

EDINBURGH COLLEGE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 12 JUNE 2015

14.00, BOARD ROOM, GRANTON CAMPUS

Present: Jenni Behan; Annette Bruton; Sandra Cairncross (Chair); Fiona Candlish; Zoe Croy; Jeroen van Herk; Nigel Kennington; Elaine Lee; Ray McCowan; Julie McCran; Richard Morris; Graham Skirving

In attendance: P MacPherson (Clerk)

By invitation: Loraine Lyall; Sharon McCue-Livingstone; Jonny Pearson

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies had been received from Colin Arthur, Diane Erasmuson, Ian McKay and Nigel Paul.

2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2.2 The Committee Chair NOTED that Nigel Paul had stepped down from the role as Committee Chair and thanked him for chairing the committee over the past three years.

2.2 The Committee Chair introduced herself to the Committee and welcomed the new Principal and Elaine Lee to their first meeting of the Academic Council.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.2 The Committee APPROVED the minutes of 27 February 2015 as an accurate record of the meeting.

(Sub-Group Chair, Curriculum Management entered the meeting).

4 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee NOTED that all actions were either carried over or covered in the agenda items.

- 4.1 Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience confirmed that the college was still awaiting the full Education Scotland report and Head of Quality & Equalities would report on the Education Scotland action plan at the next Committee meeting.
- 4.2 Vice Principal Educational Leadership advised that course team meetings will be a prioritised activity for CMs in the next academic year.

(Principal entered the meeting).

5 BLENDED LEARNING STRATEGY

- 5.1 Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience advised that the Blended Learning Strategy will be developed in two phases. The first phase will look at how to take the strategy forward. The second stage will involve feedback from staff (from all areas within the college), students and external stakeholders and will be led by the Depute Principal.
- 5.2 Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience confirmed that the strategy is aligned to the Learning and Teaching and Student Engagement strategies and is therefore linked to the principles of student engagement outlined in these strategies.
- 5.3 The Committee APPROVED the Blended Learning strategy. The Committee NOTED that they would review the actions of the blended learning strategy groups and their meeting dates would be worked around the cycle dates of the Academic Council.

6 CURRICULUM STRATEGY

- 6.1 Vice Principal Educational Leadership advised that the Academic Council had seen an earlier version of the Curriculum strategy. He advised that the strategy had been amended since the Development Plan to clearly show how it was going to meet the needs of the region. Sections one to four only contain minor updates but section five now looks at the wider demographics for the region and ensures that our curriculum aligns with these demographics both at present and in the future.
- 6.2 Vice Principal Educational Leadership cautioned Members that this is an emerging document and is developing all the time.
- 6.3 ECSA VP Welfare advised that in the earlier version document there had been a section on equality and diversity. Vice Principal Educational Leadership AGREED to make sure the equality and diversity section was added back into the Curriculum Strategy before it was published.

- 6.4 Vice Principal Educational Leadership advised that the freeze on dental technology is to allow the team to shift provision from full time to CPD courses. He confirmed that students currently studying will be able to continue at the college and will be registered with the General Dental Council. He confirmed that the college will not be removing the dental technology courses but instead will change the modes of study.
- 6.5 Vice Principal Educational Leadership confirmed that the college is looking to develop a Construction Academy in conjunction with East Lothian because of the planned growth across East and Midlothian.
- 6.6 Vice Principal Educational Leadership advised that they college had undertaken a curriculum review process that looked at every course in their portfolio. The challenge is to work within portfolios and find what's fit for purpose. We are looking at the areas we want to keep and looking at substituting new for old.
- 6.7 Principal advised that college funding is complicated and we have the capacity for further growth from commercial activities.
- 6.8 Sub-Group Chair, Student Experience and Engagement noted that the hospitality industry is looking to employ people but the college sometimes finds it hard to fill the hospitality courses and spaces on the school taster sessions.
- 6.8.1 Vice Principal Educational Leadership advised that the RIE looked to solve some of the issues in the admission process. Marketing has improved a lot and we are working directly with schools and directors of education. We are making sure that every young person who applies from school receives a college place and the timings of the school taster sessions will be reviewed for the next academic year.
- 6.9 Vice Principal Educational Leadership advised that the Academies have helped to increase the volume of college applications.
- 6.10 Principal advised that market research will be conducted to see where applicants are going if they do not get a college place and AGREED to present the findings to the Committee in the next academic year.
- 6.11 The Committee APPROVED the Curriculum Strategy in principle on the understanding that changes discussed above were incorporated.

7 ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROVISION

- 7.1 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching gave the Committee an update on the delivery of core skills for full time courses within the college.

- 7.2 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching provided a brief update on the essential skills pilot. The Committee AGREED that a further paper on the essential skills pilot should be presented at the next Committee meeting to provide full evaluation and benchmarking details against attainment.
- 7.3 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching advised that there are three delivery options for essential skills provision.

(Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching left the meeting).

(Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences entered the meeting).

8 CURRICULUM AWARENESS RAISING SESSION (Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences)

Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences gave a presentation on the Curriculum area Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences.

- 8.1 Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences advised that Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences is the largest academic centre in the college and there are staff and students based on all four campuses.
- 8.2 Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences advised that Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences have a very successful partnership in early years training with East Lothian Council and they are looking to expand this model. The bulk of their commercial income is from early years and play work. He advised that health and social care is potentially their largest single areas of growth over the next five years and they are working closely with NHS Lothian and Napier University to provide a centre of excellence at Sighthill.
- 8.3 Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences advised that in Creative Media and Communications they are working closely with Heriot Watt University to provide two new articulation routes.
- 8.4 Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences advised that in Sports and Fitness we deliver all of the training on the PACE programme. He added that the college has won the student sports champions for two years in a row and we have twelve individual students in receipt of Winning Students grants (an SFC backed programme to support the education of elite sports performers). He advised that the Marine Drive development will give students access to state of the art outdoor facilities from the start of next year.
- 8.5 Committee Chair thanked Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences for a really informative overview of what was going in the area of Health, Wellbeing and Social Sciences.

(Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences left the meeting).

9 PERFORMANCE UPDATES

9.1 MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE

- 9.1.1 Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience advised that the KPIs are currently under review and will go to the Committee for approval at the start of the academic year.
- 9.1.2 Vice Principal Educational Leadership advised that the WSUM target for this year is 295,400. It currently stands at just over 251,000 and he anticipated that we would meet the WSUM target.
- 9.1.3 The Principal noted the effort required to reach the WSUM target and congratulated all staff on their efforts to achieve this target.

(Quality Enhancement Manager entered the meeting).

9.2 LEARNING & TEACHING SURVEY 2014-15

- 9.2.1 Quality Enhancement Manager advised that the response rate was 43.5% with Midlothian having the highest rate and Milton Road the lowest rate. The satisfaction rates are moderately high and the areas of strength are very much in line with results from the previous two years.
- 9.2.2 Sub-Group Chair, Curriculum Management asked why the college was in the bottom 4th quartile if our satisfaction rates are moderately high. Quality Enhancement Manager advised that against other colleges in Scotland we compare better. Sub-Group Chair, Curriculum Management asked if it was possible to use a survey that could be benchmarked against other colleges in Scotland and if the questions could be changed if they were no longer linked to this survey.
- 9.2.3 Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience AGREED to see if it was possible to use another benchmark. She added that some of the questions can't be changed as these are used by the SFC to measure student satisfaction nationally.
- 9.2.4 Principal AGREED to make representation on the surveys to the SFC.
- 9.2.5 Quality Enhancement Manager noted that the survey influences the planning and delivery of subjects. She added that her team would like to work with ECSA to come up with strategies to get students involved with the self-evaluation process.

- 9.2.6 Quality Enhancement Manager advised that her team will also look at getting students involved with assessment. Assessment is key and getting assessment and feedback right will have a huge impact on learning and achievement. Her team are focusing on assessment and feedback and will work with Learning & Teaching Professional Development Manager's team. They are also looking to work with ECSA to encourage students to complete the surveys.
- 9.2.7 Committee Chair thanked Quality Enhancement Manager for the update and asked for next year's report to show the previous year's statistics beside the current statistics to enable comparisons to be made. Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience suggested that a heat map should be produced that includes a comparison between last year's and this year's data.
- 9.2.8 Committee Chair advised that most universities in Scotland take part in the national student survey and they also encounter some of the same issues such as providing effective survey feedback to students.
- 9.2.9 Sub-Group Chair, Curriculum Management advised that the current survey process doesn't work and doesn't represent all students at the college. Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience advised that our response rate is high and asking LDTs to get students to fill in the surveys has helped. We have an opportunity to look at our survey structure due to the SFC national survey but we should keep the Induction, Learning & Teaching and Pre-Exit Surveys.
- 9.2.10 Sub-Group Chair, Quality and Equality advised the Quality Enhancement Officer receives no update on which staff are teaching the HND year 2 students and finds it very difficult to find out who she should send the surveys to. Quality Enhancement Manager advised that the process is getting better.

9.3 INDUCTION SURVEY 2015-16

- 9.3.1 Quality Enhancement Manager advised that the survey is very similar to last year's survey. The only changes are a new question on caring responsibilities and a greater emphasis in the introduction on the anonymity of the survey.
- 9.3.2 ECSA VP Welfare advised that the wording is very leading and we're expecting students to answer questions that they don't know the answer to. ECSA VP Women's Officer advised that question 28 is no longer relevant as the college bus service has been removed. Quality Enhancement Manager advised that this question would be removed before the survey runs in October.

9.3.3 Quality Enhancement Manager advised that her team have drafted an accessible survey and will pilot with students in the ACE and ESOL team this coming October.

