

**FOR PUBLICATION (EXCLUDING RESERVED BUSINESS)**

**STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**GOVERNING BODY MEETING ON 21 JUNE 2022 AT 2PM IN THE SLEMISH ROOM,  
REFECTORY BUILDING**

**Governing Body:** Mr E Jardine (Chair), Mr P Weil, Dr A Brown, Professor J. Heggarty, Mr K Nelson, Dr M Bennett, Dr L Boyce, Dr E Birnie, Mrs C Moore, Mr R Thompson, Professor D Jones, Ms M Corrigan, Mr N McCarter

**In Attendance:** Ms K Robinson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Ms J O'Boyle (Head of Finance – Item 8)

**Apologies:** Mrs H Miller (Vice-Chair), Mr D Feely, Mr W Patterson

**Any Other Business:** None

**AGENDA**

**GB/4/22/1.1 WELCOME**

4/22/1.1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Principal for the opportunity to meet with staff at the Barbecue to mark the end of the Staff Development event.

4/22/1.1.2 Members of the Governing Body joined the Chair in thanking Dr Birnie for his service to the Governing Body as he approaches the end of his tenure on 31 July 2022. A small gift was presented in recognition of his service to the College as a Member of the Governing Body and the Finance and General Purposes Committee over the last eight years.

4/22/1.1.3 Members also extended their best wishes to Mr Patterson in his absence, as his tenure also comes to an end on 31 July 2022. He too was thanked for his service to the College as a Member of the Governing Body and the HR and Remuneration Committee over the last eight years and also for the seven years he spent as a Member of

the Finance and General Purposes Committee. A gift will be presented to Mr Patterson at an opportune time.

4/22/1.1.4 Members noted that the Chair would be informing those attending to assume that members have read the papers and therefore it is only necessary to provide a high level summary. In respect to the latter, the Chair drew attention to the high level summaries of the Committee meetings that had been prepared by the Secretary for the purposes of the discussions under Item 3

**GB/4/22/1.2 APOLOGIES**

4/22/1.2.1 The apologies from Mrs Miller, Mr Patterson and Mr Feely were noted.

**GB/4/22/1.3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

4/22/1.3.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

**GB/4/22/1.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

4/22/1.4.1 There were no other items of business to discuss, other than those to be discussed under Chair's Business.

**GB/4/22/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS ON 30 MARCH 2022 AND 26 APRIL 2022, INCLUDING A GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN, ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING**

4/22/2.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting on 30 March 2022 were agreed. These recorded the discussions at the Special Meeting which was convened to discuss Governance in the Round and Governing Body Effectiveness.

4/22/2.2 The Chair reflected on the overall outcome of the discussions. In summary, Governance in the College was assessed as good, with only a small number of actions identified. In respect to the latter, Members noted the Action Plan that had been developed and the targets for implementation, which had been discussed and agreed with the Principal. The Principal informed the Committee that the timescales for implementation were achievable. There were no questions emerging and the Action Plan was approved. Progress against the Plan will be monitored.

4/22/2.3 The Minutes of the previous meeting on 26 April 2022 were agreed. There was only one outstanding Action Point regarding the draft Personal Relationships Policy and Procedures. A meeting between the Head of HR, the Director of Student and Learning Services, The Chair

of the HR and Remuneration Committee and the Chair of the Education Committee is currently being arranged. There were no other matters arising.

**Professor Jones arrived at 2.10pm and Mrs Moore arrived at 2.15pm**

**GB/4/22/3**

## **HIGH LEVEL OVERVIEWS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

4/22/3.1.1

The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC) highlighted the key issues emerging from the F&GPC meeting on 31 May 2022. Increasing energy prices and uncertainty over budgets and capital funding were reported. Since the meeting the Principal informed Members that the Department has indicated that the College can now assume that it will receive the same allocations as the current year which is better than expected.

