

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a Meeting of the **South West College Governing Body**
held on Wednesday 28 September 2011 at 5.30 pm in Room MG04,
Enniskillen Campus, Fairview, 1 Dublin Road, Enniskillen

PRESENT:

- Mr Joseph Martin (Chairman)
- Mr Malachy McAleer (Director)
- Mr Gerry Kingston
- Mrs Margaret Martin
- Mr Wilbert Mayne
- Mrs Monica McGeary
- Mr Joseph McFall
- Mr Gerard O'Hanlon
- Councillor Thomas O'Reilly
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel
- Mr Michael Skuce
- Mrs Diane Stevenson
- Mr Derek Weir

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

APOLOGIES:

- Mr Brendan Corr
- Mr Seamus Devine
- Dr Mark Kelly
- Mr Wilson Matthews

1.0 APOLOGIES AND OTHER PRELIMINARIES

Apologies were tendered by the Secretary to the Governing Body on behalf of the above named governors. She also advised that Mrs Stevenson would be arriving late – at approximately 6.15 pm.

AGREED: that as Mrs Stevenson was Chair of the Audit Committee, the report of the Audit Committee meeting (Item 6.0 on the agenda) be deferred until her arrival.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

A conflict of interest in relation to Agenda Item 23 – Report on Review of Director's Performance Objectives for 2010/11 and Proposed Objectives for 2011/12 – was declared by the Director.

Mr O'Hanlon stated that he was related to two of the appointees listed at Item 5.4.1 of the 14 September 2011 Staffing Committee minutes which would be coming before the meeting under Agenda Item 7 (Minute Ref 6.0).

3.0 MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 31 AUGUST 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 31 August 2011.

It was noted that the confidential section of the above minutes (Page 8) 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 Mrs Martin, seconded by Mr Skuce, that the public section of the above minutes (Pages 1-7) be confirmed as a true and accurate record. This section of the minutes was subsequently signed by the Chairman.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Secretary's Business – Pages 5 and 6, Minute Ref 12.0

The Secretary to the Governing Body advised that usernames and passwords would be issued to all governors within the next week and furthermore advised that the new Secretary to the Governing Body, who was taking up post the following week, would follow up on the matter of pen pictures to accompany governor photographs for uploading to the College website.

5.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, report of a meeting of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee held on Thursday 8 September 2011, together with copies of the following papers:

- (1) FE Health Check Report, Quarter 2 of 2010/11
- (2) Revised Draft Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee Chair, Dr O'Shiel, in presenting the Committee report, drew particular attention to the update on the InnoTech Centre funding situation; the updates which the Committee had received on a range of curriculum and business development matters; the presentation of the virtualisation project by the Virtualisation Project Manager; the positive enrolment update and DEL Quarter 2 Health Check results; as well as the revised draft Terms of Reference for the Education, Quality and Performance Committee which were recommended for approval. He also highlighted the fact that a letter was to be sent to DEL expressing the Committee's disappointment at the impact of the

continuing delay in awarding the Training for Success contract on the College's curriculum development plans; and made particular mention of the work that was taking place within the Committee on the identification of key strategic issues that the Committee would focus its attention on over the next couple of years.

The Director indicated that he would address the key results from the FE Health Check report under Director's Business.

The discussion arising from the Committee Chair's presentation of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee report focused on the following issues in particular.

5.1 Centres of Specialism – Funding for InnoTech Centre – Page 2, Minute Ref 4.1

The Director advised that the allocation of innovation monies had now been agreed for 2011/12 by the Colleges Working Group and forwarded by DEL to the Minister for sign off. The South West College was, he added, satisfied with its proposed allocation.

The above update was noted and welcomed.

5.2 Marketing Report – Enrolments Update – Page 5, Minute Ref 6.3

The Director commented on the ongoing part time recruitment figures for the current year and in response to a question about the significant increase in student numbers for the previous year, said that this had largely been due to a substantial growth in the College's training provision, especially Steps to Work.

