



ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 01 SEPTEMBER 2017

14:00hrs, Boardroom, Sighthill Campus

Present: I Aitchison; B Anderson; N Black; A Bruton; C Connor; T Cotton; V Jackman; K Maloney; R Quinn; F Riddoch (Chair); J Stevenson

In attendance: J Buglass; A-M Dempsey; M Walker (Clerk)

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Colin Arthur, Ann Landels, Ethelinda Lashley-Scott, Neil Manning, Jennifer Russell and Christopher Turnbull.
- 1.2 The Committee Chair welcomed Beth Anderson and Cameron Connor, the newly appointed ECSA Sabbatical Officer, to their first Academic Council.
- 1.3 The Committee Chair thanked Juliet Harkin and Justin Sales, who had stood down as co-opted members in June, for their two years of service to the Academic Council. Further to this, the Committee Chair welcomed Ryan Quinn (Curriculum Leader, Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment), and Valerie Jackman (Lecturer, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Business) to their first meeting of the Committee following their appointment as co-opted members.
- 1.4 The Committee Chair welcomed the Head of Health, Wellbeing and Social Sciences (HWSS), Anne-Marie Dempsey, to the meeting to discuss best practice in the Faculty under Item 5.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were received.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes of the Academic Council from 02 June 2017 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 MATTERS ARISING REPORT

- 4.1.1 Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda.

4.2 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2016/17

- 4.2.1 The Committee NOTED a finalised version of the Review of Committee Operation 2016/17, as agreed by members outwith the meeting.
- 4.2.2 The Committee NOTED that, in line with a recommendation put forward by members, a Head of Faculty had been invited to attend the Academic Council meeting to provide a broader perspective on Committee business.

5 HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL SCIENCES BEST PRACTICE

- 5.1 The Committee NOTED a presentation from the Head of HWSS on current best practice with the Faculty, which included the introduction of staff development days and the establishment of new communications structures. The Head of HWSS provided an example of innovation in learning and teaching through the use of Slam Poetry, with an aim to inspire students on the Scottish Widening Access Programme (SWAP) to develop their own creative writing skills.
- 5.2 The Committee DISCUSSED, in small groups, the best practice highlighted and the potential for its incorporation into other faculties. The following points were given in feedback to the Committee being considered transferable best practice from the Faculty:
- (i) The use of best practice examples in marketing materials, through student testimonials;
 - (ii) the need to embed faculty days across the college to encourage and develop staff togetherness;
 - (iii) the teaching of research skills and the potential to make such cross-curricular activities available across the college through Moodle;
 - (iv) the potential for greater academic staff flexibility to encourage opportunities for innovation;
 - (v) the improved use of student feedback to develop soft skills, including behaviors and attitudes;
 - (vi) the positive impact of not timetabling academic staff on Wednesday afternoons, with special regard to the development of reflective lecturers;
 - (vii) the development of a archive tool to share best practice across the college.

- 5.3 The Committee Chair, on behalf of members, thanked the Head of HWSS for her presentation and engaging in discussions with the Academic Council.
- 5.4 The Committee NOTED that the Head of Hospitality, Tourism & Business would provide a presentation on best practice in the Faculty at the Academic Council's next meeting. The Committee Chair informed members that, once presentations had been received from all four faculties, there would be an opportunity to consider how to replicate and develop best practice across the college at the scheduled meeting on 09 February 2018.

6 ECSA LEARNING & TEACHING REPORT 2017

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED the ECSA Learning & Teaching Report 2017, which outlined details of the systems and processes put in place by the Students' Association to support improvements in the quality of learning and teaching at the college. The Student President highlighted further opportunities to develop and foster a 'quality culture' between staff, students and ECSA, and asked for the Academic Council's support in achieving its future aims.
- 6.2 The Committee NOTED the positive response from the wider education sector to the ECSA Learning & Teaching Report, with Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) recognising the report as best practice in the college and university sectors. Further to this, the Principal commended the report and its proactive approach to quality improvement – in line with the 'How Good is Our College?' agenda.
- 6.3 The Committee welcomed the ECSA Learning & Teaching Report and DISCUSSED the following:
- (i) The importance of continued engagement between lecturers, curriculum managers and class representatives through monthly meetings;
 - (ii) the use of the report as a document over which to engage with academic staff;
 - (iii) the use of module-level feedback collated through online surveys as a means to drill down further into the quality process;
 - (iv) the standardisation of class representative training through online videos.
- 6.4 The Committee Chair thanked ECSA for their report, and recognised the need for the Academic Council to build such reportage into its academic cycle.

