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| **Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body 1:45pm Wednesday 11 December 2024 Titanic Quarter Boardroom and via MS Teams** | |
| **Governing Body Members:** Michele Corkey (Chair); Seamus McGoran (Vice-Chair); Rose Byrne; Seamus Dawson; Tom Hesketh; Maurice Keady; Lauren McAteer; Michael McKernan; Sheena McKinney; Bill Montgomery; Yvonne Murphy; Sinéad Sharpe; Michael Mearns; Alex O’Neill; Damian Duffy (Interim Principal and Chief Executive (IPCE)  **Management:** Aidan Sloane, Chief Operating Officer (COO); Fiona Dempsey, Interim Director of Curriculum and Learner Success (IDCLS); Siobhan Lyons, Interim Director of Development and Partnerships (IDDP)  **Observing:** Janis Leaden Governor pending appointment and Andrew Clark, ICS, DoF.  **Secretary to the Governing Body:** Jim Woods | |
| **GB16 24/25**  **Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Notice of AOB and Leadership Culture**  **Quorum**: The meeting is quorate under the terms of Section 7 of the Standing Orders for the Governing Body V5 approved at **GB81a 21/22 22 June 2022** (6 members, of which 3 must be appointed under Part II Paragraph 5a of the Instrument of Government).  **Apologies:** It was noted that IPCE was unable to join the meeting until 2:30  **Welcome**: Andrew Clark, ICS was welcomed and a warm welcome extended to Alex O’Neill student Governor, and to Jim Woods, Secretary, to their first meeting of the Governing Body  **Conflicts of Interest**: There were no perceived, potential, or actual conflicts of interest declared under the terms of Section 8 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Standing Orders for the Governing Body **V5** approved at **GB81a 21/22 22 June 2022**.  **Gifts and Hospitality:** All participants must report the accepting / rejecting of Gifts and Hospitality in line with the Financial Management Policy for Belfast Met. GB10 24/25 18 Sept 2024.  **AOB:** None notified to date.  Leadership Culture: Chair noted our commitment to Governing Body Leadership Culture Watchwords for 2022/23 (GB02d 22/23 21 September 2022 refers):  To offer ***Creative*** ***Challenge*** through ***Courageous*** & ***Candid*** conversations. (**GB34 24/25 Meeting Feedback** below refers) |
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| **Minute** | **Detail** |
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| **GB17 24/25** | **Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024**  The Governing Body:   * approved the minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 18 September 2024; and approved publication of the approved minutes on the College website, to be actioned by the Secretary: and * approved the minutes of the closed meeting held 18 September 2024. |
| **GB18 24/25** | **Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024**  There were no matters arising which did not feature on the agenda of this governance meeting. |
| **GB19 24/25** | **Governance Information and Guidance**  The Governing Body **noted** the issue of this governance information in relation to:  (a) The DfE appointment of the student Governor is confirmed, and Alex O’Neill is with us today  (b) Ratification of the reappointment of Janis Leaden is in process with DfE, who is here officially in an observing capacity today |
| **GB20 24/25** | **Notification of change to the internal control environment under Section 12d of Governing Body Standing Orders V5 22 June 2022**  The Secretary has drafted updated standing orders to reflect the new partnership agreement and the updated Articled and Instrument of Government.  The Governing Body approved the new standing orders.  There was a further item on the agenda in relation to fees and charges for 2025/26 GB30 24/25 refers which will impact the control environment. |
| **GB21 24/25** | **Chair’s Business**  **The Chair provided updates on**  (a)  Board Effectiveness Review – providing an update on progress, remarking that A Clark’s presence today is ICS final part of the fact finding.  (b)   Governing Body Strategic Planning 4/5 Feb – the first sessions have been planned in detail, the second day will close with a planning meeting of the Governing Body  (c)   Public Sector Chairs Forum – AGM where issues that are pertinent to the sector were discussed.  (d)   Correspondence from DfE:  (e)   Strategic event SWC in Dungannon on 5 Dec – DfE had a considerable resource dedicated to the day and there was a flow of information from DfE to participants.  (f)   CEF Update – correspondence was received from DfE in the shape of the EY evaluation of CEF. Feedback has been requested by 23 December.  The Governing Body notedthe information provided by the Chair. |
| **GB24 24/25** | *In a change to the running order*  **Corporate Risk Register Q1 2024/25**  An update of the Corporate Risk Register which was last considered GB10 24/25 on 18 September was provided. The register had been discussed in detail at ARAC. Three risks had been reframed to align with the environment in which the college was now operating. Members relayed that given the ballot for industrial action from the teaching unions within the school sector that there was a risk that this could spread to the FE sector.  The Governing Body notedthe update from Management on to the Corporate Risk Register Q1 2024/25  *At 2:26 IP&CE joined the meeting* |
| **GB22 24/25** | **Report of the Principal and Chief Executive**  IP&CE took members through a comprehensive report providing a narrative around the update that had been issued with the papers. Members thanked IP&CE for the positive report highlighting the positive external validation of Hydebank and Step up. Members felt that the report will play a critical role in scoping out the strategic planning event in February 2025.  The Governing Bodynoted the information provided and the action taken by the IP&CE |
