

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a Meeting of the **South West College Governing Body**
held on Wednesday 28 May 2008 at 5.35 pm in
the Boardroom, Omagh Campus, 2 Mountjoy Road, Omagh

PRESENT:

- Mr Pat O’Kane (Chairman)
- Mr Martin Groom
- Mr Ian Hayes
- Mr Gerry Kingston
- Mr Adrian McCreesh
- Mr Joseph McFall
- Mr Joseph Martin
- Dr Nicholas O’Shiel
- Mr Victor Refaussé (Director)
- Mrs Diane Stevenson
- Ms Gwen Stevenson

APOLOGIES:

- Mrs Kate Courtenay
- Dr Mark Kelly
- Mr Gerard McDermott

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Elizabeth McSorley, Secretary to the Governing Body

1.0 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Mr Martin Groom (business governor) and Mr Ian Hayes (student governor) to their first Governing Body meeting. Individual introductions followed.

2.0 MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2008

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 26 March 2008. It was noted that the confidential section had not been circulated to staff and student members.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Martin, seconded by Mr McFall, that the public section of the above minutes (Pages 1-8) be accepted as a true and accurate record. They were then signed by the Chairman.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 6 MAY 2008

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee held on Tuesday 6 May 2008.

The report of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee was presented by Dr O'Shiel in the absence of Dr Kelly, Committee Chair.

Dr O'Shiel, in presenting the report, highlighted the Committee's continuing focus on the strategic development and positioning of the College through curriculum development, particularly at a Higher Education level, and its proposals for the development of a specialism or theme in each Campus. He also outlined some of the actions that would be necessary in taking forward the Committee's vision including recruitment and selection of the best possible staff. It was noted that, as a starting point in development of the vision, the Committee was to receive presentations at its next meeting from a group of staff engaged in research and development activities and from the Acting Head of DEL's Higher Education Policy Branch.

The Committee was commended on the vision that it was pursuing and, with reference to a recent press article concerning the establishment of links between Leeds and Belfast Metropolitan Colleges, it was suggested that this be taken up with the DEL representative in the context of potential development opportunities for the South West College. It was suggested that the policy on allocation of MaSN places, which were currently capped at 186 in the South West College, be also taken up with the representative.

Mr Martin, turning to the subject of education for 14-19 year olds, referred to the review of post primary provision which he was involved in at a central level and spoke of the importance of the Further Education sector actively engaging in the process and of the South West College having representation on the Western and/or Southern Area Planning Group. He viewed this as vital from the point of view of maintaining and developing the links that had already been established between the FE and schools sectors.

It was noted that Colleges had not yet been invited to join their local Area Planning Groups.

AGREED: that the Chair and the Director follow up the issue of representation on the Area Planning Groups with ANIC and DEL respectively.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr O'Shiel, seconded by Mr McCreesh, adoption of the report of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee.

5.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 MAY 2008

PREVIOUSLY CRICULATED: report of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 14 May 2008, together with the following draft documents:

- (a) Recruitment and Selection Procedure;
- (b) General Complaints Policy and Procedure;
- (c) Carers Policy;
- (d) Report on Support Staff Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.

It was noted that the confidential section of the Staffing Committee report, together with a report on a Support Staff Voluntary Redundancy Scheme at (d) above, had not been circulated to staff or student members and would be dealt with under the confidential section of the Governing Body meeting.

The report of the Staffing Committee was presented by the Director in the absence of Mr McDermott, Committee Chair, and Mrs Courtenay, the other business member who had been present at the meeting.

The Director highlighted the key issues and recommendations from the public section of the Staffing Committee report. The discussion which followed centred on the areas of Health and Safety and staff absenteeism.

5.1 Health and Safety – Pages 2 and 3, Minute Ref 3.0

It was noted that Health and Safety was one of the key issues that the Staffing Committee continued to focus its attention on and that various initiatives, including the development of a corporate Health and Safety Policy and Action Plan, were being taken forward. It was also noted, as a result of feedback given by Ms Stevenson from a Health and Safety Seminar for managers and governors held in the College that afternoon, that the ‘consequences of failure’ to comply with Health and Safety legislation, including the new Corporate Manslaughter Act, had raised issues of potential liability which would require clarification from an insurance cover perspective.

AGREED: that the Secretary to the Governing Body seek the necessary clarification.

