



For the future you want

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 10 NOVEMBER 2017

14:00hrs, Boardroom, Granton Campus

Present: B Anderson; N Black; A Bruton; C Connor; V Jackman; A Landels; E Lashley-Scott; N Manning; F Riddoch (Chair); J Russell; J Stevenson; C Turnbull

In attendance: J Buglass; S-J Linton; J Sischy; M Walker (Clerk)

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Iris Aitchison, Tia Cotton, Kevin Maloney and Ryan Quinn.
- 1.2 The Committee NOTED that Colin Arthur, the Teaching (Academic) Staff Board Member, had retired on 03 November 2017. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, commended Mr Arthur's 20 years of service to the college and his significant contribution to the Academic Council over the past five years.
- 1.3 The Committee Chair welcomed the Head of Tourism, Hospitality and Business, Sarah-Jane Linton, to the meeting to discuss best practice in the Faculty under Item 5.
- 1.4 The Committee Chair welcomed Judith Sischy, a Non-Executive Board Member, to the meeting as an observer.

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 01 September 2017 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

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

5 HOSPITALITY, TOURISM AND BUSINESS BEST PRACTICE

- 5.1 The Committee NOTED a presentation from the Head of Tourism, Hospitality and Business on current best practice within the Faculty, which included an overview of staff award winners and recent learner success stories.
- 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 incorporation of STEM into the wider curriculum and importance of developing a cross college understanding of science;
 - (ii) the potential for a 'pop-up shop' space on a college campus, which could be used by business students and other curriculum areas for student-led projects;
 - (iii) the Faculty's wide range of regional/national contacts and its involvement in high profile events;
 - (iv) the innovative use of work experience and how this could be adopted by other faculties;
 - (v) the current initiatives relating to community based learning, and the potential for community open days attended by all faculties.
- 5.3 The Committee Chair, on behalf of members, thanked the Head of Tourism, Hospitality and Business for her presentation and engaging in discussions with the Academic Council.
- 5.4 The Committee NOTED that all four Heads of faculty had provided presentations on best practice to the Academic Council. The Committee Chair informed members that there would be a further opportunity to consider how to replicate and develop best practice across the college at the scheduled meeting on 09 February 2018.

Neil Manning left the meeting

6 EDINBURGH COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-22

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED that the Board had approved a new Edinburgh College Strategic Plan 2017-22 at its meeting on 19 September 2017. The Principal advised the Committee that the Plan was accompanied by a Blueprint, which set out a clearly defined strategic roadmap for the next five years.

- 6.2 The Committee NOTED that the majority of the Business Transformation Plan had been successfully delivered over the past two years. The Principal informed the Committee that transformation plan programmes which had yet to be completed would continue to run in parallel with the new Strategic Plan.
- 6.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the five strategic aims of the college, as set out in the Plan, and the role of the Academic Council in relation to performance monitoring against relevant strategic goals.
- 6.4 The Committee AGREED that, through a standing item, it should receive quarterly updates on progress relating to relevant areas of the Strategic Plan.

7 HOW GOOD IS OUR COLLEGE? UPDATE

- 7.1 The Committee NOTED that the college's Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP) 2016/17 had been submitted to Education Scotland and the SFC on 30 October 2017. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that the submitted EREP 2016/17 had previously been through several iterations following feedback from the Education Scotland, SFC and the Senior Management Group of the college.
- 7.2 The Committee NOTED that the college had graded itself as 'Good', following debate on all aspects of the rating system at senior management level. The Assistant Principal informed the Committee that although the college had performed well in a number of areas, there was the potential for greater consistency across the college going forward.
- 7.3 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to review the EREP 2016/17, and DISCUSSED the following matters:
- (i) The current rating of the college, and members' recognition of HGIOC as an improvement process;
 - (ii) the role of Connect Groups in providing feedback in order to facilitate improved performance across the college;
 - (iii) the role of the Academic Council in the HGIOC process, and the relaying of feedback from Connect Groups to the Committee in the future;
 - (iv) the wider performance review initiatives taking place across the college, which aimed to evaluate and develop performance within curriculum areas.
- 7.4 The Committee NOTED that the Executive would meet with Education Scotland and SFC in November 2017, to discuss the submitted EREP 2016/17 further. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that the further HGIOC updates would be provided to the Academic Council at its scheduled meetings in February and June 2018.

8 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW UPDATE

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED an update on top line key performance indicators (KPIs) and the ongoing Performance Review process. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that, as part of the EREP 2016/17, KPI information had recently been shared with Education Scotland and SFC.
- 8.2 The Committee NOTED that, in terms of KPIs, a key focus of the college would be towards improving its 'completion / partial completion' success rates. The Assistant Principal informed the Committee that the college had performed disappointingly in this area during 2016/17 and would aim for significant improvements going forward.
- 8.3 The Committee DISCUSSED historical performance at the college relating to 'completion / partial completion' success rates. The Principal informed the Committee that low success rates were a chronic problem across the college sector.
- 8.4 The Committee DISCUSSED ongoing work to replicate best practice across all faculties through the Performance Review process, specifically with regards to improving 'completion / partial completion' success rates. The Committee Chair welcomed the implementation of clear actions streams to address issues around success rates, and encouraged the presentation of further updates from the Performance Review process to future meetings of the Academic Council.

