

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **South West College Governing Body**
held on Wednesday 16 January 2013 at 5:35 pm
in the Boardroom, Dungannon Campus, Circular Road, Dungannon

PRESENT:

Mr Joseph Martin (Chairman)
Mr Malachy McAleer (Director)
Mr Peter Archdale
Mr Thomas Bradley
Mr Aquinas Devlin
Dr Mark Kelly
Mr Wilson Matthews
Mr Wilbert Mayne
Mrs Monica McGearry
Mr Gerard O'Hanlon
Councillor Thomas O'Reilly
Dr Nicholas O Shiel
Mr Michael Skuce
Mr Derek Weir

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Fintan Donohue, CEO of Gazelle Global (*Items 1.0 & 2.0 only*)
Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body

APOLOGIES:

Miss Ashley Clarke
Mr Brendan Corr
Mrs Margaret Martin
Mrs Diane Stevenson

1.0 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair of the Governing Body, Mr Martin, welcomed all present to the meeting and extended a particularly warm welcome to Mr Donohue, who was joining the meeting to update it on the activities of the Gazelle Colleges Group.

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Miss Clarke, Mr Corr, Mrs Martin and Mrs Stevenson.

2.0 GAZELLE COLLEGES GROUP

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Gazelle Presentation.

Mr Donohue began his presentation by thanking governors for the opportunity to introduce the Gazelle Colleges Group and discuss its objectives and activities. With the aid of a short video and a PowerPoint presentation, he then explained the rationale for the establishment of the Gazelle Colleges Group; described its principle of allowing students to practise entrepreneurship and gain work experience through their

involvement in learning companies competing with real businesses; quantified the growth in the membership of the group since its establishment in 2011; made reference to the progressive nature of South West College and its strategic fit as one of the leading colleges within the group; and highlighted the contribution already made by South West College to the group as well as planned future developments.

Mrs McGeary joined the meeting during Mr Donohue's presentation.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Mr Donohue responded to questions and comments from members. Salient points emerging from this discussion include:

- the need to work smarter rather than more intensively in the current economic climate and the associated beneficial sustainability implications;
- the emerging reliance on SMEs rather than large corporations for job creation;
- the shifting role of the lecturer in entrepreneurial colleges;
- government's recognition of the importance of seed funding;
- the need for students to gain enterprise, self-efficacy and social skills in addition to technical skills;
- the governance challenges presented by the entrepreneurial college model and the ongoing investigations in this area; and
- the group's negotiations with awarding bodies to influence the content of curriculum.

Following this discussion the Chair of the Governing Body, supported by other members, thanked Mr Donohue for his presentation, which was described as exhilarating and inspiring, and highlighted the mutually beneficial learning opportunities presented by the College's involvement in the Gazelle Colleges Group.

Mr Donohue withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

3.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4.0 MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 14 November 2012 (Pages 1 – 9).

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Archdale and seconded by Mr Devlin, that the public section of the above minutes (Pages 1 - 9) be accepted as a true and accurate record. This section of the minutes was subsequently signed by the Chairman.

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2012

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 November 2012 Audit Committee Minutes (Pages 1 – 7).

It was noted that a verbal report of this meeting had been given by the Presiding Committee Chair at the Governing Body meeting held on 14 November 2012.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Skuce, seconded by Mr Mayne, adoption of pages 1-7 of the Audit Committee Minutes.

7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2012

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 December 2012 Staffing Committee Minutes (Pages 1 – 8)
- Paper 07.02 Stress Management Policy
- Paper 07.03 Student Internship Policy.

In presenting the public section of the Staffing Committee report the Committee Chair, Mr Skuce, began by drawing attention to the presentation that had been received by the Committee from the Business Process Manager on the progress of the Shared Services Sectoral Working Group, highlighting in particular the Committee's concern that South West College may be asked to make further savings despite its already lean nature relative to others in the sector. The Director, at this point, informed members that a meeting with DEL on the issue of shared services is scheduled for later in the month and undertook to report back to the Staffing Committee on the outcome of this meeting.

