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**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTY FIRST MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2024, COMMENCING 16:00 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

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**PRESENT:** Mr P Clancy, Committee Chair  
Mr B Dougherty  
Mrs M Gormley (until 18:05)  
Mr B O’Neill  
Mr F Smyth  
Mr P Thompson  
Ms V Toland

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr C O’Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards  
Ms G Moss, Head of Client Services  
Mrs K Moore, Head of Quality Enhancement (until 17:47)  
Mr D Seffen, Regional Head of Prison Programmes, Belfast Met (for presentation item 71.0 only)  
Mr S Hillis, Deputy Head of Prison Programmes at HMP Magilligan (for presentation item 71.0 only)  
Mrs É Doherty, Secretary to the Governing Body

**APOLOGIES:** Mr L Murphy, Principal & Chief Executive  
Dr S Fisher

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**71.0 PRESENTATION**

The Committee Chair welcomed Mr D Seffen, Regional Head of Prison Programmes, Belfast Met and Mr S Hillis, Deputy Head of Prison Programmes at HMP Magilligan. The Committee were provided with an insightful overview on the work undertaken in the Prisons together with the positive outcomes for the students. The Committee were apprised of the priorities moving forward.

Governors got the opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation. The Committee Chair thanked Mr Seffen and Mr Hillis for a very informative session.

*Mr D Seffen and Mr S Hillis left the meeting at this juncture.*

**71.1 WELCOME**

The Committee Chair welcomed everyone and extended a warm welcome to Mr B Dougherty recently appointed Board member who was attending his first Committee meeting.

**71.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no conflicts of interest declarations. There were no declarations of any other business.

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**71.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2024****➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 71.3 Draft Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2024

The Draft Minutes were taken as read and agreed were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**PROPOSED**, Mrs M Gormley

**SECONDED**, Mr B O'Neill

**REPORT 1 MATTERS ARISING – 17 September 2024, Committee Meeting**

70.4 Following an expression of interest issued to relevant Committee members, Dr S Fisher has agreed to take on this role.

70.5 An update is provided within the papers. The paper outlines the actions taken to date and the plans to support new leaders that have been appointed following the voluntary severance process. (Ref 71.5, Report 7.)

70.6 The Estates Team will explore the options available to provide a common room facility for HE students into their Programme of Works for 2025.

**71.4 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Committee Chair and fellow Governors attended the NWRC Higher Education and Access Awards Graduation Ceremony on 30 October 2024 at the Millenium Forum. Over 600 students graduated. It was a fabulous day of celebration, a memorable day for the graduating students to begin the next chapter of their lives. The Committee Chair wished to thank all the staff, particularly the marketing, administration and corporate teams that made the day possible. The Committee members echoed these sentiments.

The Committee Chair attended the ETI evaluation meeting for the Step-Up Programme on 17 October 2024. Mr Gareth Rooney District Inspector and Ms Karen McLaughlin from ETI presented their findings. Overall, the report was very positive. A summary of the findings/recommendations can be found in Dr O' Mullan's Management Report (Ref EC 71.5, page 5).

The Committee Chair attended the North West Future of Energy Conference at the Ebrington Hotel on the 7 November 2024. Ms Francine Moran, NWRC Lecturer and Sustainability Champion was part of a panel discussion on, " Investment in Innovation and Developing Skills Pipeline for Net Zero Ambitions". Ms Moran made an excellent contribution to the panel discussion and highlighted what the College in partnership with industry are doing to deliver the necessary skills needed to support this growing renewable/green sector. It was agreed to pass

on thanks to Ms Moran.

## **71.5 MANAGEMENT REPORT – Dr C O’Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards.**

### ➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

EC 71.5	Management Report
Report 1	Draft College Development Plan 2024/25
Report 2	Enrolments against CDP Targets 2024/25
Report 3	Quality Report – November 2024
Report 4	Compliments, Complaints & Academic Assessment Appeals 2023/24
Report 5	Commissioning Letter 2024/25 Quality Improvement Planning Submission
Report 6a	Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24
Report 6b	Draft Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25
Report 7	Leadership & Management Report
Report 8	Academic Standards Committee Draft Minutes October 2024
Report 9	Business Support Centre Update

### **EC 71.5 Management Report**

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards referred to the matters within the Management Report not referred to in the individual reports attached. This included further details on the ETI Evaluation of the Traineeship provision due to commence on 13 January 2025.