A lengthy discussion ensued in relation to the impact that an increase in higher education tuition fees could have on application numbers; on the College's recruitment strategy; and on the profile of its student population. The Director, in responding to some of the questions and comments, said that there was unlikely to be a significant increase in MaSN places for the sector on the grounds of cost but that the South West College had initiated discussions with the University of Ulster on the possible reshaping of the part time offer with a view to making this a more attractive higher education route to potential students; explained how the College refreshed its full time higher education curriculum offer within the limitations of its current MaSN allocation; said that a report on application numbers under the Entitlement Framework would be brought to the next meeting of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee; and confirmed that the College's performance in terms of student achievement and success rates was subject to audit.

The Committee Chair, in response to a comment that one of the universities took the view that a significant number of young people would still choose to study outside Northern Ireland irrespective of the fee situation, expressed concern at the undue financial burden that was being placed on young people in this regard and felt that this concern should be conveyed to the Department through the Director.

The Governing Body Chair, in acknowledging the ongoing and emerging challenges for the College in terms of the issues raised and in the delivery of a balanced curriculum, said that he was confident the Education, Quality and Performance Committee would bring creative solutions to the matters in question.

5.3 Training for Success/Apprenticeships NI – Page 7, Minute Ref 12.1

The Director, in response to a question on the subject of travel costs for trainees living in the rural South West College region relative to other regions, said that the College continued to carry a cost of approximately £100k per annum over and above the DEL allowance and assured members that this level of support would continue pending the outcome of the Training for Success tendering process which was on hold due to a third party legal challenge.

5.4 Identification of Key Strategic Issues – Page 7, Minute Ref 12.3

Mr Weir, with reference to the list of possible key strategic issues identified under the above heading, offered his expertise to the Education, Quality and Performance Committee in the matter of Intellectual Property Rights.

The Governing Body Chair, on the matter of development of the 14-19 agenda, spoke of changes in the funding of the Entitlement Framework which were of concern to the six colleges and said that Colleges Northern Ireland would be writing to the DEL Minister asking him to make representations to the Education Minister in this regard.

5.5 Additional Business – Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

CIRCULATED: to those members present, copies of the following policies:

- (1) Policy for Protection of Children/Young People
- (2) Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy, Procedures and Guidance

It was noted that these policies had previously been approved by the Governing Body and were being issued for the benefit of new members and by way of reminder to the other members of the College's safeguarding responsibilities.

AGREED: at the suggestion of the Governing Body Chair, that Mrs Martin, on the basis of her professional background and expertise, be appointed the Governing Body's champion on safeguarding matters.

5.6 Adoption of Committee Report

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr O'Shiel, seconded by Mrs Martin, adoption of the report and recommendations of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee incorporating the revised draft Committee Terms of Reference circulated with the Governing Body meeting papers.

6.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: report of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 14 September 2011, together with copies of the following papers:

- (1) Equality Progress Report 2010/11
- (2) Revised Draft Committee Terms of Reference

It was noted that the confidential section of the Staffing Committee report (Pages 10-11) had not been circulated to the staff members and would be dealt with under the confidential section of the Governing Body meeting.

The Committee Chair, Mr Skuce, in presenting the public section of the Committee report, highlighted various aspects of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing report; drew attention the Section 75 Equality Progress Report for 2010/11 that had been circulated with the papers for the meeting, the Governing Body Chair's briefing on the Affirmative Action Plan, and the College's evolving work in the area of restorative justice. Other issues highlighted included the Committee's recommendations in relation to appointments, fixed term contracts, staff requests, and its revised draft Terms of Reference; the tremendous value for money that was being achieved by the College in terms of its staff development spend; the development of best practice in the area of quality monitoring and improvement which had been recognised and commended by DEL; and the College's outstanding performance in reducing sickness absence to its lowest ever level of 2.67%.

The Governing Body Chairman, with reference to the Affirmative Action Plan, and for the benefit of new Governing Body members beyond the Staffing Committee, commented on the background to this issue.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Skuce, seconded by Mrs Martin, adoption of the report and recommendations of the Staffing Committee (Pages 1-9) incorporating the revised draft Committee Terms of Reference circulated with the Governing Body meeting papers.