In continuing his report, the Committee Chair gave a brief overview of the update that had been received by the Committee from the Human Resources Manager on the Centre for People and Workforce Development which, it was noted, is strategically aligned with the College Development Plan 2012-15; made reference to the College's participation in a case study for the Equality Commission's forthcoming Good Practice Guide for Public Authorities as well as the research being embarked upon within the student body on how well diversity has been embedded in College life since the establishment of the College in 2007; highlighted the Committee's recommendation for ratification / approval as necessary for the appointments listed in section 6.3.1 of the report, the staff requests listed in section 6.3.2, the other resourcing issues referred to in section 6.3.5 as well as the revised Stress Management Policy and the new Student Internship Policy.

Making reference to the research on embedding diversity within the College noted above, the Director, supported by Mr Bradley, informed the meeting of the purpose and progress of this research and sought a representative from the Governing Body to sit on the Steering Group for the project.

AGREED: that Mr Skuce sit on the Steering Group for the Embedding Diversity Research Project.

The Director also advised that the College's Travel & Subsistence Procedure had been amended to align it with the sectoral procedure.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Skuce, seconded by Mr Bradley, adoption of pages 1-8 of the Staffing Committee Minutes and the recommendations therein including the revised Stress Management Policy and the new Student Internship Policy.

8.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2012

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 December 2012 Finance & General Purposes Committee Minutes
- Paper 08.02 Financial Management Report to 31 October 2012
- Paper 08.03 Investment Strategy & Plan 2012/13
- Paper 08.04 Energy Management Policy.

In presenting the report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, the Committee Chair, Mr Matthews, made reference to the presentation that had been received by the Committee from the Business Process Manager on the review of the finance team processes, which, he explained had been undertaken in light of the revised NDPB arrangements as well as the change to the strategic direction of the College as detailed in the CDP 2012-15, and confirmed that the primary recommendation that had emerged from the review was the need to make optimal use of technology to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the finance function.

Mr Matthews then drew attention to the attendance of Mr Andy Cole, DEL's Head of Corporate Governance & Accountability Branch, for part of the meeting to discuss the implications of the reclassification of colleges as Non-Departmental Public Bodies. He highlighted in particular Mr Cole's confirmation that FE Sector reserves are protected until the end of the current comprehensive spending review period in March 2015 and reported that the two main issues identified by the Committee are the proposed new procurement arrangements as well as the administrative burden and complexities of budgeting to the Department's March financial year end in addition to the College's July year end and the associated lack of clarity over the potential requirement for two year end audits. In response to a query from a member, the meeting was made aware of the College's statutory requirement to report on the basis of an August to July financial year.

In continuing his report, the Committee Chair explained the reason for the Committee's recommendation for the provision of an emergency fund of £250 per campus to meet urgent student hardship requests; made reference to the reduction in investment interest rates and the consequent reduction in interest income; and highlighted the Committee's recommendation for the investment proposal detailed in the minutes as well as for the adoption of the addendum to the Procurement Policy & Procedure, the revised Energy Management Policy and the Investment Strategy & Plan 2012/13.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Matthews, seconded by Mr O'Hanlon, adoption of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Minutes and the recommendations

therein, including the Investment Strategy & Plan 2012/13, the revised Energy Management Policy, the addendum to the Procurement Policy & Procedures, the provision of an emergency fund of £250 per campus to meet urgent student hardship requests and the investment proposal recommended by the Committee.

9.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2012

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 November 2012 Education, Quality & Performance Committee Minutes
- Paper 09.02 Annual Operating Plan 2012/13 Update.

Dr Kelly, the Presiding Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting held on 29 November 2012, commenced his report of the committee meeting by highlighting the presentations that had been received from the Head of Department (Business Services) and the Head of Department (Training) on the theme of 'Developing Excellence' in their respective departments as well as the Quality Unit Annual Report that had been presented by the Quality & Performance Manager.

In continuing his report, Dr Kelly then reported that FLU targets for full time higher education had been exceeded and that further education recruitment is on track to achieve the targets set; drew attention to the various awards that had been received by college students; advised that a discussion on FP7 and Horizon 2020 opportunities would be held at the next committee meeting as well as a review of the key strategic issues for the Committee; and commented on the challenge in meeting both the accountability and strategic responsibilities of the Committee and the need to make optimal use of time during meetings.

With reference to the Quality Unit Annual Report referred to above as well as the report presented in paper 10.02, the Director reported that the annual ETI scrutiny inspection of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning process had taken place in early January and confirmed that a Grade 1 had been awarded to the College as a result of this inspection. Members commended the staff involved in securing a Grade 1 for the third consecutive year, describing it as a marvellous achievement, and asked that the Governing Body's congratulations be expressed to those involved.