| **GB23 24/25** | **Master Impact Report 2023/24**  Members thanked the IP&CE for the presentation on the Master Impact Report 2023/24.  The Governing Body noted the information provided which at a high level measured the impact achieved by Belfast Met during 2023/24. Members requested that it would be useful at some point to reflect on the College overall performance in respect of other Colleges in the sector. IPCE suggested that this could be picked up as part of the research and insights piece feeding into the strategic planning process in the New Year. |
| **GB25 24/25** | **College Development Plan and alignment with Ministers Priorities**  Members were taken through a summative paper which outlined progress of the 2024/25 College Development Plan for the 2024/25 against 12 metrics mapped to the 4 Economic Priorities. The review is for quarter 1.  Members explored the opportunities in reaching a wider audience through on-line learning. IPCE provided some insight on the College approach to technology enhanced learning and the partnership with OU which has been the leading provider of open learning and blended solutions.  The student representative relayed that she and other of her classmates travel a considerable distance to attend college and that the cost can be prohibitive. On this basis any developments or more blended learning approaches would be most welcome by the students.  The Governing Body noted the information provided and tasked CQE with having a deep dive on the impact that blended and technology enhanced learning is having on the curriculum and an understanding as to how ‘Digit by Design’ theme will support further enhancement to online learning as part of the evolving curriculum framework which will underpin the new strategic plan. |
| **GB26 24/25** | **Traineeships**  A report was presented which outlined the Traineeship provision and aligned priorities. The summary included details on the background and areas for delivery. Details on the framework and learner profiles were provided including information from the learner voice and challenges from a learner perspective.  A discussion ensued on the fixation on providing outcomes that align to schools measures on providing with outcomes that equate to 5 CGSEs Grade A-C as a measure of success. It was noted that as part of the ongoing discussions on the components of the Traineeship, CCEA as regulator had put forward some comments on the equivalency of the components in the Traineeship.  The Governing Body noted the information provided and the impact for Belfast Met. CQE were asked to examine the issues in detail at their next meeting. |
| **GB27 24/25** | **Castlereagh Campus: Public consultation analysis**  The Governing Body previously approved an outline strategic business case that addressed the long-term sustainability of the Castlereagh Campus and identified options. The college facilitated as 14-week public consultation exercise. A paper was presented which provided an update on the consultation findings and detailed the next steps to be taken. The paper had been finalised in close collaboration with the Equality Commission to ensure it met the full requirements in terms of reporting back on the outcomes from a public consultation.  The Governing Body noted the update and approved the publication of the results to the public domain. |
| **GB28 24/25** | **Performance Reporting Q1 2024/25**  Three main Q1 performance reports related to Risk, Finance and curriculum had been issued with the papers. Following a question from the student representative a discussion ensued on how some of the resources available in the budget might be used to enhance the student experience. It was agreed that more detailed discussion was need outside of the main Board meeting.  The Governing Body noted the performance reporting for Q1 2024/25. A meeting comprising AO’N, COO, and IDCLS is to be convened to explore expenditure on the student experience. |
| **GB29 24/25** | **Quality Assurance update including Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and Annual Quality Assessment Return**  The Governing Body was advised by TH, Chair, CQE, that the committee had discussed the paper in considerable detail. The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and HE annual Quality Assessment Return are included. Under the process Board must approve annual assurance statements which are in turn signed of by the Chair.  The Governing Body approved a full assurance assessment which must be returned by 25 January 2025. |
| **GB30 24/25** | **Fees and charges for 2025/26 academic year**  The Governing Body were taken through the fees and charges for 2025/26. In line with article 14 (1) (b) (c) (g) and 14 (2) of the Further Education Order NI the Governing Body must set the fees. COO took members through the paper explaining that changes are in line with DfE guidance and result in a 2% increase in fees.  Members asked what committee had debated and examined the proposal. An assurance was given that the Executive Leadership Team had considered the report in detail on a number of iterations.  The Governing Body approved the fees for 2025/26 which is a change to the control environment and asked that a short follow up paper be circulated outlining the background considered by ELT in terms of the changes in fees being recommended. |