7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, report of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 21 September 2011 together with a copy of the following paper:

- (1) Revised Draft Committee Terms of Reference

Dr O'Shiel, who had acted as Temporary Chair pending the appointment of a Committee Chair which had been deferred to the next meeting, commented on the College's strategy of an operating breakeven or better budgetary position and for management of its reserves; highlighted the draft financial results for the

2010/11 financial year; the Committee's review of the FE College Health Check Report; and the recommendation in relation to tendering of banking services. Other matters drawn to the Committee's attention included the recommendations relating to the proposed shared services development on the Erne Hospital site and sale of the Fairview Campus car park adjacent to the Tesco Stores, Enniskillen; and the recommendation for adoption of the revised draft Terms of Reference.

Mrs Stevenson entered the meeting during presentation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting report.

The discussion arising from the Temporary Chair's presentation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee report focused on the following issues in particular.

7.1 Enniskillen Developments – Shared Services Development – Page 6, Minute Ref 5.5.4

The Director, for the benefit of those new Governing Body members who were not members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, explained the nature of the College's interest in the shared services project and commented on some of the key timeline issues including the target date for expressions of continuing interest.

7.2 Enniskillen Developments – Car Park Adjacent to Tesco Stores – Pages 6 and 7, Minute Ref 5.5.5

CIRCULATED: to those members present, copy of letter dated 22 September 2011 from Land and Property Services advising that there had been no expressions of interest received in response to a public sector trawl of the above surplus land and that the College could now proceed to the next stage of the disposal process.

The Director, in responding to members' questions, reaffirmed the assurance given to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the sale would not be detrimental to any future redevelopment of the Fairview site; said that arrangements were in hand for alternative car parking provision to the rear of the Fairview property; and, in relation to the listed buildings condition survey, advised that the College did not self insure.

7.3 Adoption of Committee Report

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr O'Shiel, seconded by Mr O'Hanlon, adoption of the report and recommendations of the Finance and General Purposes Committee incorporating the revised draft Committee Terms of Reference circulated with the Governing Body meeting papers.

8.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2011

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: report of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Wednesday 14 September 2011, together with copies of the following papers:

- (1) Draft Statement of Internal Control
- (2) Revised Draft Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee Chair, Mrs Stevenson, in presenting the Committee report, commented on the role of the different external attendees and described them as a tremendous support to the work of the Committee; referred to the strategy that had been agreed for the carrying out of the audit of the College's 2010/11 accounts and the Committee's recommendation for approval of the draft Statement of Internal Control; highlighted the positive internal audit reports including the overall *substantial* assurance rating in respect of those areas reviewed during the 2010/11 year; and drew attention to matters such as the Committee's feedback on the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2011/12, the development of a fraud risk self assessment process, and the very informative presentation of the annual complaints summary by the Quality and Performance Manager. Other issues highlighted were PwC's performance against the College's key performance indicators; the proposal for their reappointment as internal auditors for the period to 31 July 2012; the recommendation that the Governing Body reaffirm its commitment to the joint procurement exercise for internal audit services beyond the current year; and the recommendation for adoption of the revised draft Terms of Reference.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Stevenson, seconded by Mr Mayne, adoption of report and recommendations of the Audit Committee incorporating the draft Statement of Internal Control and the revised draft Committee Terms of Reference circulated with the Governing Body meeting papers.

9.0 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BODY

AGREED: at the suggestion of the Secretary to the Governing Body, that the filling of this position be deferred pending the appointment of all the Committee Chairs.

10.0 DRAFT GOVERNANCE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copy of draft Governance Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Weir, seconded by Mr O'Hanlon, adoption of the draft Governance KPIs.

11.0 DRAFT PROCEDURE FOR THE ELECTION OF STAFF GOVERNORS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copy of draft Procedure for the Election of Staff Governors.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Martin, seconded by Mr Skuce, adoption of the draft Procedure.

