

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a Meeting of the **South West College Governing Body**
held on Wednesday 24 September 2008 at 5.35 pm in
Room MG04, Enniskillen Campus, Dublin Road, Enniskillen

PRESENT: Mr Joseph Martin (Presiding Chairman)
Mrs Kate Courtenay
Dr Mark Kelly
Mr Gerry Kingston
Mr Gerard McDermott
Mr Joseph McFall
Councillor Thomas O'Reilly
Dr Nicholas O'Shiel
Mr Victor Refaussé (Director)
Mrs Diane Stevenson

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

Agenda Items 2 and 3 Respectively:

Mr Aaron Black)
Ms Jill Cush) Staff engaged in innovation,
Mr Fergal Tuffy) research, and development
Mr Mark McGuigan) activities
Mr John Moore)
Mrs Ciara Duffy, ILT Services Manager

APOLOGIES: Mr Martin Groom
Mr Adrian McCreesh
Ms Gwen Stevenson (Vice Chair)
Councillor Dr Philip Weir

1.0 PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 Election of Presiding Chairman

The Secretary to the Governing Body, due to the absence of the Vice Chair, invited nominations from eligible governors for the position of Presiding Chairman to chair that evening's meeting.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr O'Shiel, seconded by Mr McDermott, that Mr Martin act as Presiding Chairman of the 24 September 2008 Governing Body meeting.

Mr Martin then took the Chair.

1.2 Welcome and Introductions

The Presiding Chairman welcomed Councillor O'Reilly to his first Governing Body meeting. Members, at the Presiding Chairman's invitation, then introduced themselves individually.

1.3 Congratulations

The Presiding Chairman, on behalf of the Governing Body, extended congratulations to the Vice Chair on the recent birth of her daughter.

2.0 **PRESENTATION BY GROUP OF STAFF ENGAGED IN INNOVATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

The Director, in introducing the team, advised that they came within the Head of Curriculum and Business Development's area of responsibility and provided a University type service to industry in the areas of innovation, research and product development. The purpose of the presentation, he added, was to highlight to members the type of activity that the team had been engaged in over the past five years.

A PowerPoint presentation, with input from each of the five team members, then followed. Issues highlighted included the income which had been generated for the College through the various activities; the clients they had delivered services to ranging from start up businesses to large international companies; the types of stakeholder groups they had or were currently engaged in collaborative and partnership work with; the positive contribution made to new and innovative curriculum development; ongoing work in the area of knowledge transfer; the various demonstration facilities, including Camphill, which were testimony to the work of the team; the range of commercial services that had been developed over the past five years; the international links that had been established through best practice visits; and an insight into some of the project work that the team had and were currently engaged in. In terms of future direction, the team were of the view that their various activities needed to be brought into one cohesive unit and mainstreamed as a core element of the College's overall activities.

Members, in response to various questions, were assured that the work of the team linked back to the College's CDP; were informed of proposals for recruiting twelve additional staff in the area of innovation development as a result of funding secured from DEL under its Employer Support Programme Innovation Fund; were informed of the strong links which existed with Invest Northern Ireland and of the benefits of its voucher scheme to the College; were advised that more work needed to be done in the area of Intellectual Property Rights; and were further advised that the team's relationship with industry had, and continued to have, a positive impact on the development of curriculum, and hence student recruitment.

Mrs Stevenson entered the meeting at this juncture.

Members positively acknowledged the innovative nature of the work of the team and the need for a strategy that informed its future direction.

The five team members left the meeting at this juncture.

The Director, with reference to the earlier comment about the new DEL Innovation Fund, advised that the College had secured 100% funding for its Year 1 bid of £671k, representing over 40% of the total funding allocated, and said that this offered an opportunity to consolidate and develop current activities. The Presiding Chairman, in rounding off the discussion, emphasised the importance of KPMG, who had been appointed to undertake the scoping study on the development of Higher Education in the South West of Northern Ireland, being fully briefed on this aspect of College activity.

3.0 FAST STANDARD SOFTWARE COMPLIANCE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copies of the following draft policies:

- (a) Acceptable Use Policy, incorporating:
 - Data Retention Policy
 - ILT Acquisition and Disposal Policy
 - ICT Change Control Policy
 - ILT Security and Auditing Policy
 - Internet, E-mail Usage and Monitoring Policy
 - Software Compliance Policy
 - User Account Management Policy

- (b) Clear Desk/Screen Policy

The ILT Services Manager, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, informed members of the background to this issue and current IT areas of concern; the consequences of not becoming a FAST compliant organisation; and the actions that were necessary to achieve this.

It was noted that the Government Agency FAST (Federation Against Software Theft) had been brought into the College, at a one off cost of £9,999 covering a period of three years, to undertake, inter alia, a comprehensive risk assessment of the College network, policies and procedures, with the objective of the College becoming a FAST approved organisation by January 2009. The ILT Services Manager said that the launch of the above FAST approved policies would be a first step in this process and that these required Governing Body approval.

