

Belfast Metropolitan College Human Resources Committee 4.30pm Monday 22 June 2020 via Microsoft Teams Minutes FINAL approved 2 September 2020

Committee Members: Jim McCall (Chair); Catherine Burns; Sam Snodden; Maureen Walkingshaw, Brian Wilson; Louise Warde Hunter, Principal & Chief Executive

Management: Gillian Magee, Director of People, Policy and Planning; Rebecca Roberts, Centre for Excellence (CfE); Stephanie McCormack, Head of Human Resources (HHR).

Clerk to the Governing Body: Gerry Crossan

<p>HR43 19/20 Chair</p>	<p>Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Advance Clarifications and Notice of AOB</p> <p>Quorum: The meeting was quorate under the terms of Paragraph 3B of the Terms of Reference for the Human Resources Committee dated February 2018 (2 Governors).</p> <p>Apologies: No apologies received as at date of meeting (22 June 2020).</p> <p>Welcome: The Chair welcomed Louise Warde Hunter, P&CE to the meeting.</p> <p>Conflicts of Interest: No perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest under the terms of Paragraph 15.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders dated August 2015 were advised.</p> <p>Advance clarifications: No advance clarifications sought as at date of meeting (22 June 2020).</p> <p>AOB: Staff Pulse Survey Results (22 June 2020).</p>
<p>HR44 19/20 Chair</p>	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2020 - Draft (Proposed Final)</p> <p>The Committee approved the Draft (Proposed Final) minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2020 with some corrections advised.</p>
<p>HR45 19/20 Chair</p>	<p>Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2020</p> <p>Microsoft Teams training: Management advised that additional training is available via Belfast Met account.</p>
<p>HR46 19/20 Clerk</p>	<p>Governance Guidance and Information</p> <p>No governance guidance and information relating to the work of the HR Committee has been notified since the date of the last Committee meeting.</p>

Agenda Item	
HR47 19/20 Chair	Chair's Business No items not on this agenda.
HR48 19/20 DPPP	HR Metrics (TOR 1.3) (a) Quarter 3 2019/20 Key staff-related performance metrics Management advised on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sickness absence and days lost trend is positive in year and in comparison to same period from 2018/19; • Slightly higher level of sickness absence in support staff compared to teaching staff; • Significant reduction in short-term sickness absence since beginning of response to COVID-19; • Circa 9000 days lost in 2018/19 compared to circa 7000 for the same period in 2019/20; • Leavers comparable to the same period last year, but the proportion of teaching staff leaving has increased through retirements and resignations to move into other jobs – exit interviews did not evidence potential grievances about the College; • Average attrition rate is 0.9%; • Utilisation rates comparable to same period in 2018/19; • Increase in employment to 12 live cases compared to 10 in 2018/19; • Tribunal offices remain closed therefore anything listed before 23 March 2020 will be reviewed at the end of June and the earliest that work is likely to begin again is July 2020 and no new cases will be listed before October 2020; • Churn rate is very low – management regularly review staff turnover, curriculum provision and workforce planning and skills development with curriculum managers; • Utilisation metric is for teaching staff only and compares actual to contracted contact time for teachers; <p>Management have made adaptations to processes to ensure that Management support rights at work following the making of a complaint of harassment and will present a brief paper on these to the Committee.</p> <p>Management advised that at the last annual benchmarking exercise some months ago, the College experience was similar to that across the sector.</p> <p>Management will provide an in-depth analysis to the Committee in September 2020 on the workforce planning in key areas of the Curriculum – this work is currently under way, for example, 50% of workforce are aged between 50-59, within next 5 years large proportion of staff in the School of Health and Wellbeing will be eligible for retirement.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the revised blended learning environment from September 2020 may require additional support skills. Management advised that capacity is emerging as support tasks and processes have changed in the past few months. Management are implementing clear working patterns/programmes and the evidence is that support workforce is fully deployed, project planning tools are being widely used and skills requirements analysis is ongoing.</p> <p>P&CE advised that correct comparison is against best in class and that Executive Team is considering wider perceptions and the overall “health check” for the College.</p> <p>The Committee noted the information provided by and the action taken by Management.</p>
HR49 19/20 DPPP	HR Department Priorities (TOR 1.3) (a) Quarter 3 2019/20 HR Department Priorities