4/22/3.1.2

The Committee also considered updated Policies on:

- Anti-Money Laundering;
- Gifts and Hospitality; and
- Treasury Management.

In respect to the updated Treasury Management Policy, Governing Body Members noted that subsequent to the meeting the Chair had asked for advice on the compatibility of the Policy with the College's NDPB status. Governing Body Members noted that the Department is content with the draft Policy. The following was provided in the Department's response:

*“MPMNI asks departments to ensure NDPBs have a cash management strategy in place (including banking arrangements), which Stranmillis clearly does. MPMNI highlights the minimisation of risks, efficiency and value for money (seeking the best terms possible) in treasury management.*

*Stranmillis' Treasury Management Policy is simplified by the fact that it does not currently undertake borrowing/overdrafts or trade and financial instruments & controls are in place where borrowing/overdrafts might be required. It is relatively straightforward and makes good use of overnight accounts to generate interest on unproductive cash, as well as surplus cash in fixed term cash deposits (based on cash forecast requirements) to generate a return.*

*The types of deposits are low risk and sensible for the College and in line with what you would expect an NDPB to do in terms of treasury management. The key objective of this policy is the*

*security of the principal sum invested, which is as you would expect.”*

- 4/22/3.1.3 The draft Policy on Anti-Money Laundering was approved as proposed by Mr Thompson and seconded by Dr Boyce.
- 4/22/3.1.4 The draft Gifts and Hospitality Policy was approved as proposed by Ms Corrigan and seconded by Professor Jones.
- 4/22/3.1.5 The draft Treasury Management Policy was approved as proposed by Mr Weil and seconded by Dr Birnie.
- 4/22/3.2.1 Members noted the high level summary of the Education Committee meeting on 7 June 2022 as set out in the paper. The Chair highlighted, and Members discussed, the ongoing issue as reported recently in the media about Widening Participation and the need to broaden the conversation around encouraging males into teaching, particularly in Early years and Primary teaching. Members agreed that a more strategic approach will be necessary. This will be further discussed at the Education Committee early in the next academic year.
- 4/22/3.2.2 Members further noted that there had been positive reports on the Continuous Action for Programme Enhancement (CAPE) and the Periodic Reviews which were undertaken, the good practice which was identified and the actions that will ensure continuous improvement. Of further note was the QUB plans for an Institutional Review of the College in the autumn of 2023, which will include a comprehensive review of all QUB validated programmes.
- 4/22/3.2.3 The Education Committee also considered the updated Research and Scholarship Strategy and welcomed the very positive Research Excellence Framework (REF2021) results. The updated Research and Scholarship Strategy was also approved as proposed by Dr Brown and seconded by Mr Nelson.
- 4/22/3.3 Members noted the detail in the paper of the business that was discussed at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 8 June 2022. Of particular note as highlighted by the Chair of the Committee was the news that Satisfactory Assurance has been awarded for all Internal Audits during 2021-22. The Governing Body congratulated the College on the results achieved.
- 4/22/3.4 Members noted the detail in the paper of the business that was discussed at the HR and Remuneration Committee meeting on 14 June 2022. The meeting was chaired by Dr Boyce in Mr Patterson's absence. Of particular note as highlighted by the Chair was that sickness absence is being effectively managed in the College.

4/22/3.5 The Following Committee Minutes were approved by the Governing Body:

- Education Committee 1 March 2022;
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 3 March 2022;
- Finance & General Purposes Committee 22 March 2022; and
- HR & Remuneration Committee 5 April 2022.

#### **GB/4/22/4 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2025**

4/22/4.1 The Principal introduced the updated draft of the Corporate Plan 2022-2025, an earlier version of which was discussed at the previous meeting.

4/22/4.2 The Principal assured Members that comments from the previous meeting have been reflected in the revised draft, for example in terms of a reduced number of KPI targets, including explicit outcomes as well as demonstrating linkages with the draft Programme for Government (PfG) outcomes. Ensuring connectivity with young people within the College values was also addressed.

