paper 10.05 Financial Management Report Q1 2022/23
- Paper 10.06 Bad Debt Policy
- Paper 10.07 Fees & Charges Policy 2023/24
- Paper 10.08 CCTV Policy.

In reporting on the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 14 December 2022, Mr McCaffrey, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, noted that long term financial planning had been discussed, that assurances had been provided on the preparation of the 2023/24 budget and that initiatives had been implemented to support students with cost of living pressures. He also drew attention to the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Fees & Charges Policy 2023/24 and the CCTV Policy.

In response to questions from members, Ms McCartan undertook to investigate the reason for the significant increase in costs incurred in relation to an awarding body and to further review the CCTV Policy to include the required period for retention of general images and confirmation that systems are regularly checked for faults. She also explained the reason that the proposed application for One Planet Living leadership status had been paused in order to ensure cross college application of required sustainability measures.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McCaffrey, seconded by Mr McGuckin, adoption of the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting and the recommendations within. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

11.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11 List of Outstanding Actions.

Dr O'Shiel detailed the progress made on the implementation of each of the actions listed. A revised list of outstanding actions is included in Appendix A.

13.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

14.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Mr Daly welcomed the introduction of further student support initiatives and the awareness raised of these initiatives.

15.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Dr O'Shiel welcomed any feedback on the effectiveness of meetings and explained that such feedback could be channeled directly to him or through the Secretary to the Governing Body.

Ms Breen, Mrs Brown and Mr Daly withdrew from the meeting at this juncture. The meeting then went into confidential session.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH 2023

CHAIRMAN



DATE 08/03/2023

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	16/11/2022	4.0	Training to be provided to governors to support the effective discharge of their challenge function.
2	16/11/2022	6.0	Mr Brolly to seek comparative data on the success rates of colleges, schools and universities as well as comparative data on the destination of college and university leavers.
3	16/11/2022	9.0	Statistics to be provided on the level of compliance with the Sickness Absence Notification Procedure.
4	16/11/2022	9.0	Employee Standards Policy to be reviewed by the internal Change Management Team with a view to developing a handbook for staff.