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**MINUTES OF THE FORTY SEVENTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT SUITE, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS ON WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2019 @ 12:15**

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**PRESENT:** Mr M O’Kane, Committee Chair  
Mr S Gillespie  
Mr S McGregor  
Mr G Killeen  
Ms L McGonigle  
Mr A Magee  
Mrs L Taggart  
Mr E Kelly  
Mr L Murphy, Principal and Chief Executive

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs S Traynor, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Information Services  
Mrs M Jones, PA to Vice Principal, Curriculum & Information Services

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The Chair welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open. He advised members that the planned presentation of the HR and Learner Services Report would be deferred to the next Education Committee meeting as Ms Moss was unable to attend at this time.

**47.1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs É Doherty, Mr P Canavan, Dr M O’Neill and Mr B Quinn,

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

No conflict of interest declarations were made. There were no declarations of any other business.

**47.3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2018.**

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Paper EC 47.3 Final Draft Education Committee Minutes of 7 November 2018

It was taken that the Final Draft Minutes were read and were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**PROPOSED;** Mr M O’Kane

**SECONDED;** Mr S McGregor

**47.3.1 MATTERS ARISING – 7 November 2018 Committee Meeting**

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

**Terms of Reference with regard to HE Review**

Included in Papers (EC.47.5 Report 9) to be discussed as part of the Management Report (EC.47.5).

**47.4 CHAIR’S BUSINESS**

The Chair had no other business to discuss.

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**47.5 MANAGEMENT REPORT – Mrs S Traynor, Vice Principal Curriculum & Information Services****➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

PAPER EC.47.5 Management Report

Report 1 - Enrolment Tables

Report 2 - Action Plan – Community Education Department 2018/19

Report 3 - Whole College QIP 2018/19

Report 4 - Higher Education in FE: Review of Aims

Report 5 - College Curriculum Plan 2016-19

Report 6 - Health and Social Care Hub Action Plan

Report 7 - Draft Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee Meeting on  
14 November 2018

The Vice Principal reported on the CDP Progress Report against targets set for January 2019 and outlined the summary tables included in the report. An overall progress report had been submitted to the DfE on 12 December 2018. Slippage noted, with regard to Report Card 1 and the target set for overall enrolments, was addressed by the Vice Principal - although NWRC was currently 4% below target there were plans in place to continue to increase recruitment in Semester 2.

The Principal asked whether milestones had been set with regard to enrolment targets as this may arise at the upcoming bi-lateral meeting with DfE. The Vice Principal confirmed that targets had been set for the end of March 2019, suggesting that a rebalancing of MASN numbers would be necessary when planning for 2019/20. The Vice Principal explained the ongoing challenges with post primary sector and unconditional offers in HEI's in UK and explained the need for local post primary Principals to direct students more suited to vocational training to the College.

The Principal asked that Mr Killeen raise this issue with the local Education and Skills Group to ensure Principals are aware that any reduction in our MASN numbers could lead to an increase in MASN numbers for other colleges.

The Vice Principal outlined a recent meeting with representatives from LYIT and their intention to offer a bridging qualification similar to the Access programmes offered at NWRC. Should this proceed it would also impact on NWRC recruitment. The Vice Principal and Head of Quality Enhancement were currently in discussions with LYIT with a view to increase collaboration by widening the HE offer at the College by collaborating on a wider (2+2) curriculum.

Mr Killeen confirmed he would raise the matter with Foyle College and suggested the matter is also raised through the Foyle Learning Community (FLC). The Vice Principal advised that Ms K Moore, Head of Training and Skills Department, represented NWRC at FLC meetings and these concerns were being expressed.

The Vice Principal continued to report on updated enrolment targets for the whole College and then by Department as at 31 January 2019. Shortfalls in HE enrolments were noted, in particular part time HE. Mr McGregor requested further explanation. The Vice Principal advised that in an effort to improve part time HE enrolments HNC/Ds would be offered as these programmes were more flexible than Foundation Degrees. Also, the possibility of engaging with other HE providers was being explored.

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College retention currently stood at 97.6%. The Vice Principal confirmed the Whole College target set was 93% and this was being monitored by curriculum departments and the College Retention Working Group (RWG) that is chaired by Ms G Moss. The RWG explore strategies on how to retain students that may be at risk of withdrawal. The members considered the retention figures across each curriculum area and discussion arose with regard to the positive increase in retention in Science that rose from 80.7% in 2016/17 to 94.9% in 2017/18.

Performance Review meetings had taken place with each Department – led by the Quality Enhancement Unit and the Vice Principal highlighted some of the points gathered during these meetings as per the Management Report.