Part of the Staff Conference, ‘Empowering Improvement’ referenced the new Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education (July 2024).

As part of the Multiply Project a very successful Maths Week Ireland Event was held at the Springtown Campus on 18 October 2024. Teams of Primary 6 and Primary 7 children from 20 schools took part in a Quiz and range of activities illustrating the importance of mathematics for employment.

Updates on Project Based Learning, Sustainability, Cross Border Collaborations, Strategic Planning and Competition/Awards/Events was provided to the Committee.

### **Report 1 Draft College Development Plan 2024/25**

The Draft College Development Plan was presented in the new format with a new set of KPI’s. The College is waiting on the final sign off from the Department (DfE). It is expected that the 2025/26 CDP will be commissioned at an early stage in this academic year.

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**Report 2 Enrolments against CDP Targets 2024/25**

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards reported on the positive picture in relation to full-time enrolments against CDP targets. For 2024/25 there were 2901 enrolments against a target of 2981. Part-time enrolments for 2024/25 were currently showing 5331 against a target 7872 enrolments. Part-time enrolments will continue throughout the academic year.

The College retention rate at 7 November 2024 was 98% overall. This is made up of a retention of 96% for full-time and 99% of part-time. Attendance rates overall at 7 November 2024 was around 90%. The reasons for withdrawal from courses for the 283 students was shared with the Committee.

**Report 3 Quality Report – November 2024**

Mrs K Moore, Head of Quality Enhancement brought the Committee through the report. Retention increased by 1.1%, achievement by 1.6% and success improved by 2.3% from 2022/23 (FELs data). Data was also shared with the Committee on the ETI whole course data for Retention and Achievement.

**Report 4 Compliments, Complaints & Academic Assessment Appeals 2023/24**

Compliments increased from the previous year. Formal and informal complaints increased in 2023/24 from 2022/23. No complaints were presented to the NI Public Services Ombudsman for the period of the academic year 2023/24.

No Academic Appeals were received during 2023/24. The Academic Support Governor added that receiving no academic appeals was a reflection of the work of the academic staff.

**Report 5 Commissioning Letter 2024/25 Quality Improvement Planning Submission**

The Head of Quality Enhancement noted Report 5, the Commissioning Letter. The submission has been streamlined to align with College development planning and is in a new format. The submission to the Department (DfE) this year will include;

- An update of the Quality Improvement Plan for 2023/24 – provided at Report 6a
- A Quality Improvement Plan for 2024/25 based on robust self-evaluation – provided at Report 6b
- An Assurance Statement for FE signed at the appropriate level – provided in Report 5, Annex A
- An Assurance Statement for HE signed at the appropriate level – provided in Report 5, Annex C.

**Report 6a Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24**

Management would recommend the Report to the Committee. This report will progress to the Governing Body meeting on 20 November 2024 for approval.

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**Report 6b Draft Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25**

The new format has been mapped to align with the Minister for the Economy's, Economic Vision and the Programme for Government, the QIA and ETI inspection frameworks.

The nine key areas for improvement that the College will work through in the 2024/25 academic year are:

