



For the future you want

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 14 FEBRUARY 2017

14:00 Boardroom, Milton Road Campus

Present: Colin Arthur; Neal Black; Annette Bruton; Bruce Cassidy; Bob Downie; Stephen Dunn; Ann Landels; Ian McKay (Chair); Niki McKenzie; Nigel Paul; Fiona Riddoch; Azra Sharif-Qayyum; Robin Stimpson; Ian Young

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Alex Craig; Penny Davis; Michael Jeffrey; Pauline MacPherson; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Amanda Clark and Alan Johnston.
- 1.2 The Chair notified the Board that Elaine Lee, a non-executive member, had decided to stand down from the Board in January 2017 with immediate effect. The Chair thanked Ms Lee for her service to the Board and its Academic Council.
- 1.3 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked student ambassadors Naimh Curran and Holly McNie for their pre-Board presentation to members on the launch of the Creative Takeover Campaign. A campaign designed to promote the College and employment opportunities in Creative Industries to schools.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 The Board APPROVED the Minutes from 13 December 2016 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda, with the exception of the following:

4.1.1 CATERING AND NURSERY INCOME

The Board NOTED that reports on catering and nursery income would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

5. PREPERATION OF A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

- 5.1 The Board NOTED an update on the production of the next Edinburgh College Strategic Plan. The Principal advised that, following an initial consultation with the Board, the Executive and the Senior Management Group, further consultation would take place with staff and students in March. Once complete, an initial draft of the strategic plan would then come forward to the Policy & Resources Committee on 18 April.
- 5.2 The Board NOTED that a 12 week open consultation and engagement exercise would begin after the Policy & Resources Committee. The Principal informed the Committee that consolidated drafts on the strategic plan would be placed before the Board at its May and June meetings.
- 5.3 The Board DISCUSSED the timeframe for the development of the Strategic Plan and AGREED that a final version of the document would be presented to the first Policy & Resources Committee of the 2017/18 academic year - for approval.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

6.1.1 MINUTES 24.01.17

The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 24 January. The Vice Chair informed the Board that the Committee had considered an initial draft of the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) 2017-2020, and agreed that as a strategic approach the College should focus on sustainability with a long-term view to accommodating future growth.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had approved the 2017/18 tuition fees, as endorsed by the Executive, which saw no increase in course fees for credit based provision. The Vice Chair informed the Committee that following a benchmarking exercise, a small number of commercial and international courses fees had been increased to align with other local providers.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had considered an approach, put forward by the Principal, to improve and remodel partnership working at the College. The Vice Chair advised the Board that the Committee had approved the arrangements put forward and, in support of this, agreed to the engagement of an experienced conciliator to help shape partnership working for the future.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had considered an initial high-level feasibility review of the Edinburgh College Estate, which had been funded by the SFC. The Vice Chair highlighted that the College's ambition to continue to be a successful and efficient education provider in the region, and how this was strongly linked to its ability to implement a robust estates strategy. The Board NOTED that it would receive an opportunity to discuss the ongoing Estates review at an appropriate juncture.

6.1.2 STUDENT RECRUITMENT DASHBOARD

The Board NOTED an update on the performance of the College against its 2016/17 recruitment and credits targets. The Assistant Principal, Recruitment & Retention, informed the Board that approximately 98.9% of the College activity target had been achieved - a significant improvement on the previous year-to-date credit score.

The Board NOTED that the College had achieved its HE credits for the year, and therefore exceeded its European Social Fund (ESF) target. The Assistant Principal outlined ongoing work to ensure that the College achieved its activity target, which included the retention of semester 2 students at specific cut-off points in February and March.

The Board DISCUSSED the positive progress made around student recruitment, retention and credit activity, and AGREED that once the College had achieved its target a message should be circulated to all staff communicating the outcome.

The Board AGREED that, using the data collated over the past year, the Executive should provide comparable year-on-year data in future student recruitment and retention dashboard reports. Further to this, the Board AGREED that the Executive should critically reflect on the work undertaken to achieve the activity target and produce a discussion paper for the Board in the next academic year.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, commended the Executive and all staff involved in driving the College towards its student activity target.

6.1.3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO DECEMBER 2016

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College, as highlighted in the financial accounts to December 2016. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that cash-flow projections had shown month-end balances at the two critical months of March and July 2017 as particular low. To mitigate this issue cash-flow during these periods would be managed closely by the Finance Team.

The Board DISCUSSED the management accounts to December 2016, and the College's position in comparison to last year. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that although the College remained in a recovery phase, significant improvements had been made and the transformation plan remained on target.

6.1.4 BUDGET UPDATE

The Board NOTED the key headlines relating to college sector funding in light of the publication of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget for 2017/18 on 15 December 2016. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that the Budget

would not be finalised until it had gone through the Scottish Parliament's Legislative process in April.

