

FOR PUBLICATION EXCLUDING RESERVED BUSINESS

STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

**SPECIAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING ON 30 MARCH 2022 AT 2PM IN THE
CONFERENCE HALL, MAIN BUILDING**

Governing Body: Mr E Jardine (Chair), Mrs H Miller, Mr P Weil, Dr A Brown, Mr D Feely, Professor J. Heggarty, Mr W Patterson, Mr K Nelson, Dr M Bennett, Dr L Boyce, Dr E Birnie

In Attendance: Ms K Robinson (Secretary to the Governing Body)

Apologies: Ms M Corrigan, Mrs C Moore, Mr R Thompson, Professor D Jones, Ms M Magee

Any Other Business: None

AGENDA

GB/2/22/1.1 WELCOME

2/22/1.1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, the purpose of which was to re-visit the papers from the previous meeting on 'Governance in the Round' in order to inform the Governing Body's review of its effectiveness.

GB/2/22/1.2 APOLOGIES

2/22/1.2.1 The apologies from Ms Corrigan, Mrs Moore, Mr Thompson, Professor Jones and Miss Magee were noted.

GB/2/22/1.3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

2/22/1.3.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

GB/2/22/1.4

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2/22/1.4.1

There was no other business to discuss, other than that included on the main Agenda.

GB/2/22/2

INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION

2/22/2.1

The Chair provided some contextual background on the purpose of the meeting. He referred to the papers and the background reading which had been provided by the Secretary, including:

- the College's performance against the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Code of Governance for Higher Education Institutions;
- the Ernst & Young Analysis of the Advance HE Governance Checklist, which had been completed by members;
- a paper on Higher Education Governance, Policy and Standards; and
- a list of questions and comments emerging from the completion of the Advance HE Checklist.

2/22/2.2

The Chair emphasised the importance of the Board ensuring that good governance is given high priority.

2/22/2.3

The Chair acknowledged that the Questionnaire was much too lengthy and would need to be streamlined for future surveys. Members noted that while the results of the survey presented a reasonably healthy position in terms of governance, there is always room for improvement.

2/22/2.4

On reflection some of the issues raised in the survey analysis report may no longer be appropriate. For example, in view of the current review of Governance Effectiveness, it may not be necessary to convene a separate workshop on Governance as recommended in the Academic Governance Review report.

GB/2/22/3

BREAK-OUT DISCUSSION GROUPS

2/22/3.1

Members met in two separate break-out groups to discuss the questions and comments identified in the papers for the meeting.

GB/2/22/4

FEEDBACK SESSION

2/22/4.1

Feedback was provided by both groups.

2/22/4.2

The general consensus was that the Governing Body is strong on governance and overall there are robust processes in place. The role of the Secretary is also well positioned to both independently support the Governing Body and the Principal.

There was a consensus among members that the Governing Body is open to reviewing its own performance on a regular basis. However, it was acknowledged that while the Advance HE Checklist used for the survey, provided a baseline of performance, there is a need to consider a more structured framework for future 3-yearly reviews that focuses on outcomes for example. Members agreed that Annual reviews of the Governing Body's Operating Framework and how the College performs against the CUC Code of Governance should also continue.

A number of suggestions were made about how the Governing Body could further improve governance structures and processes. For example, a review of how Board Papers are structured, disseminated and prioritised in terms of those where decisions need to be made. Overall it was considered that there was too much narrative in the covering papers.

It was agreed that the previous issues over Academic Governance were now resolved, and that there was no longer a need for a workshop as recommended in the Academic Governance Review report.

It was agreed that the Governing Body needs to consider how it can engage more with staff.

It was also considered that there is a need for the College's work to be driven more by research and the needs in schools. We also need to have a clearer picture of graduate outcomes as the current survey, which is undertaken externally does not provide the detail of how many of our former students are in teaching roles, for example.

In terms of benchmarking, there is a need to develop relationships with other similar institutions in GB and Ireland and to make more use of Advance HE and the Committee of University Chairs in this area. Opportunities for governors to network on education matters should also be explored.

It would also be useful to identify all the College's stakeholders and ensure that we are communicating with them.

On Diversity of Board Membership, we have made progress. Board appointments are the responsibility of DfE and we should work with the Department on the forthcoming competition to identify and target appropriate demographics and skills.

GB/2/22/5

CONCLUSIONS AND ACTION PLAN

2/22/5.1

The Chair thanked those members who had been free to attend the Special Meeting and reflected on the value of having such discussions. In conclusion, members agreed that it was a very useful meeting as it

allowed the Governing Body the time to focus on its effectiveness and the progress that has been made in the area of governance over the lifetime of the current Board.

2/22/5.2

Members agreed that an action plan should be developed based on the comments in 2/22/4.2 and other comments received outside of the meeting as well as actions identified from the report on performance against the CUC Code of Governance.

Signed _____ Date 21/6/22

Chair of the Governing Body