- AFI 1 Drive regional economic growth through innovative curriculum delivery and strategic partnerships by continuing to deliver Industry-Aligned Curriculum, Strategic Partnership Building, Innovation and Sustainability Integration and a focus on student success.
- AFI 2 Through proactive leadership drive the sustainability agenda across both the estate and through the curriculum to achieve ambitious Government targets of net zero by 2035.
- AFI 3 Leverage inter-college collaboration to drive excellence through systematic quality improvement.
- AFI 4 Curriculum: To implement targeted interventions across all curriculum levels from the retention and achievement strategies, and timetabling guidance to meet the retention, achievement and progression targets in line with the College Development Plan.
- AFI 5 To significantly improve outcomes for those studying Essential Skills.
- AFI 6 Develop and implement a comprehensive resource and Staff Development Strategy to deliver curriculum excellence through: robust Curriculum Resource Planning, the innovative Staff Development Programme and through future proofing identify current and future skills shortages in high priority sectors to create responsive training programmes.
- AFI 7 Continue to ensure financial stability and through innovation and creativity explore additional funding streams.
- AFI 8 Continuously enhance student support services and engagement strategies to improve students experience and outcomes by providing pathways to work in support of a more inclusive society.
- AFI 9 To recognise the importance of campus safety and good citizenship in line with the Programme for Government.

The submission for the year will provide:

1. an update of the Quality Improvement Plan submitted for 2023/24;
2. a Quality Improvement Plan for 2024/25 based on robust self-evaluation and presented on a template designed and agreed by the Curriculum Directors and Quality Managers in the Sector;
3. an Assurance Statement for Further Education signed at the appropriate level;
4. an Assurance Statement for Higher Education signed at the appropriate level.

In relation to providing assurance of the quality and the quality improvement processes on the HE Provision, the Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards referred to the issue of the Academic Standards Committee Minutes, the adherence to the quality processes and periodic reviews and focus on HE provides the evidence and assurance to the Committee and Board that the College is adhering to and moving towards quality improvement.

The Committee can review the Plan further and submit feedback to inform the final version. These Reports will progress to the Governing Body meeting on 20 November 2024 for full Board consideration and feedback. The final version of the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25 will be provided to the Board around December time. The Plan has to be submitted to the Department (DfE) on or before 24 January 2025.

#### **Report 7 Leadership & Management Report**

Referring to report 70.5, the Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards reported that following the voluntary severance process a number of senior leaders and middle managers have been appointed. A comprehension plan to support these leaders is being developed to ensure that they are well-equipped to manage their expanded responsibilities and continue to achieve the College's strategic goals.

#### **Report 8 Academic Standards Committee Draft Minutes October 2024**

The Committee noted the report.

#### **Report 9 Business Support Centre Update**

The Committee noted the report.

The Committee Chair thanked Dr C O' Mullan and invited Ms G Moss to report to the Committee.

### **71.6 CLIENT SERVICES – Ms G Moss, Head of Client Services**

#### **➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

- Report 1 Equality Update
- Report 2 Safeguarding Update

#### **Report 1 Equality Update**

The Head of Client Services reported that feedback was received from the Equality Commission in relation to the recent submission of the S75 Annual Progress Report. The feedback is extremely positive, and the work of the Equality Officer in particular was acknowledged.

Further work on equality was noted with the recent and forthcoming awareness days. The Equality Working Group continue to meet with various agenda items. There is focus on the White Ribbon NI Pledge Working Group. This aligns to the Programme for Government's Strategy and the CDP in relation to ending violence against women and girls.

Good Relations Week included meeting with REACH and TRIAX Neighbourhood Partnership. New links have been established with the Koram Centre in Strabane. The process to renew the College's charities for the next two academic years is progressing. In concluding her report the Head of Client Services highlighted the Section 75 categories.

**Governor Mr B Dougherty requested a meeting with Ms Moss to consider potential engagement work. Ms Moss welcomed this invite.**

#### **Report 2 Safeguarding Update**

Ms Moss brought members through the key items from the Safeguarding Report. A robust discussion followed highlighting the increasing number of Students that the Safeguarding Team is managing. The importance of continued links with partnership and community groups were noted.

The Committee Chair thanked Ms Moss for her report.

#### **71.7 CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

#### **71.8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no any other business to discuss.

#### **71.9 RESERVED BUSINESS – Taken separately.**

That being the end of business the Committee Chair thanked everyone. The meeting ended at 18:13.

**Date of Next Meeting – 12 February 2025**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Mr P Clancy, Committee Chair

Date: 12 February 2025