The two outgoing staff governors were thanked for their tremendous contribution to the governance of the College over the past four years. They, in turn, extended thanks and appreciation to their fellow Governing Body members for their dedication and hard work on behalf of the College.

12.0 DRAFT PROGRAMME OF GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS 2011/12

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: to all members, copy of draft Programme of Governing Body Meetings for 2011/12.

AGREED: at the request of the Secretary to the Governing Body, that the November 2011 Governing Body meeting be held in the Omagh Campus to facilitate the first electronic meeting of the Audit Committee being held on the same day, with the location of the remaining meetings to be rotated.

13.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS/ACTIONS

The Chairman advised that he had no business/actions to report.

14.0 DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

14.1 College Development Plan and DEL Health Check Presentation

CIRCULATED: to those members present, copies of slide presentation material comprising:

- the overarching framework for strategic change and self improvement;
- the College's vision, mission, and values;
- an overview of the College Development Plan (CDP) 2011-14; and
- key results from DEL's Quarter 2 Health Check 2010/11.

It was noted that the Director's presentation was in response to requests that had been made by the Education, Quality and Performance and Staffing Committees respectively.

The Director, with reference to the presentation material, explained the strategic and operational planning process and how this was used to improve performance and outcomes. Various of these outcomes, he added, were captured and measured by DEL in the context of its quarterly health check review of the sector.

In continuing his presentation, the Director explained the format of the CDP and the strategic projects/plan approach to its delivery; commented on the emphasis on quality and the fact that the College's Quality Improvement Plan had achieved a Grade 1; provided a breakdown of the projected student numbers for the current year; and, in terms of curriculum delivery, advised that this was achieved through four curriculum departments. He then provided details of the four curriculum departments concerned, what they delivered, and their source of funding; and drew attention to the College's business development role which was delivered through the InnoTech Centre, its specialisms, current programmes and achievements to date.

It was noted that responsibility for monitoring progress against the College Development Plan rested with the Education, Quality and Performance Committee.

The presentation also focused on the key results from the first of DEL's quarterly health checks (Quarter 2 of 2010/11 Health Check report) in relation to retention, achievement, and success rates; FLU and enrolment outcomes; and internal audit report summary. The Director, in commenting on the process generally, said that as a result of further refinement of some of the indicators, the Quarter 3 results, which were imminent, would be more useful for benchmarking purposes. With reference to the Quarter 2 results, he drew particular attention to the South West College's performance in relation to retention, achievement and success rates which he described "as being amongst the best".

The Chairman, with reference to future health check reports, suggested that the detailed results be reviewed and monitored through the different committees.

The Director concluded his presentation by drawing attention to the two final slides which compared current sector needs with future sector needs and said that these had been prepared by the Northern Ireland Adviser on Employment and Skills and made interesting reading. He also recommended that members look at the Northern Ireland Assembly website for a recent statement by the Minister for Employment and Learning on Higher Education in Northern Ireland and tuition fees.

15.0 REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no amendments to the Register of Interests.

16.0 DECLARATION OF ANY HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made.

17.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

18.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

18.1 Committee Papers

Several members, at different stages in the meeting, paid tribute to the quality of the papers submitted to the different committees and the knowledgeable manner in which they had been presented by the officers concerned.

18.2 Colleges Northern Ireland (formerly ANIC)

The Chairman, in response to a query relating to value for money discussions in the context of ANIC (now Colleges Northern Ireland) at previous Governing Body meetings, said that a new Chief Executive had since been appointed and that a fundamental review of College Northern Ireland's business operations generally was being carried out. He assured the meeting that the situation was being closely monitored by the Director and himself on behalf of the South West College. The Director undertook to provide the Governing Body with an update on the financing arrangements at its next meeting.

19.0 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 during which, in response to specific enquiries, she explained the process for the issuing of late papers and the timeframe for all meetings being conducted electronically. There were no issues of note as regards governor feedback.

Mr Kingston and Mr McFall, staff members, left the meeting at this juncture (7.25 pm). The meeting then went into private session and ended at 7.35 pm.

**CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2011**

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____