The Board DISCUSSED the Draft Budget and the proposed increase in revenue and capital funding for the college sector. The Student President highlighted that the Board that the only reduction in funding related to student support funds, and informed members that NUS continued to lobby MSPs and the SFC for additional funding.

6.2 ACADEMIC COUNCIL

6.2.1 MINUTES 20.01.17

The Board NOTED the Academic Council minutes from the meeting held on 20 January. The Committee Chair informed the Board the Committee had received a presentation on the Learning Engagement Framework, an ECSA led framework developed with students to create a process to improve the learner experience. The Board AGREED that the slides from the ECSA presentation should be circulated to members for information.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had received a positive report on the results of the 2016 Induction Survey, which was designed to collate students' opinions on key aspects of their experience before starting at the College and during their first weeks as enrolled students. The Committee Chair highlighted that satisfaction was high, with 96.6% of students stating that overall they were satisfied with the College. The Board DISCUSSED the Induction Survey results and its correlation with improvements highlighted in the College's improved early retention rates (minute 6.1.2 refers).

The Board NOTED that the only area of review arising from the Induction Survey related to the financial support received by the student. The Principal notified the Board that this was a nationwide issue, and the College had worked hard to improve its internal processes in order to ensure students receive funding in a timely manner.

6.3 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

6.3.1 MINUTES 09.02.17

The Board NOTED the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 09 February.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had received a report from the Principal on the processes employed by the College to provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation on student experience. The Committee Chair informed the Board that members were content that appropriate processes were in place, and acknowledged the Academic Council's essential role in monitoring and reviewing quality arrangement and the performance of the College.

The Board NOTED that, to support good governance, the Principal had updated the Committee on events following on from the Section 22 report published in November 2016. The Committee Chair advised the Board that Audit Scotland had recently indicated that a new report on Edinburgh College's 2015/16 financial statements would be laid before the Public Audit & Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee (PAC) in March.

The Board DISCUSSED the scope of the information requested by Audit Scotland and AGREED that a more detailed briefing note on the remit of the PAC should be circulated to Board members. Further to this, the Board endorsed a proposal for the Chair, the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee and the Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee to meet with the lead auditor as part of the process.

The Chair advised the Board that the PAC's request for further information was timely, and would provide the opportunity for the College to ensure that accurate information was placed in the public domain.

6.2.2 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Board NOTED a Summary Top Risk Register to February 2017, which outlined three changes to the risk register since December. The Committee Chair informed the Board that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee had reviewed the Full Top Risk Register at its previous meeting.

The Board DISCUSSED the risks related to 'Poor Industrial Relations', and the setting of the residual risk scores at the maximum level. The Chief Operating Office advised the Board that this level had been set due to ongoing discussions on pay through the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) and a local EIS-FELA ballot for industrial action, both of which maintained the high risk of industrial action.

6.4 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

6.4.1 MINUTES 25.01.17

The Board NOTED the External Engagement Committee minutes from the meeting held on 25 January.

The Board NOTED that representatives of Midlothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP) had attended the meeting to discuss shared opportunities with the College. The Vice Chair informed the Board that discussions were constructive and a number of operational matters for senior management to consider had been put forward.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had considered an update on the development of the External Engagement Strategy, including an overview of the College's external engagement priorities for 2017. The Vice Chair informed the Board that the finalised Strategy would come forward to the next meeting of the Committee for approval, and would subsequently be reviewed by the Board.

7. EQUALITY OUTCOMES REPORTING

7.1 The Board NOTED that in order to comply with its public sector equality duties, the College must publish new equality outcomes and other information on its website by 30 April 2017.

7.2 The Board NOTED that the published report would include information on Board diversity, including a gender breakdown of board members and details on how

information on the protected characteristics of the board has and/or will be used to improve diversity amongst members.

- 7.3 The Board DISCUSSED the reporting of equality outcomes and AGREED that delegated powers be given to the Policy & Resources Committee to approve a finalised document at its next meeting for publication before the end of April.

8. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 8.1 The Board NOTED a report from the Principal covering a range of activities at the College since the last Board meeting.
- 8.2 The Board NOTED that following both the Principal and Chief Operating Officer's attendance at the PAC in November 2016, to answer questions on the Audit General for Scotland's report 'The 2014/15 audit of Edinburgh College', the College had been asked to provide further information to the committee. The Principal outlined the questions and the additional information requested, and informed the Board that once complete the PAC response would be shared with members.

9. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT

9.1 ECSA REPORT

- 9.1.1 The Board NOTED a report from the Student President on the various activities of ECSA between December and February. The Student President advised the Board that 79% of ECSA's annual objectives were complete, partially complete or on course.
- 9.1.2 The Board NOTED that ECSA had produced and launched its first ever online class reps training session, based on learning materials produced by Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs). The Student President informed the Board that ECSA aimed to train over 50 class reps through the new format by the end of term.
- 9.1.3 The Board NOTED that elections for full-time sabbatical officer positions would take place in early March. The Student President informed the Board that ECSA would continue to take part in the 'Big Student Elections' with 12 other institutions across Scotland. Voting would take place from 06 to 09 March, with the results to be communicated on 10 March.