The members discussed Essential Skills outcomes and the challenges exhibited by end of year testing. Mr Kelly explained that most students believed Essential Skills would not meet University entry criteria. The Vice Principal and Mrs Taggart advised that QUB and UU did accept Essential Skills in some curriculum areas as an equivalence to GCSE. The Principal suggested exploring the current trends in GCSE outcomes. Mr Gillespie confirmed this information should be available from the Council Statistician as this is now a KPI for local authorities.

Continuing with the report the Vice Principal outlined progress made by the Community Team and referred members to the action plan attached to the papers. (EC.47.5 Report 6). Mr McGregor asked for an update on engagement with Limavady High School. The Chair suggested an update is presented at the next meeting with regard to the EF provision for all three campuses. Mr McGregor also commended the work being carried out at HMP Magilligan.

It was noted that Community enrolments had improved on the previous year. Work is ongoing to increase enrolments on accredited programmes in the Community. The College Connect programme had met its target for the year, whereas other colleges were struggling to achieve this target. This programme targets NEETS and runs for 34 weeks allowing participants to sample blocks of different curriculum to encourage participants to progress onto Level 2 courses at the College following completion of the programme. The Vice Principal updated members on the possibility of future funding from the Princes Trust to deliver training to RoI students but the training will be based at NWRC.

The Vice Principal referred the Committee to the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2018/19 and advised that Mr McNulty, ETI, is to meet with the Quality Enhancement Head of Department and Vice Principal on 14 February to review the plan and provide guidance.

The Student Survey (QDP) is currently live and has been extended to 1 March 2019 to allow more students to complete the survey. Mr E Kelly confirmed students were being encouraged to take part in the survey by their student reps. Mr Kelly found the most successful method of ensuring students complete the survey is to incorporate it into a tutorial class for example. The NSS Survey is also live until 29 April 2019. This is aimed at final year HE students and the overall outcomes are often used by prospective students when choosing which HE Institution to apply to.

With regard to the NWRC Review of Higher Education in FE the Vice Principal updated the Committee on a planned sector-wide review of HE in FE. The Principal confirmed a paper on HE in FE had been submitted to the Department, by the Principals Working Group, and more

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information should be available at the next Principals Group meeting on 14 February. The Chair and Committee agreed to postpone any decision on the College review of HE until after the Principals Group meeting and sector-wide decision relating to this review.

The Vice Principal provided an update following a recent meeting with Open University (OU) representatives. If NWRC were to enter into the application process, the start date for any new HE programme would be September 2020. The costs were comparable with UU costs. The Committee agreed the Vice Principal and Head of Department for Quality Enhancement should continue to explore this option and consider the curriculum offer to benefit students and industry. Updates are to be provided to the Education Committee.

The Vice Principal confirmed the College Curriculum Plan was due to be reviewed and would be returned to the Committee for information.

The HLA Conference held on 8 February 2019 was successful with staff from curriculum and BSC presenting on best practice on behalf of the College.

The Skills Analysis pilot in collaboration with JISC was ongoing. The service uses student data and predictive data modelling to identify students that may benefit from additional support.

NEF Assessors were on campus on 1 February to assess the Colleges application for revalidation of the STEM Assured status. The visit was successful and the assessors commended staff on the progress made over the last five years. The final decision would be reported to the College within one month. The Principal suggested a business engagement STEM conference should be arranged, once validation is confirmed, to promote the continued success of the College in the area of STEM. The members welcomed this suggestion.

The Vice Principal confirmed that NWRC will be lead in the sectoral partnership for Creative and Cultural Skills as part of ongoing curriculum reform.

The Health and Social Care Hub Action Plan (included with the papers) had now been approved by DfE.

Members noted the draft Academic Standards Committee minutes included with the papers.

No further questions arose with regard to the Management Report and the Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her report.

#### **AGREED ACTIONS:**

- **The Vice Principal to provide an update on VEP engagement with regard to Derry/Londonderry, Strabane and Limavady at the next Committee meeting.**
- **NWRC Review of Higher Education in FE to be postponed until further information is received by the Principal with regard to the sector-wide review of HE in FE.**
- **Vice Principal and Head of Department of Quality Enhancement to continue to explore Open University validation and the curriculum offer and Vice Principal to report back to members at the next meeting.**

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**47.6 CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to report on.

**47.7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair suggested mid-day meetings may be preferable in future as the meeting was well attended. The members agreed and the Chair will follow up with the Governance Secretary. That being the end of business the Chair thanked everyone and brought the meeting to a close at 14:10.

**Date of Next Meeting: 9 April 2019**

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CHAIR**  
Mr M O'Kane

**DATE: 9 APRIL 2019**

APPROVED