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	<p>Management advised the Committee on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of improvement projects will be rolled over into 2020/21; • Review of HR structure is now being informed by experience of moving to online, flexible support over the past months – evidence suggests that we will require a different skills profile as HR processes are re-engineered in the light of the move to online business and “presence for a purpose”; • There has been a significant investment in the HR team to deliver a “HR business partner” operational structure – the need for a leadership post which is business improvement in this environment rather than a HR legal expert; • Key skills being emphasised in this environment areas are communication, people analytics and technical skills in an online environment; • Evidence of staff reacting positively to online interviewing; • the role of “Speak Up Champions” which has been reviewed to match to the current environment; • any changes to the premises footprint will need to be assessed through financial, social impact and other criteria for the maintenance of learner identity. <p>The Committee noted that the impact of the response to COVID-19 will mean that the new normal business is likely to be very different to that prior to the outbreak.</p> <p>P&CE advised that the environment has provided evidence on the appetite and engagement of staff in both online working and premises-based working.</p> <p>The Committee noted the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p>HR50 19/20 DPPP</p>	<p>Equality Information (TOR 1.10)</p> <p>(a) Quarter 3 2019/20 Key Equality related information</p> <p>Annual Review - Fair Employment Monitoring Return:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College has maintained a balanced workforce; • Increasing proportion of applicants not providing information on perceived community background, but this common across the public sector – NI Life and Times Survey is indicating that there is a general trend towards non-determination; • Statutory obligation to collect information and to apply the residual method; • Management are alive the potential reasons behind this and are working with the Equality Commission to gain insight into this; • Management advised that BAME proportion of staff is very low and not mirroring the proportion in the NI population as a whole. <p>Article 55 review (triennial review)</p> <p>Committee thanked Management for the information in this report. Management will advise the Committee on the feedback from the Equality Commission.</p> <p>The Committee noted the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p>HR51</p>	<p>Resourcing (TOR 1.8)</p>