| **GB31 24/25** | **Governance Programme 2024/25**  Each of the Committee Chairs provided a detailed update focusing on the oversight of strategic themes, scrutiny of Q1 reports, consideration of relevant risks and approval of terms of reference. The draft minutes of the first cycle of committee had been issued with the papers.  **Curriculum, Quality and Engagement 4 Dec 2024**  TH, as chair, provided a detailed summary of the matters that had been addressed at the committee including the student performance report, the business skills report, two very pleasing external evaluations, the activities of Learner Success update and a deep dive into the activities of the school of Science, Engineering and Construction. He concluded that new framework of KPIs is as judicious way forward, mapping curriculum and business activities to 12 performance indicators which will be presented in a Dashboard. The risk discussion for curriculum had been limited to challenges around attracting qualified lecturers.  **Safeguarding**  SMcK, as the Governor with Safeguarding oversight responsibility, reported to the Governing Body that the safeguarding 2023/24 report provided a good assurance on safeguarding activities within the College. She drew attention to the number of referrals through encompass. She hoped to meet the team face to face during the next quarter.  **Human Resources Committee 2 Dec 2024**  LMcA, as chair, provided a strategic oversight in relation to being an employer of choice relaying that the appointment of the Director of People and Culture will be pivotal in this regard. A deep dive into activities in relation to culture has been deferred until the appointment is made. A detailed review of the annual report and Q1 performance reported was conveyed. It was pleasing that the level of applications for positions were increasing. The main risk change perceived by the committee relates to industrial relations.  **Resources Committee 5 Nov 2024**  SD, as chair, provide an overview informing members that for Q1 that finances were on target and remarked on the improved budget allocation. A consolidated report structure was very well received by the committee. Both estates and IT had provided updates and that KPIs are generally on track. No major changes reported in terms of finance and resources.  **Audit Risk and Assurance Committee 18 Nov and 10 Dec 2024**  SMcG, as a chair, reported that the normal meeting had been held 18 November during which normal business was conducted in relation to assurance business and Internal Audit activities. The annual accounts however could not be approved by the NIAO due work required to address issues related to the technical accounting treatment. One which was sector wide related to the treatment of pensions and the other deferred income. The same treatment had been used in the accounts approved 2023/24.  At an ARAC meeting held yesterday, which was not quorate, proceeded on an exceptional basis. A clean set of reconstituted accounts was presented with NIAO approval. Further details in relation to the accounts are provided in GB33 24/25.   1. Governance Programme 2024/25 Cycle 1 approved minutes were agreed to be released in the public domain. 2. AC17 24/25 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 16 September 2024 3. RC15 24/25 Resources Committee 5 September 2024 4. HR15 24/25 Human Resources Committee 9 September 2024 5. CQE15 24/25 Curriculum, Quality and Resources Committee 4 September 2024.   (b) Terms of reference for each of the committees was ratified by the Board.  Expressions of interest for the position of vice chairs will be issued in early 2025.  **Governance Housekeeping**  The Secretary to the Governing reported that the Code of Conduct is in the process of being updated and will be subject to approval at a future meeting. An online conflict of interest portal has been developed and will be released to members in the coming weeks.  The Governing Body noted information provided by the Committee Chairs and adopted the approved Committee minutes andapproved publication of the approved minutes on the College website, to be actioned by the Secretary. |
| **GB32 24/25** | **Any Other Business**  There was no other notified business |
| **GB33 24/25** | **Approval of annual accounts**  The Chair of the Audit Committee advised members that the Audit committee has met yesterday and had an exceptional meeting, with only two members present. He explained that the Comptroller and Auditor General agreed to certify the 2023/24 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification. An ‘other matters’ paragraph has been added to highlight matters which are fundamental to the ‘users’ understanding of the financial statement. Adjustments relate to the technical accounting treatment of matters such and pensions and deferred income.  The chair thanked members of staff and of the NIAO for the quick turnround in addressing the matters when they had come to light.  The annual accounts were agreed and approved by the Governing Body. |
| **GB34 24/25** | **Meeting Feedback**  Governing Body members:   * **considered** the conduct of the meeting in the light of the responsibilities of the Governing Body set out in Sections 9, 10 and 12 of the Governing Body Standing Orders V6a approved 11 dec 2024; and, * **advised** the Chair that the conduct of this governance meeting provided evidence of the Governing Body’s commitments as set out at GB16 24/25 above. |
| **GB35 24/25**  **Date of Next Meeting** | **Governance Programme 2024/25**  Governance Programme 2024/25 Cycle 3: The next meetings of the Governing Body will be held at:   * 4th and 5th February 2025] at Corick House commencing at 10:00 and,   Governance Programme 2024/25 the fourth meeting of the Governing in 2024/25 will be held on:   * 31 March 2025 at Titanic Quarter and via Microsoft Teams. * 30 April 2025 at Titanic Quarter and via Microsoft Teams * 25 June 2025 at Titanic Quarter and via Microsoft Teams |

***The Meeting ended at 17:15***

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| Members attendance in person | Members attendance Via teams |
| Michele Corkey | Maurice Keady |
| Seamus McGoran | Sheena McKinney |
| Rose Byrne | Damian Duffy |
| Seamus Dawson |  |
| Tom Hesketh |  |
| Lauren McAteer |  |
| Michael McKernan |  |
| Bill Montgomery |  |
| Yvonne Murphy |  |
| Sinéad Sharpe |  |
| Michael Mearns |  |
| Alex o’Neill |  |

Minutes approved for release at Governing Body 31 March 2025