9.3.4 Committee Chair AGREED that the decision to approve the survey would be given to the Executive. A volunteer sub-group would be created from Academic Council members to look at required changes (although limited by those questions that we are able to change due to SFC requirements).

10 UPDATES

10.1 ECSA UPDATE

10.1.1 Student President advised that ECSA VP Education had been working on the Learner Engagement Framework since the start of the year. It is a very useful document and the focus is on the learning experience for students. He advised that Education Scotland produce a report every four years and our yearly report will directly feed into the quality college review. He advised that ECSA VP Welfare has been working on creating an excellence awards to celebrate the work of staff within the college. Student President advised that it was a good year for class reps and they have started recruiting class rep trainers for the next academic year.

10.1.2 Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience asked ECSA to provide feedback on the class rep system (high level) that could be communicated to all staff.

10.1.3 ECSA VP Women's Officer confirmed that ECSA have tailored class rep meetings. ECSA VP Welfare advised ECSA were looking to have guest speakers at each class rep meeting (from all levels throughout the college). The Committee Chair advised that she looked forward to hearing how the class rep meetings developed.

10.2 STUDENT REVIEW PROCESS

10.2.1 ECSA VP Welfare advised that ECSA received good feedback from students about the student review process and it was also mentioned in the Education Scotland review. Once the EIS grievance has been resolved they will come back to the Committee with an update.

10.2.2 ECSA VP Welfare advised that ECSA are going to have a look at other colleges to see how they do student reviews.

10.2.3 Sub-Group Chair, Curriculum Management advised that you need to explain to lecturers what the process is about. Student President

advised that students aren't reviewing lecturers but conducting a course review. He confirmed that ECSA will communicate with lecturers to find out the best times for student reviewers to attend their classes.

10.2.4 Principal advised that the way forward is for both staff and students to design the model of self-evaluation.

10.2.4 ECSA VP Welfare advised that ECSA are looking to find one curriculum area to trial the student review process.

10.3 SUB GROUP REPORTS

10.3.1 Sub-Group Chair, Quality and Equality advised that Equalities, Policy and Research Manager has developed training for challenging behaviour which will be rolled out in June. She advised that there is now a quality bulletin but the quality team are limited to their own mailing list and are unsure if it is getting out to the whole college.

(Elaine Lee left the meeting).

Principal AGREED to speak to Sub-Group Chair, Quality and Equality after the meeting to get this issue resolved. Sub-Group Chair, Quality and Equality advised that the sub group had also looked to see if it was possible for students to complete the surveys in Moodle.

10.3.2 Sub-Group Chair, Curriculum Management advised that the sub group has held two meetings. The first meeting looked at the RIE process and was attended by the Head of Health, Wellbeing & Social Sciences. The sub-group had some concerns about the RIE process but by the end of the meeting we felt a lot more comfortable with it. It was felt that the comms around the RIE process had been too positive and didn't highlight that it was an ongoing process. The second meeting looked at the questionnaires.

10.3.3 Sub-Group Chair, Student Experience & Engagement rereported that Head of Quality & Equalities had attended their sub-group meeting and had clarified how the surveys worked. He added that the college needs an induction template for the course induction. Vice Principal - Quality, Performance & Student Experience advised that teams need to have flexibility and different areas will approach induction in different ways. Sub-Group Chair, Curriculum Management advised that this came up at the last meeting when talking to Learning & Teaching Professional Development Manager and he was unsure if this had been taken forward. Sub-Group Chair, Student Experience and Engagement advised that the sub-group had also discussed the new application process and they were concerned that some people didn't know if they had managed to get onto their course. They felt this

could cause disengagement and felt there should be clearer communication with students.

10.3.4 Sub-Group Chair, Learning & Teaching & CPD advised that there is an ongoing theme of lack of participation in surveys. Their sub-group highlighted the fact that we do not get any feedback when students drop out of a course. They had also talked about the new WiFi provision. He advised that the sub-group will discuss student feedback at the start of the academic term.

10.3.5 Sub-Group Chair, Quality and Equality advised that Equalities, Policy and Research Manager had noted that leadership need to understand why it isn't always possible to get cover for classes and they need to help find ways to overcome this issue.

11 FOR INFORMATION

11.1 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY APRIL 2015

Committee Chair advised that the equality duty was signed off at the Board of Management on 05 May 2015.

11.2 ECSA ENGAGEMENT MINUTES

None.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION

The Committee agreed their responses to the review of the Committee Operation.

12.2 The Committee Chair NOTED that this was Sub-Group Chair, Learning and Teaching and CPD's last meeting as he was stepping down from the role of sub-group chair after three years. The Committee Chair thanked him for his contribution to the Committee.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is now scheduled for **Friday 30 October 2015** at 2pm in the Boardroom, Milton Road Campus.

The meeting closed at 1630 hrs.