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<p>19/20</p> <p>DPPP</p>	<p>(a) Quarter 3 2019/20 Resourcing information</p> <p>Management advised the Committee on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing activity levels are comparable to 2018/19 although a slight reduction is expected for the outturn for the year; • Recruitment and selection processes have moved online and the feedback from managers has been very positive with very little candidate withdrawal; • Q3 24 posts, 8 academic, 4 for part-time and support registers; • A significant number of formerly suppressed vacancies have been filled in this academic year; • Still facing challenges in recruiting staff in areas where there are skill shortages and against the backdrop of significant variances in public sector pay frameworks for teaching profession; • Overall numbers are stable, headcount is not increasing and posts are being filled as a result of staff turnover and in suppressed post; • Increase in NIPS staff; • Every vacancy subject to financial and HR appraisals and final consideration by Establishment Panel. <p>The Committee noted the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p>HR52</p> <p>19/20</p> <p>DPPP</p>	<p>Observation and Appraisal (TOR 1.6)</p> <p>(a) Quarter 3 2019/20 Key information in relation to completion of appraisals within the College.</p> <p>Management advised on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 response has affected closing out of appraisals while core reflection/KPI processes will not change significantly – end of October remains the deadline for completing appraisals for support staff; • Changes to the teaching and learning environment from September 2020 is necessarily driving changes to the appraisal framework and this will be subject to consultation and negotiation; • options for the “annual conversation” and the timing of completion of appraisals in the light of the extraordinary workload levels that all staff have been experiencing in responding to COVID-19; • 100% engagement and compliance is itself a measure of good performance management; <p>The Committee noted that there was the risk that the present framework may not provide adequate performance differentiation which is a driver for continuous improvement.</p> <p>The Committee noted the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p>HR53</p> <p>19/20</p> <p>CfE</p>	<p>Centre for Excellence</p> <p>(a) (a) COVID-19 Response: Staff Training and Support Key Statistics (b) Quarter 3 2019/20 Centre for Excellence Overview by Workstream; and, (c) Quarter 3 2019/20 Centre for Excellence Overview by Team.</p> <p>Management advised on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting move to online working environment was a major challenge for CoE staff;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CoE objectives to support mental health engagement, resilience and the maintenance of connections between staff and teams;• Great deal of evidence to support discussions with awarding bodies on the nature of assessment processes in an online environment.• Over 3000 webinars delivered by staff to learners;• Major changes to CANVAS to support legal compliance, just-in-time teaching and learning support;• Quality management is now almost entirely online, using virtual exam boards and communicating awarding body standards and processes;• Health and Wellbeing capacity has increased with two recent appointments• Online training has been developed with a number of partner organisations in the Third Sector, including programmes to support parenting, managing anxiety and a range of other relevant programmes; and,• 132 people have attended training since lockdown and evidence is that staff are prioritising their own health and wellbeing and Management are supporting staff in this;• Mental Health Charter Group has been established with good representation from across the College;• CoE liaises with CAMs on accessing resources to manage their own wellbeing and that of the teams that they lead – strong evidence that staff know how to access resources and are getting strong support from their line managers; <p>The Committee noted the concerns raised at the recent CQE Committee meeting and the relevance of the work of CoE in addressing these issues – this may be an issue with particular relevance to staff delivering vocational qualifications in the absence of clear guidance from awarding bodies.</p> <p>The Committee noted the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
	<p>HR and Employee Relations responses to COVID-19 and move to online teaching and learning</p> <p>Management advised on the following key principles being applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexibility and support in the consideration of all aspects of case-work;• Timing of progressing HR processes;• Reasonable objections to online processes – options are online, based on written submissions or parked until working environment returns to manageable physical environment;• Cases are being considered in the light of statutory obligations and the rights of employees; <p>The Committed noted that this approach is being applied across the sector and Management are maintaining communications with staff and trade union representatives. Management advised that the socially-distanced options for hearings will be available in September 2020.</p> <p>Managed advised on the cross-sectoral action which is being taken to address anomalies in the negotiated policies and procedures.</p>

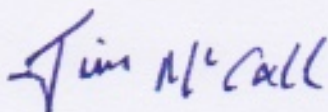
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of staff with caring responsibilities report that College has provided support; • Confidence in government advice on returning to work in line with evidence across the economy and in Managements actions in taking decisions to protect staff while anticipating further clarity on the detail of returning to work; • High levels of positive feedback on levels and engagement and communications from line manager; • High levels of confidence in management support and the provision of tools needed to work effectively; • 25% of staff indicated that their productivity had declined; • 75% report no change or improvement to levels of productivity; • Robust evidence to inform IT support for both students and staff in the teaching and learning environment from September 2020 onward; and, • Preparatory actions for return to work will be across Health & Safety, communications, adequate equipment and technical support, workload and training and flexible working. <p>P&CE advised that the action taken is providing staff with assurance that we are listening to staff and are attuned to the needs of staff and will be taking action to address staff concern. A further survey is being planned for September 2020.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the timely briefing on the results of this survey, the positive and solution-focused engagement of staff with the survey and the robust evidence that will inform Management actions to prepare for the return to work.</p> <p>Managed advised that a policy on Remote Working is under consultation and is likely to be brought to the Committee over the summer. The Committee agreed that this could be considered by the Committee remotely when consultation has been completed.</p> <p>The Clerk advised the Committee on the development and consultation on the Governance Business Programme 2020/21.</p>
<p>HR56 19/20</p> <p>Chair</p>	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Human Resources Committee will take place in September 2020. The date, time and venue will be confirmed by the Clerk as part of the consultations on the Governance Business Programme 2020/21 which will take place in May/June 2020.</p>

Chair of the Belfast Metropolitan College
Human Resources Committee

Jim McCall

Signature



Date

07/09/20