Lengthy discussion followed during which the ILT Services Manager responded to a range of questions and comments largely relating to the practical application of the proposed policies during which some concerns emerged in relation to

some of the restrictions imposed by the draft policies. It was felt, in the circumstances, that it would be best for them to be referred to a small working group of governors for more detailed scrutiny prior to a final decision being made and for them to also be examined by the College's Internal Auditors.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr O'Shiel, seconded by Mr McDermott, that (1) a Working Group comprising Mr Kingston, Mr McFall, and Councillor O'Reilly be given delegated authority to review and agree the Acceptable Use and Clear Desk/Screen Policies, and (2) that they also be forwarded to the College's Internal Auditors for review.

Dr O'Shiel and the ILT Services Manager left the meeting at this juncture.

AGREED: (3) at a later stage in the meeting, that the ILT Working Group meeting take place at 2.00 pm on Thursday 2 October 2008 in the Enniskillen Campus.

The Director, in response to a query as to what standing Committee this issue would normally have been dealt with, said that the Head of Department for this area of activity was the Head of Client Services who reported to the Education Committee, and therefore, time permitting, it would have been brought to that Committee.

4.0 MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2008

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 25 June 2008. It was noted that the confidential section had not been circulated to staff and student members.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr Kelly, seconded by Mr Kingston, that the public section of the above minutes (Pages 1-10) be accepted as a true and accurate record. They were then signed by the Chairman.

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Governance Healthcheck Questionnaire – Pages 1 and 2, Minute Ref 1.0

The Secretary to the Governing Body advised that LSDA wished to attend a future Governing Body meeting to present the results of the Governance Healthcheck conducted at the June 2008 meeting.

AGREED: that LSDA be invited to the January 2009 meeting if, following consideration of the report at the November 2008 meeting, it was felt that this would add value.

5.2 Appointments – Page 2, Minute Ref 3.2

The Presiding Chairman reported that the following appointment had been made by the Staffing Committee Selection Panel since the last meeting:

- Head of Department (Technology) – Mr Michael McAlister

He further advised that the position of Estates Manager had been externally advertised following an unsuccessful internal trawl.

5.3 Chairman’s Resignation – Page 7, Minute Ref 9.2

The Secretary to the Governing Body, by way of update, advised that the closing date for applications for the position of Interim Chair was Friday 26 September 2008 following which there would be an interview process and, hopefully, an appointment by the end of October 2008. She further advised that arrangements for the appointment of a permanent Chair would be delayed pending the outcome of a full governance review which was unlikely to get underway until the end of the year, and that it was therefore probable that the Interim Chair would be in post for a period of approximately twelve months.

6.0 **REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2008**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee held on Tuesday 2 September 2008.

Dr Kelly, in presenting the report, advised that the primary focus of the meeting had been the appointment of consultants to undertake the HE scoping review and said that he had since attended a meeting of the Planning and Project Management Steering Group when KPMG had explained their approach to the commission and associated timescale. These meetings, he added, would take place every two to three weeks and would provide the College and the Governing Body with an opportunity to monitor and shape the direction of the project on an ongoing basis. It was noted that the deadline for completion of the review and submission of the final report to the College was 31 December 2008.

The Director, in response to Dr Kelly’s reference to student issues, gave an update on enrolment figures, as follows:

Full time FE – projected numbers, 1743; Actual recruitment, 1749. The College’s retention target was 90% and DEL funding allowed for a 5% tolerance on projected numbers but there would be clawback if numbers fell below the tolerance level. Full time students accounted for 75% of recurrent funding.

Part time FE – still recruiting, but numbers were expected to be down due to the current economic climate. Efforts would continue to maximise numbers through targeted recruitment drives.

Full time HE – number of MaSN places, 186; actual recruitment around 200.

Training – 1,395 trainees which was down 55 places on the 2007/08 numbers. The drop in numbers was largely in the area of construction.

Entitlement Framework (14-19 year olds) – 633 in 2007/08; 731 in 2008/09 – an increase of 98.

In welcoming the fact that the full time FE and HE were on target, the Director expressed the view that the suspension in industrial action had made a significant difference to the recruitment drive. In response to an enquiry from Councillor O'Reilly in relation to the payment of travel expenses for trainees, he undertook to clarify the position with DEL and to come back to him as soon as possible.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr Kelly, seconded by Mrs Stevenson, adoption of the Report of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee.

7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2008

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, report of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Wednesday 10 September 2008, together with a copy of the Three Year Strategic Audit Plan incorporating revised Internal Audit Plan for 2008/09.

