

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a Meeting of the **South West College Governing Body**
held on Wednesday 25 May 2011 at 5.30 pm in the Boardroom,
Omagh Campus, 2 Mountjoy Road, Omagh

PRESENT:

- Mr Joseph Martin (Chairman)
- Mr Malachy McAleer (Director)
- Mrs Kate Courtenay
- Dr Mark Kelly
- Mr Gerry Kingston
- Mr Gerard McDermott
- Mr Wilson Matthews
- Mr Wilbert Mayne
- Mr Joseph McFall
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel
- Mrs Diane Stevenson
- Ms Gwen Stevenson

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

APOLOGIES: Mr Brendan Corr

1.0 APOLOGIES

An apology was tendered by the Secretary to the Governing Body on behalf of the above named governor.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

There were no conflict of interest declarations.

3.0 MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 30 March 2011.

It was noted that the confidential section of the above minutes (Pages 9-10) had not been circulated to the staff members and would be dealt with under the confidential section of the Governing Body meeting.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr Kelly, seconded by Dr O'Shiel, that the public section of the above minutes (Pages 1-8) be accepted as a true and

accurate record. This section of the minutes was subsequently signed by the Chairman.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 5 MAY 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, report of a meeting of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee held on Thursday 5 May 2011, together with copies of the following papers:

- (1) Revised Draft Higher Education Access Agreement
- (2) Teaching and Learning Strategy 2011-12
- (3) Draft Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policy
- (4) CDP Interim Progress Report at 31 March 2011
- (5) CDP Strategic Projects Traffic Light Report at 31 March 2011
- (6) Key Performance Indicators, April 2011

The Committee Chair, Dr Kelly, in presenting the Committee report, referred to the presentation that had been given by the Student Services Manager; highlighted the continuing progress under Phase 1 of the virtualisation project, the College's success in relation to three further externally funded projects, and in securing an additional 55 full time MaSN places for the next academic year. He also drew attention to the Committee's suggestion in relation to the development of specific, high level curriculum; the three documents at (1) – (3) above which were recommended for Governing Body approval, areas selected to go forward as potential centres of specialism, and the Committee's response to a proposal regarding lecturer workload. He further drew attention to the various College Development Plan reports at (4) – (6) above; highlighted the name change proposal for the Client Services Department which had been taken back for further consideration; explained the rationale for deciding against an ETI presentation to the Governing Body in relation to the current year's inspection activity and outcomes; and made brief reference to the internal audit review of curriculum management and the position in relation to a consultancy report on the proposed shared services facility at the Erne Hospital site.

Mrs Diane Stevenson entered the meeting at this juncture.

The Director, in responding to members' questions during the discussion that followed, explained that although the increase in HE provision was welcome, indications were that it was unlikely to be sufficient to meet demand and undertook to bring a strategy for addressing the projected shortfall to the Education Committee. In relation to the proposed shared services facility at Ennsikillen, it was hoped, he said, that the report commissioned by Fermanagh District Council could be made available to the Governing Body shortly.

The Governing Body Chairman again paid tribute to all concerned with the successful strategy in relation to the growth of HE provision that had been developed over the past three years and the favourable ETI inspection reports over the course of the current academic year.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr Kelly, seconded by Dr O’Shiel, adoption of the report of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee including the policy and strategy documents at (1) – (3) above.

6.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 MAY 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: report of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 11 May 2011, together with a copy of the following paper:

(1) Draft Flexible Retirement Policy

It was noted that the confidential section of the Staffing Committee report (Pages 9-10) had not been circulated to the staff 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 Governing Body Chairman who had acted as Presiding Chairman in the absence of Mr McDermott, the Committee Chair.

The Governing Body Chairman, in presenting the public section of the report, highlighted the excellent presentations made by a number of senior staff on key performance indicators and themes for excellence for their respective departments; the College’s success in achieving a merit award from the British Safety Council International Safety Awards which he described as a fitting endorsement to the tremendous work that had been ongoing in this area since the merger; and the various recommendations in relation to resourcing matters. He also drew attention to the scheduling of a Special Staffing Committee meeting to deal with the potential academic redundancies and other issues; proposed amendments to the Further Education Teachers’ (Eligibility) Regulations (NI) 2007; and the Secretary to the Governing Body’s notice of retirement. He again paid tribute to the work of the outgoing Secretary and said that arrangements for the appointment of a replacement Secretary would be discussed at the Special Staffing Committee meeting to be held later in the evening.

The Director, in response to a query, undertook to ensure that the role of the Governing Body in relation to flexible retirement applications was clearly defined within the draft Flexible Retirement Policy.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Martin, seconded by Mrs Courtenay, adoption of Pages 1-8 of the Staffing Committee Report incorporating adoption of the draft Flexible Retirement Policy subject to the foregoing.

7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, report of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 18 May 2011 together with copies of the following papers:

- (1) Notes of annual review meeting held with representatives of Belfast Educational Services (BES) re Dungannon and Omagh PFI Contracts
- (2) Financial Management Report to 31 March 2011
- (3) Draft Fees and Charges Policy
- (4) Cheque Signatories Listing, May 2011

CIRCULATED: to those members present, Summary of Interest Rates available at 25 May 2011 for £1m Investment.