4/22/4.3 A discussion followed on the extent to which the College contributes to the draft PfG outcomes and the rationale for referencing the input that the College makes to all nine Outcomes. Outcomes 4 and 6 we specifically mentioned. For example, the College input to 'we enjoy long, healthy and active lives and 'our economy is globally connected, regionally balanced and carbon neutral'.

4/22/4.4 There was also a discussion around the infographic on Page 5. The Principal informed Members that the statistics have still to be updated. Notwithstanding this the Governing Body agreed that further thought should be given to why we are including the percentage of academic staff with doctorates and what the College wants to convey, for example the benchmark against which the College is measuring.

4/22/4.5 The Governing Body noted following a Member's question that that a separate 'behaviours framework' is to be developed following discussion with staff at the staff Development event earlier in the day.

4/22/4.6 Notwithstanding the comments above, the Governing Body was content to agree the Plan subject to further consideration by the Principal of the points raised in 4/22/4.3 and 4/22/4.4. The Governing Body also congratulated the Principal and all those involved in the development of the plan for the good process that was employed and the level of engagement with staff in the process.

**GB/4/22/5**

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

4/22/5.1

The Principal introduced his report. Members noted the following updates:

- Covid-19 – while numbers testing positive are significantly down on those previously reported, the College is continuing to monitor the situation.
- Centenary Planning – good progress is being made in this area.
- Full-time Student Number Allocation for 2022-23 – the allocation numbers are not yet known.
- Curriculum Delivery – which included updates on the Review of Teaching and Learning in 21/22, placements, plans for 2022-23, the Independent Review of Education and the work which is taking place to prepare the validation documentation for the new doctorate in Educational Professional Practice which will be submitted to QUB for validation. The Principal commended teaching and support staff for their efforts in ensuring successful delivery of courses and services during the year.
- Research - the Governing Body congratulated the College on its very positive results in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, demonstrating that the College is 'punching above its weight' in this area.
- Visiting Professors - the Governing Body approved the appointment of the two new Visiting Professors for the College as identified in the paper. QUB have no involvement in this process.

4/22/5.2

The Principal proposed an evening meal with staff who present papers to the Governing Body and its Committees would be an ideal opportunity to engage with these staff on a less formal basis. The Governing Body welcomed this and agreed that the meal could take place on the evening of the first Governing Body meeting in September 2022.

**GB/4/22/6****POLICIES AND PROCEDURES APPROVAL PROCESS**

4/22/6.1

The Governing Body approved the paper as proposed by Ms Corrigan and seconded by Dr Boyce, which set out clearly a more streamlined process for handling the approval of Policies and Procedures.

**GB/4/22/7****CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

4/22/7.1

The updated Corporate Risk Register was reviewed and endorsed, subject to the consideration of removing Risk 5.

**GB/4/22/8****MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND ASSOCIATED COMMENTARY**

4/22/8.1

The Governing Body considered the paper provided by the Head of Finance.

4/22/8.2 – 8.7

**RESERVED BUSINESS**

4/22/8.8

The Governing Body concluded that the College's finances are being well managed and thanked the Head of Finance for her report. The Principal commended the Head of Finance and her team for their excellent work.

**GB/4/22/9****STUDENT PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

4/22/9.1

The Student President's Report was noted. The Report included updates on Clubs & Societies and SU Executive work. Further information on re-engaging with students in year 4 will be provided at the next meeting.

**GB/4/22/10****CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

4/22/10.1

The Chair reported on a number of matters that would be considered as Reserved Business.

**GB/4/22/11****ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

4/22/11.1

While there was no other business to discuss, the Chair asked the Principal to extend the Governing Body's thanks to staff for their excellent papers and presentations, which have evidenced the tremendous work that is undertaken by individuals and teams across

the College to ensure the ongoing good management and sustainability of the College.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date 27/09/22 \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of the Governing Body