9.2 ECSA DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- 9.2.1 The Board NOTED a draft framework outlining ECSA's strategic thinking for the next 3 years of activity, from which a more detailed strategic plan would be developed. The Student President advised the Board that further development would take place to see how the strategic framework could compliment the work of the Business Transformation Plan, and steer ECSA's course to become a more sustainable, effective and relevant organisation in years to come.

- 9.2.2 The Board DISCUSSED the draft strategic framework and endorsed the direction of travel outlined by ECSA. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, commended the work of the Students' Association in continuing to develop its vision and values.

10. GOVERNANCE REPORT

10.1 GOVERNANCE UPDATE

- 10.1.1 The Board NOTED that shortlisting and interviews for non-executive Board members in January, with Pat Armstrong (Chief Executive, ACOSVO) acting as the independent panellist. The Governance Director informed the Board that following this process, the interview panel had agreed to recommend three candidates for appointment.
- 10.1.2 The Board AGREED to endorse the recommendation of the interview panel to Scottish Ministers, with a view to new members of the Board undergoing their induction before their first Board meeting on 02 May.

10.2 DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

- 10.2.1 The Board NOTED that at its last meeting members had agreed the submission of Board self-evaluation report to the SFC by 31 March. The Governance Director advised the Board that to support the submission of the report, members would also be asked to approve a development plan.
- 10.2.2 The Board NOTED a high-level draft of the development plan, which outlined the timing, objectives and structure of such activities. The Governance Director highlighted to the Board that the annual evaluation and development cycle was an opportunity for boards to reflect on their performance and implement improvement measures.
- 10.2.3 The Board DISCUSSED the draft document and AGREED to delegate powers to a short-life working group to finalise a version of the development plan, for submission to the SFC. Further to this, it was AGREED that the working group would consist of the following members of the Board: Ian McKay; Stephen Dunn; Ann Landels; and, Annette Bruton.

10.3 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 10.3.1 The Board NOTED an update on College events, Board training and visits through the remainder of the academic year.

11. NATIONAL REPORT

- 11.1 The Board NOTED ongoing discussions within the NJNC in relation to pay and terms & conditions. The Chair advised the Board that failure to reach an agreement could result in future industrial action.

11.2 The Board AGREED that it may be appropriate to invite the Colleges Scotland Employment Relations Policy Lead, John Gribben, to a future meeting of the Board to provide further details on ongoing industrial relations.

12. RIDDOR REPORT

12.1 The Board NOTED RIDDOR reportable incidents between 01 December 2016 and 31 January 2017.

12.2 The Board DISCUSSED the logging of incidents in the nursery and whether any benchmarking existed. The Board AGREED that it may be appropriate for the nursery to consider joining a benchmarking group with other local nurseries to allow comparisons in incident rates.

13. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

13.1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS UPDATE

13.1.1 The Board NOTED an update on a recent EIS-FELA ballot requesting industrial action, up to and including strike action. The Principal advised the Board that on 13 February it had been confirmed that 75.7%, of the 259 members of teaching staff who participated in the ballot, supported industrial action.

13.1.2 The Board DISCUSSED industrial relations with EIS-FELA and AGREED that the Executive should do whatever possible to reduce the impact of any proposed industrial action on students.

13.2 STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

13.2.1 The Board NOTED that issues around student funding had been discussed by the Board under the Budget Update and the 2016 Induction Survey items.

13.2.2 The Board DISCUSSED the potential for the College to create an initiative to proactive lead on issues around poverty and further/higher education. The Board AGREED that the Principal, who recently led the East Lothian Poverty Commission, and ECSA should work together and conduct some initial 'thought leadership' on this area and report back to the Board on progress.

13.3 DEPARTURE OF ROBIN STIMPSON

13.3.1 The Board NOTED that Robin Stimpson, the Chair of the Remuneration Committee, would be stepping down from the Board in March - following a considerable period of service to Edinburgh College. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mr Stimpson for his contribution to Edinburgh College and its legacy college (Jewel & Esk).

13.4 DEPARTURE OF THE GOVERNANCE DIRECTOR

13.4.1 The Board NOTED that the Governance Director, Penny Davis, had taken voluntary severance and would be leaving the College on 24 February 2017. The Committee Chair thanked the departing Governance Director for her service to the Board and the wider college sector.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 The next meeting would be held at 14:00hrs on 02 May 2017 at the Milton Road Campus.

15. CLOSED BUSINESS

15.1 Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session. Closed items were recorded under a separate minute (Closed Minutes 15/14.02.17 refers)

Meeting closed at 16:50

..... (Signature of Chair) (Date)