CIRCULATED: for information purposes to those members present, a "Your Comments matter to us..." card and a "Thanks and Appreciation..." card in the context of the Annual Complaints Report section (Minute Ref 7.0) of the Audit Committee minutes.

Mr Martin, in presenting the report, drew particular attention to the good practice arrangement that had been put in place for private meetings with the Internal and External Auditors; the satisfactory outcome of the first follow up review; the Annual Internal Audit Report and reason for the decision not to give an overall assurance rating; the revised Internal Audit Plan for 2008/09 to take account of the Governing Body's request for a review of the Student Support Fund; the recommendation to reappoint PricewaterhouseCoopers as Internal Auditors to the College; and the development of Key Performance Indicators for the internal audit service.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Martin, seconded by Mr McDermott, adoption of the Report of the Audit Committee, including the Three Year Strategic Audit Plan incorporating revised Audit Plan for 2008/09, and reappointment of PricewaterhouseCoopers as Internal Auditors to the College.

8.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2008

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, report of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 10 September 2008, together with a copy of the proposed Staff Employment Award Scheme.

It was noted that the confidential section of the Staffing Committee report had not been circulated to staff or student members and would be dealt with under the confidential section of the Governing Body meeting.

Mr McDermott, in presenting the public section of the report, highlighted the key issues and recommendations and drew particular attention to proposed developments in the area of health and safety; the Committee's concern at the loss of 5,476 working days across the College in 2007/08 and its support for a range of initiatives under consideration by management in this regard; the proposal for introduction of a Staff Employment Award; and for approval and signature of the South West College Equality Progress Report to 31 March 2008.

In response to a request from the Staffing Committee Chairman for an update on the industrial dispute, the Director, supported by Mr Kinston, confirmed that both sides were working with the Labour Relations Agency towards the appointment of an Arbitrator.

With reference to Minute Ref 1.1 (Access Northern Ireland), the Secretary to the Governing Body advised that the Department for Employment and Learning had issued a circular (Circular FE 14/08, 18 September 2008) setting out temporary arrangements to assist FE Colleges in making appointments to positions in advance of receiving an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate.

Additional staff requests and a career break application were submitted for approval, as follows:

Omagh Campus – three Temporary Classroom Assistant (Special Needs) and two Temporary Data Inputters

Dungannon Campus – a one year Career Break application

Dungannon/Cookstown Campuses – a Project Officer for a period of three years for the KNEW Place Project (Project valued at £900k), which had recently been secured.

All Campuses – Classroom Assistant (Special Needs) and Learning Support Panel

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McDermott, seconded by Mrs Courtenay, adoption of Pages 1-5 of the Staffing Committee report, incorporating the foregoing.

9.0 REPORT OF AN ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2008

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, report of an adjourned meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 25 June 2008, immediately prior to the June Governing Body meeting.

AGREED: unanimously, adoption of the above report.

10.0 VERBAL REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2008

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, Draft Terms of Reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

CIRCULATED: to those members present, Investment Strategy as at September 2008.

The Director, in the absence of the Committee Chair, gave a verbal report on the key outcomes from the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held earlier in the day, as follows:

- (1) The draft annual accounts for 2007/08 showed an operating surplus of £1.477m against a cumulative deficit of £732k in 2006/07 for the three former Colleges. This healthy trading position had been welcomed by the Committee. The final accounts would be presented to the November meeting.
- (2) The Committee had agreed to recommend the draft Terms of Reference for adoption by the Governing Body but, in so doing, had noted that the Finance Section would be unable to conform fully with the reporting requirements in the 2008/09 year due to staff resourcing issues related to the ongoing restructuring.
- (3) The Investment Strategy had also been agreed for recommendation to the Governing Body on the following basis:
 - Investments totalling £6.4m to be made for a period of 6 months with the Bank of Ireland (£2.4m); the First Trust Bank (£2m); and Anglo Irish Bank (£2m), and
 - DEL/DPF guidance on the investment proposal to be sought.

Lengthy discussion in relation to the investment recommendation followed with some members expressing reservations about being asked to make a decision of this magnitude in the absence of prior guidance from DEL/DFP and a prior written paper. It was however noted that the current investment accounts were due to mature at beginning of October and it was therefore reluctantly accepted

that the Governing Body would have to take a position on the Finance and General Purposes Committee's recommendation.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Martin, seconded by Dr Kelly, (1) adoption of the draft Terms of Reference and (2) adoption of the Investment Strategy on the basis of a three rather than six month investment period with the situation to be reviewed at the November meeting.

11.0 DRAFT VISION, MISSION STATEMENT, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2008/11

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, Draft Vision, Mission Statement, Strategic Objectives 2008/11 for the South West College.

The Director indicated that this paper, which had been developed by the management team, had evolved from the strategic planning workshop held in the Lough Erne Golf Resort in April 2008 and said that the deadline for its completion was 30 November 2008.