7 HOW GOOD IS OUR COLLEGE? UPDATE

- 7.1 The Committee NOTED an update on progress made in the development of an Edinburgh College Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP) 2016/17, which outlined the college's approach towards measuring '*How good is our College?*' (HGIOC). The Assistant Principal, Curriculum Design and Development, advised the Committee that the college had used the previous academic year to embed ownership of the new quality arrangements, and

develop approaches to evaluation and reporting that were suited to the regional context and operating circumstances.

- 7.2 The Committee NOTED that the EREP 2016/17 would be submitted to Education Scotland and the SFC on 31 October 2017. The Assistant Principal outlined the latest draft EREP and the progress achieved by the college regarding the implementation of the new HGIOC arrangements.
- 7.3 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to comment on the draft EREP 2016/17, and DISCUSSED the following matters:
- (i) The grading approach outlined in the arrangements, and the need to ensure that such a system is reliable and authentic;
 - (ii) the college sector's decision not to publish grading outcomes in the first year under the new arrangements;
 - (iii) the degree to which HGIOC would be a self-reflective process, and the opportunities going forward for sector benchmarking.
- 7.4 The Committee AGREED that prior to the submission of the EREP 2016/17 by the Executive, for agreement with Education Scotland and the SFC, Academic Council members would receive an opportunity to review the final draft.

Ryan Quinn left the meeting

8 CURRICULUM STRATEGY: PERFORMANCE MEASURE OVERVIEW

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED a recommendation from the Board that the Academic Council utilise the new Curriculum Strategy to ensure that performance data was effectively monitored, and that the college's curriculum offer remained under regular review. In furtherance of this, the Assistant Principal, Curriculum Design and Development, advised the Committee that key information from faculty-level operational plan had been made available for members' review.
- 8.2 The Committee NOTED that following an examination of performance reviews held in 2017/18, by the Head of Faculty, the Head of Policy, Planning and Performance, the Assistant Principals and the Depute Principal, it was agreed that new template for measuring performance would be required. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that Heads of Faculty were now asked to complete a new template, which allowed plans and targets to be measured in line with the college budget and the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) for 2017/18.
- 8.3 The Committee NOTED the 'Summary of Targets' template, which had replaced Faculty Operational Plans, and DISCUSSED the following:
- (i) The consultation process that had taken place with academic staff to develop the new template;
 - (ii) the number of compulsory measures set through the ROA;
 - (iii) the use of the template to focus college staff on key areas of business;

- (iv) the use of lecturer performance reviews, and the expectation that faculties would implement this through the ENHANCE programme.

8.4 The Committee NOTED that the Executive would continue to provide top line summary performance information for review by the Academic Council.

9 COLLEGE SATISFACTION SURVEYS

9.1 SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

9.1.1 The Committee NOTED a summary of satisfaction survey recommendations arising from the previous academic year.

9.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the need for greater visibility across the college that survey recommendations were being addressed. The Committee AGREED that information relating to key improvements should be highlighted through the Student Portal and other appropriate outlet by the Communications Team.

10 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10.1 FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS

10.1.1 The Committee NOTED an overview of key items of Academic Council business which would be considered during the course of the year.

10.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the following items of business which would be considered in the academic year 2017/18:

- (i) Key performance indicators contributing to the ROA;
- (ii) the monitoring of relevant elements within the Blueprint for the Future;
- (iii) updates on the ECSA-led Learning Engagement Framework;
- (iv) the ongoing development of the EREP in the areas of *'Leadership and Quality Culture'* and *'Delivery of learning and services to support learning'*;
- (v) student feedback through college satisfactions surveys.

10.1.3 The Committee AGREED that it would also welcome an opportunity to consider matters relating employability and employer engagement going forward. The Committee Chair advised the Committee that, in line with comments made during the Review of Committee Operation 2016/17 (Paragraph 4.2 refers), invitations to employer representatives to attend future meetings of Academic Council may be appropriate.

10.2 MEETINGS WITH THE CHAIR OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

10.2.1 The Committee NOTED that the Chair of the Academic Council would be holding one-to-one meetings with co-opted members, in advance of future meetings, to discuss the workings of the Committee and listen to members' feedback.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The date of the next meeting is 10 November 2017 at 14:00, in the Boardroom, Granton Campus.

The meeting closed at 15:50