5.2 Staff Absenteeism – Page 3, Minute Ref 4.0

Members generally welcomed the reduction in staff absenteeism across all Campuses.

A lengthy discussion then took place in relation to the statement that sickness absence information would be presented in Departmental as opposed to Campus format with affect from the new academic year. Some members felt that the Campus format had been an extremely effective tool and should continue in that format until the end of the current calendar year at least whereas others felt that it had negative conations and was counter to the ‘one College’ ethos which the Governing Body was striving to create and should therefore be discontinued.

The Director, as a compromise, indicated that he would be willing to present the information in both formats.

PROPOSED: by Mr McCreesh, seconded by Mrs Diane Stevenson, that the information continue to be presented in Campus format until the end of the current calendar year and thereafter reviewed.

PROPOSED: by Ms Gwen Stevenson, seconded by Mr Kingston, that the information be presented in Departmental format only with effect from the new academic year.

The Chairman put the two proposals to the meeting with the following outcome:

In favour of Mr McCreesh's proposal	-	6
In favour of Ms Stevenson's proposal	-	3
Abstaining	-	2

AGREED: on the majority of the votes cast, that information on staff absenteeism continue to be presented in Campus format until the end of the current calendar year and thereafter reviewed.

5.3 Appointments – Page 4, Minute Ref 5.1

The Chairman reported that the following appointments had been made by the Staffing Committee during the month:

- Head of Professional Services – Mr Tom McBride
- Head of Training – Mrs Maria Hackett
- Head of Social Sciences – Mrs Fidelma McAleer
- Quality and Performance Manager – Mrs Eileen Kenny

It was noted that the Head of Technology post had not been filled and that it was now being internally trawled.

5.4 Other Issues – Associate Lecturer Applications – Page 4, Minute Ref 5.3(b)

The Director, in response to an enquiry by Mr Kingston, advised that the moratorium on Associate Lecturers applications would be reviewed in the new academic year.

5.5 Adoption of Report

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Refaussé, seconded by Mr Martin, adoption of the public section of the Staffing Committee report (Pages 1-8) including the three Policies and Procedures at (a) to (c) above, subject to the foregoing.

6.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 MAY 2008

CIRCULATED: to those members present, report of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 21 May 2008, together with the following supporting documents:

- (a) Notes of Annual Review meeting (Dungannon and Omagh PFI Contracts) held on Wednesday 21 May 2008;
- (b) Fees and Charges Policy;
- (c) Credit Control and Debt Management Policy;
- (d) Financial Management Report for the 9 months to 28 April 2008.

Ms Gwen Stevenson, Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, provided members with an overview of the key issues and recommendations arising from the meeting with the primary focus being on the Financial Management Report for the 9 months to 28 April 2008. She highlighted the level of the surplus (£2.8m) against the projected surplus (£2.1m) but emphasised that this did not take of a number of adjustments to be provided for in the final quarter. She also highlighted the key income and expenditure variances. In relation to exceptional costs not yet provided for in the accounts, and in particular exceptional redundancy costs, the Director reported that there had been no progress as regards DEL funding towards the academic redundancies as DEL was still awaiting DFP approval to its business case for additional finance.

Members, in response to various questions, were advised by the Chair that it was not anticipated that there would be any clawback of DEL recurrent grant in relation to a performance shortfall against projected student numbers in the 2007/08 academic year; and that the year end position was expected to be better than breakeven. He reported on a recent meeting with DEL officials attended by the Director and himself representing the South West College when this, and the College's bid for 2008/09, had been discussed.

The above comments were noted and welcomed.

AGREED: on the proposal of Ms Stevenson, seconded by Mr McFall, adoption of the Finance and General Purposes Committee report, including the two Policies (b) to (c) above, subject to an amendment in the last paragraph of Page 5, whereby "... 9 months to 28 January 2008" should read "... 9 months to 28 April 2008".

7.0 DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE SOUTH WEST COLLEGE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copy of Draft Strategic Framework for the South West College.

It was noted that this document was the product of the Governing Body's strategic planning event held in the Lough Erne Hotel, Enniskillen, on 16 and 17 April 2008.

AGREED: following some debate as to how best the framework should be developed, that the College Senior Management Team take the document into the College Development Plan (CDP) planning process with a draft of the 2008/09 – 2011/12 Corporate Plan to be brought to the September Governing Body meeting for the Governing Body's consideration.