Members generally were of the view that given the importance of the subject matter, the paper would merit a dedicated meeting so that sufficient time could be allocated to consideration of its content.

AGREED: (1) that a Special Governing Body meeting to consider the above document be held at 5.30 pm on Wednesday 22 October 2008 in the Enniskillen Campus, and (2) that any comments governors may have on the draft paper be communicated, in the interim, to the Secretary to the Governing Body.

12.0 DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

The Director reported on a range of issues as follows:

- (1) **Steps to Work Programme** – the South West College's tender for the Steps to Work Programme, which would replace New Deal, had been accepted by DFP. The Programme would cover the Dungannon, Fermanagh, Omagh and Strabane Council areas with the College acting as lead partner supported by seventeen sub contractors.
- (2) **District Heating Scheme Feasibility Study** – the South West College in conjunction with Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council, would be examining the feasibility of a district heating scheme, using biomass, to heat the Dungannon Campus, the Council Offices, the swimming pool, and two schools.

In response to a number of queries, the Director advised that should the outcome of the feasibility study be favourable, the legal issues relating to any joint venture proposal would be pursued at that time. In terms of

input by the College, he confirmed that that this would be in the form of expertise.

- (3) **Co Fermanagh Tourism Initiative** - an initiative aimed at improving the tourism potential of County Fermanagh was in the early stages of discussion. Stakeholders included the hospitality sector, the Tourist Board, Fermanagh District Council, the Sector Skills Council, DEL and others including Mr Martin and himself. The concept, he added, was about working together to increase tourism through improving standards, improving the skills of existing staff, marketing the industry, and meeting customer expectations.
- (4) **Staff Information Day** – an Information Day for all College staff had been held in the Strule Arts Centre, Omagh, during August 2008. This had been the first occasion since the merger in August 2007 that staff from all four Campuses had come together in one venue and it had been a very beneficial exercise.
- (5) **Skills Centre Capital Development Project** – this remained on schedule and to budget and should be ready for occupation by July 2009.

13.0 REGISTER OF INTERESTS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copy of the 2007/08 Register of Interests and a Register of Interests form for completion for the purposes of compiling the 2008/09 Register.

The Secretary to the Governing Body advised that this procedure was in accordance with the Instrument of Government and asked all members to submit their completed returns at the end of the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter.

14.0 REGISTER OF HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: for information purposes to all members, a copy of the South West College Hospitality and Gifts Policy.

The Secretary to the Governing Body advised members that in accordance with the terms of the above Policy, they were required to declare any hospitality or gifts received or offered for entering onto the Register.

No declarations were forthcoming.

15.0 CORRESPONDENCE

15.1 NIPSA – Request for Speaking Rights

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copies of the following correspondence:

- (a) letter dated 24 June 2008 from NIPSA requesting speaking rights at a meeting of the Governing Body in relation to the Governing Body's response to their representations for (1) a commitment that there would be no compulsory redundancies, and (2) protection of support staff salaries;
- (b) the Director's response dated 7 July 2008 advising that the request had been referred to the Governing Body for raising at the next Governing Body meeting, ie, the September 2008 meeting.

AGREED: that the request be granted with NIPSA to be advised that, in accordance with Governing Body policy on external deputations, they would have a maximum of ten minutes to address the meeting.

15.2 Letter of Thanks

The Secretary to the Governing Body read a letter dated 28 August 2008 from Ms Phyllis Ervine, a former member of the Dungannon Campus lecturing staff, expressing her thanks and appreciation to the Director and the HR Manager in particular for the professional manner in which they had handled her voluntary redundancy application and asking that this information be shared with the Governing Body. Best wishes were also extended to the Governing Body for the future success of the newly amalgamated Colleges.

16.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

16.1 Training

The Secretary to the Governing Body provided members with the following training update:

- (1) DEL's induction training for new governors – a further training session would be held towards the end of October/early November. Any governor who had not yet undergone this training would be invited to participate.
- (2) LSDA planned to undertake a Governor training needs analysis in the coming months. No further information was currently available.
- (3) Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 – half day information sessions delivered by the Volunteer Agency on behalf of the DHSS&PS to be available at a number of locations across Northern Ireland in the coming months. The Education sector was one of four sectors eligible to avail of these.

Councillor O'Reilly expressed an interest in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups training opportunity and the Secretary to the Governing Body undertook to obtain additional information in this regard.

16.2 Committee Vacancies

The Secretary to the Governing Body, in response to an enquiry by Mr McDermott, advised that Committee vacancies would be addressed on appointment of the Interim Chair.

The staff representatives left the meeting at this juncture and the meeting then went into private session.

The meeting concluded at 8.35 pm

CHAIRMAN _____ **DATE** _____