9 COLLEGE SATISFACTION SURVEYS

- 9.1 PRE-EXIT SURVEY RESULTS 2016/17
 - 9.1.1 The Committee NOTED a report on the results of the 2016/17 Pre-Exit Survey, which was designed to assess students' opinions regarding key aspects of their experience at the College.
 - 9.1.2 The Committee NOTED the scope of the survey which was made available to 8,500 full-time and part-time students across all four campuses, via Moodle, during a four week period from April to May 2016. The Interim Head of Policy, Planning & Performance informed the Committee that the response rate was 23% overall, 6.2% less than the previous year's survey.
 - 9.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the low response rate outlined in the Pre-Exit Survey Results and how students could be engaged further to complete surveys at the point of leaving the college. The Interim Head of Policy, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that a number of colleges had moved to two student satisfaction surveys per year, rather than three, due to the poor response rates associated with pre-exit surveys. The Committee AGREED that the Interim Head of Policy, Planning & Performance should consider the number of surveys and, if appropriate, propose changes to a future meeting of the Academic Council.

- 9.1.4 The Committee NOTED the key messages from the 2016/17 survey results, which showed that respondents overall satisfaction was 'on the rise', with 89% of students stating that they enjoyed studying at the College, and 87% stating that they would recommend the College to a friend. The Interim Head of Policy, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that 89% of students reported being satisfied with their college experience, an increase in satisfaction levels of 8% since 2015/16.
- 9.1.5 The Committee NOTED that the lowest satisfaction rates on the survey were related to the topics of facilities and, in particular, support. The ECSA Student President informed the Committee that there were no surprises in the report relating to student support, however, it was hoped that a new data sharing agreement between the college and ECSA would allow further developments to the support provided by the Students' Association.
- 9.1.6 The Committee DISCUSSED the areas of strength and improvements identified, and the recommendation put forward to enhance the student experience. The Committee AGREED that progress on recommendations for further action should be reviewed at future meetings as part of the Survey Recommendation Summary.
- 9.2 SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY
- 9.2.1 The Committee NOTED that there were currently no outstanding recommendations from previous satisfaction surveys.
- 9.3 LEARNING AND TEACHING SURVEY 2018
- 9.3.1 The Committee NOTED the content and format of the draft Learning and Teaching Survey 2018. The Interim Head of Policy, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that the survey had remained unchanged from the previous year to support continued benchmarking.
- 9.3.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the Learning and Teaching Survey and were generally content with its format and presentation. The Interim Head of Policy, Planning & Performance recognised the need to keep the survey as concise as possible, but informed members of the necessity to collate monitoring information.
- 9.3.3 The Committee DISCUSSED comments relating to the specific wording of questions within the Survey, and AGREED that Academic Council members should be provided with the opportunity to provide further feedback to the Interim Head of Policy, Planning & Performance. The Committee AGREED that a finalised draft of the Learning and Teaching Survey 2017/18 would be circulated for approval in December 2018, prior to its launch in the new calendar year.
- 9.3.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the future layout of Learning and Teaching Surveys, and AGREED that the Interim Head of Policy, Planning & Performance should consider a less structured survey for 2018/19. The Principal advised the Committee that through this new approach the college would aim to more freely assess what students' think of their learning and teaching experience.

The Principal left the meeting

10 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10.1 STUDENT COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

10.1.1 The Committee NOTED that, further to a discussion at the last meeting of the Academic Council (minute 9.1.2/01.09.17 refers), the Communications Manager had confirmed that Student Satisfaction Survey results had been published through the College Update Newsletter and the staff intranet. Further to this, statistics from such surveys had been turned into infographics and presented at the staff briefings in October 2017.

10.1.2 The Committee NOTED that in order to address wider issues relating to student communications a working group, with staff representatives from Communications, Marketing, Student Experience, Student Records and MIS, would be created to clearly outline the requirements for communication at every stage of the student journey. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that such an approach would ensure greater coherency towards future improvements in student communications.

10.1.3 The Committee AGREED that progress relating to developments in student communications should be tracked through future Matters Arising Reports.

10.2 CLASS REPRESENTATIVE CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

10.2.1 The Committee NOTED a verbal update on the ECSA Class Reps Conferences 2017, and the feedback received relating to induction and retention. The ECSA Student President advised the Committee that reports from each campus conference had been presented to the Senior Management Group and Curriculum Managers, and that an invitation had been received from the latter to attend future curriculum team meetings to discuss feedback further.

10.2.2 The Committee AGREED that reports from each of the ECSA Class Reps Conferences should be circulated to members of the Academic Council for information.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The date of the next meeting is 09 February 2017 at 14:00, in the Boardroom, Sighthill Campus.

The meeting closed at 16:00