The Committee Chair, Ms Gwen Stevenson, in presenting the Committee report, highlighted the main outcome from the Committee's annual review meeting with the College's PFI contract providers, namely the decision to seek a reduction in the annual charge to the College in the current economic climate; reflected on the College's financial performance at 30 April 2011 and its debtor and creditor position for the same period; highlighted the College's budget allocation position and strategy for the next financial year and sought approval for the Committee's recommendations in relation to two projects under the Resource Allocation Plan for 2011-14, adoption of the Tuition Fees and Charges Policy incorporating proposed fees and bursary arrangements for the next academic year, and the renewable energy project at the Dungannon Campus. She also highlighted the Committee's recommended strategy in relation to a proposed £1m investment and drew attention to the interest rates circulated in this regard.

The Director, with reference to DEL's recurrent budget allocations, said that while the College had performed well relative to other Colleges, the settlement represented a requirement to deliver efficiencies of £½m in 2011/12. With reference to the investment proposal, management's recommendation was, he said, as follows:

- £1m to be invested with the Ulster Bank on maturity of the existing investment; and
- £1m to be moved from the First Trust Bank to Santander to ensure greater diversification of the College's investments.

Lengthy discussion ensued in relation to the merits or otherwise of seeking further professional advice to inform decision making on this issue with one member being of the view that this should be pursued. The overall view that emerged however was that the College had already obtained professional investment advice (from FGS in October 2010), that the recommendation from management was entirely consistent with the advice given at that time, and that no further advice was required or necessary.

AGREED: (1) adoption of the investment recommendation put forward by the Director.

AGREED: (2) on the proposal of Ms Stevenson, seconded by Dr O’Shiel, adoption of the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee subject to the foregoing.

A comment in relation to Paragraph 7.3 of the Fees and Charges Policy, namely that the potential 20% discount for early payment of full fees only benefited those who could afford to make early payment, was noted.

8.0 DRAFT STANDING ORDERS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copy of draft Standing Orders.

The Secretary to the Governing Body advised that these incorporated the relevant provisions from the College’s Instrument and Articles of Government, South West College specific provisions, and general good practice.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Matthews, seconded by Mr McDermott, adoption of the draft Standing Orders.

9.0 CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS

The Chairman reported on the following issues:

- (1) **Governor Resignation** – Mr Adrian McCreesh had resigned from the Governing Body due to ever increasing work commitments. His letter of resignation dated 6 May 2011 was read to the meeting following which the Chairman expressed his appreciation of Mr McCreesh’s contribution to the work of the Governing Body.
- (2) **Governor Recruitment Exercise** – the interview process had commenced and DEL’s target was to have this completed by the end of June with the governors appointed by 1 August 2011.
- (3) **FE Review of Governance** – a DEL official had separately met with the Director and himself to discuss roles, responsibilities and other issues as part of its ongoing work aimed at the development of a code of governance.

10.0 DIRECTOR’S BUSINESS

The Director, with reference to other business not already covered during the course of meeting, reported that:

- (1) **Visits** – the Chief Executive of Invest Northern Ireland had made a half day visit to the InnoTech Centre and the Permanent Secretary of DEL

had made a half day visit to the STEM Centre. They had both been very impressed by the facilities at each of the centres.

- (2) **Innovation Funding** – it was hoped that funding for the InnoTech Centre would be confirmed for a four year period but this may not happen during the tenure of the current Governing Body.
- (3) **Training for Success Tendering Process** – likewise the outcome of this was unlikely to be confirmed during the current term due to a legal challenge being brought by a third party.
- (4) **MaSN Numbers** – as previously mentioned, the number of places available was unlikely to be sufficient to meet demand and efforts would continue going forward to secure a further increase in the College's allocation.
- (5) **CREST (Centre for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technology)** – this South West College led application under the INTERREG IVA Programme was currently going through a rigorous assessment process.
- (6) **Centre of Procurement Excellence** – this INTERREG IVA application, which was being led by Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre in partnership with the University of Ulster and the South West College, had come through the first stage in the assessment process with the next stage being full appraisal.
- (7) **College Grouping** – DEL had informed the College that it had moved from an F2 grouping based on its 2008/09 enrolment figures to an F3 grouping based on its 2009/10 figures.

11.0 REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no amendments to the Register of Interests.

12.0 DECLARATION OF ANY HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made.

13.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

14.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

14.1 Comments from a Retiring Governor

Mrs Courtenay advised that she would be unable, due to an important family commitment, to attend the June Governing Body meeting and said that this, the May meeting, was therefore her last Governing Body meeting prior to standing down as a governor at the end of the current term. She acknowledged and thanked her fellow governors, particularly the Chairman and the Committee Chairs, for their contribution and support, offered the College her best wishes for the future, and said she looked forward to following its progress, particularly in the Dungannon area. She also acknowledged the work and support of the Secretary to the Governing Body and wished her well in her forthcoming retirement.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Governing Body, paid tribute to Mrs Courtenay's many qualities as a governor, thanked her for her huge contribution to the work of the Governing Body and for her support for him personally, and wished her well for the future.

15.0 EVALUATION OF MEETING

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copy of meeting evaluation form.

Completion of the form was conducted on a collective basis facilitated by the Secretary to the Governing Body. There were no issues of note as regards governor feedback.

Mr Kingston and Mr McFall, staff members, left the meeting at this juncture (6.40 pm).

The meeting then went into private session and ended at 6.45 pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____