AGREED: on the proposal of Dr Kelly, seconded by Mr Archdale, adoption of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee Minutes.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Letter to College Chairs regarding amendments to Instrument of Government
- Paper 10.02 ETI Scrutiny Inspection of the Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Planning Processes in South West College.

The Chairman reported the following matters:

- **Proposed change to Instrument of Government** – The letter contained in paper 10.01 contains details of DEL’s proposal to amend colleges’ Instruments of Government to strengthen its powers to remove governors from office, should this be required, as recommended under DFP guidance. It was noted by a member that this amendment does not provide a mechanism for appeal by affected members.

AGREED: that South West College’s Instrument of Government be amended accordingly;

- **ETI Scrutiny Inspection of Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Planning Process** – The Chairman, the Director and the Quality & Performance Manager met with DEL and ETI to receive the outcome of this inspection as detailed earlier in the meeting;
- **Ratification of fixed term contracts** – The fixed term contract proposals presented to the Staffing Committee at its December meeting had been approved by the Chairman on behalf of the Governing Body as a number of the contracts recommended for extension expired before the Governing Body meeting;
- **Proposal to provide authority to the Chair of the Governing Body to ratify routine Staffing Committee recommendations on behalf of the Governing Body** – The change to the calendar of meetings in 2012/13 from that of previous years has resulted in an extended period between the Staffing Committee’s recommendation for approval of staff requests, fixed term contract proposals and appointments and their formal approval by the Governing Body and subsequent implementation. In order to resolve this operational issue it is proposed that the Governing Body provides authority to its Chair to ratify these routine recommendations going forward on its behalf as permitted under the College’s Standing Orders. In response to a query from a member, routine recommendations were defined as those below Deputy Head of Department and Band 8 Support Staff level.

AGREED: that authority be granted to the Chair of the Governing Body going forward to ratify routine staff requests, fixed term contract proposals and appointments recommended for approval by the Staffing Committee on behalf of the Governing Body;

- **Certificate in Corporate Governance course** – Following her attendance at this course, the Secretary to the Governing Body has attained the Certificate in Corporate Governance;
- **14 – 19 Agenda meeting** – A meeting has been held with the Minister for Employment & Learning to stress the importance of the 14 – 19 Agenda;
- **Meeting of Committee Chairs** – A collective meeting of Committee Chairs will shortly be arranged to discuss issues of common concern across committees, the identification of training needs and any other issues that chairs may wish to raise;
- **DEL’s Survey of Further Education Governors** – Governors are encouraged to complete DEL’s survey of Further Education Governors by the closing date for responses of 25 January 2013.

11.0 DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

The Director reported the following matters:

- **CREST Project** – The Letter of Offer from SEUPB for £2.9 million from the Interreg IVA Programme for the CREST Project has been received and should be finalized by 1 February 2013 following minor amendments;
- **NEETS funding** – £547k of funding has been secured to support 16 -24 year olds not in education, employment or training in the Omagh District Council area in addition to the circa £800k already secured to support this cohort in the Fermanagh and Dungannon Council areas;
- **Enniskillen shared services development** – Recent developments in relation to this project include:
 - The outline design for the development has been completed;
 - A Project Board is being established with initial membership comprising SWC, Fermanagh District Council (FDC), the Strategic Investment Board (SIB), DEL, the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Board (NIAB);
 - The SIB will shortly recruit a Project Manager for the project to be funded by SIB, SWC and FDC and seconded to the College for the first year initially;
 - The relevant land / title legal documentation is currently being compiled by the Western Health & Social Care Trust (WHSC).

12.0 AMENDMENTS TO REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Secretary to the Governing Body requested that those governors who had not yet submitted their conflicts of interest declaration form to do so as soon as possible.

No amendments were made to the Register of Interests.

13.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

14.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

15.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

16.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13 March 2013 at 5:30 pm in the Enniskillen campus.

17.0 EVALUATION OF MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 16 Governing Body Meeting Evaluation Form.

Completion of the form was conducted on a collective basis led by the Secretary to the Governing Body. Governors conveyed their satisfaction with the proceedings of the meeting.

The Staff Governors, Mr Bradley and Mr Devlin, withdrew from the meeting at this juncture. The meeting then went into private session and concluded at 7:50 pm.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2013

CHAIRMAN _____ **DATE** _____