8.0 LEARNING COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copies of the following Learning Community Agreements:

- (a) Derg Mourne
- (b) Dungannon and Cookstown
- (c) Fermanagh
- (d) Omagh

The Director advised that each of the learning communities had been established for the purposes of developing post primary education provision for the 14-19 year old age group and promoted a culture of collaboration across all educational providers in each of the four areas.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Hayes, seconded by Mr Martin, approval of the General Constitution and Operational Guidance for each of the four learning communities, subject to deletion of the reference to particular Campuses within the documents at (a), (c) and (d) above.

9.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

9.1 Freedom of Information Act – "Qualified Person" for Section 36 Exemption

The Chairman reported receipt of a letter dated 21 May 2008 from the Department for Employment and Learning advising him that as Chairman of the Governing Body, he held the position of "qualified person" for the South West College for the purposes of Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and that this power could not be delegated.

This was noted.

9.2 Programme of Meetings 2008/09

The Chairman referred to the transitional year arrangement of eight meetings per annum that had been put in place for the Governing Body; Education, Quality and Performance Committee; Staffing Committee; and Finance and General Purposes Committee; and suggested that this arrangement be revised to six meetings per annum effective from the new academic year. The Secretary to the

Governing Body, in supporting the Chairman's comments, advised that provision existed for calling special meetings, if required.

AGREED: unanimously, following a short discussion, that meetings of the Governing Body, and the three Committees listed above, be each reduced from eight to six each per annum, with the arrangement to be reviewed at the end of the 2008/09 year.

10.0 DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

10.1 New Skills Centre and Other Estates Issues

The Director advised that work on the new Skills Centre was progressing well and was on schedule.

On the subject of the College Estate generally, the Director advised of discussions that were taking place with the Department of Finance and Personnel, Properties Division, in relation to them providing a property management service for the Enniskillen Campus to include planned preventative maintenance, reactive maintenance, minor works, property and condition surveys, specialist surveys, fire safety, energy management etc. The other buildings, he added, were either PFI or new buildings.

Responding to questions about future development proposals for the Enniskillen Campus, the Director advised that the Sports Hall development had been put on hold due to the unavailability of DEL funding for at least another three years. Looking to the longer term, he stated that all options, including relocation to a more suitable site should the opportunity arise, would be kept open.

11.0 AMENDMENTS TO THE REGISTER OF INTERESTS 2007/08

The Secretary to the Governing Body reminded members of their responsibility under the Instrument of Government to declare any amendments to the Register of Interests.

The Secretary to the Governing Body then advised that Mr McDermott had asked her to declare the following amendment on his behalf:

Board Member of Share Holiday Village, Co Fermanagh

AGREED: that the above amendment be recorded in the Register of Interests.

12.0 CORRESPONDENCE

12.1 Thank You Note

The Secretary to the Governing Body advised that a note of thanks for the Governing Body's expression of sympathy on the death of Nicola Murray, a

pupil at St Ciaran's High School, Ballygawley, had been received from the Head Teacher.

The communication was noted.

12.2 DEL Circular – Learner Access and Engagement

The Secretary to the Governing Body reported that a DEL circular dated 16 May 2008 on the subject "Learner Access and Engagement", was available to interested members on request.

13.0 **ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

13.1 Possible Withdrawal from ANIC Negotiating Forum

The Chair, in response to an enquiry, advised that the issue to be discussed later in the meeting was possible withdrawal from the Lecturers Negotiating Committee only. Mr Kingston contended that withdrawal ahead of a further UCU ballot would be premature and advocated staying within the collecting bargaining framework.

13.2 Student Matters

Mr Hayes requested clarification as to why there was no contact between the Student Union and SLDD students in the Enniskillen Campus, and raised an issue relating to insufficient ventilation in a room used by SLDD students in the Omagh Campus.

The Director undertook to follow up on both of the above issues.

13.3 Governor Training

The Secretary to the Governing Body reminded members that:

- (a) a Governance Healthcheck, facilitated by LSDA, was to be conducted at the June Governing Body meeting;
- (b) an equality training session for governors and managers would be held on Wednesday 25 June 2008 in the Dungannon Campus prior to the June Governing Body meeting; and
- (c) that she had a range of training materials from various recent training events that she would make available to interested governors in due course.

The staff and student representatives left the meeting at this juncture and the meeting then went into private session following a five minute adjournment.

The meeting concluded at 8.55 pm

CHAIRMAN _____ **DATE** _____