



For the future you want

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 20 SEPTEMBER 2016

14:00 Boardroom, Milton Road Campus

Present: Colin Arthur; Neal Black; Annette Bruton; Sandra Cairncross; Amanda Clark; Bob Downie; Alan Johnston; Ann Landels; Elaine Lee; Ian McKay (Chair); Niki McKenzie; Nigel Paul; Fiona Riddoch; Azra Sharif-Qayyum; Robin Stimpson

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Penny Davis; Michael Jeffrey; Pauline MacPherson; Jonny Pearson; Gill Ritchie (Education Scotland) Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson; Michael Willis (External Assessor)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Kellie Bradford, Stephen Dunn and Ian Young.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Gill Ritchie, Her Majesty's Inspector of Education Scotland, to the meeting to present the Education Scotland Annual Evaluation Visit Report.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Neal Black and Amanda Clark the newly elected Student President and Vice President (Welfare) to their first meeting as Student Board Members.
- 1.4 The Board NOTED that Michael Willis, an independent board assessor, would observe the meeting as part of the Board's ongoing self-evaluation.
- 1.5 The Chair welcomed the three newly appointed Assistant Principals to the meeting, as members of the Executive Team.

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 21 June 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.

5. EDUCATION SCOTLAND ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT VISIT

- 5.1 The Board NOTED a presentation from Gill Ritchie on the College's Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit (AEV), which took place on 09 and 10 May.
- 5.2 The Board DISCUSSED the context of the report and the performance of the College, with the HM Inspector outlining the 'seismic' shifts which had taken place in the college sector through mergers and ONS reclassification. The Board NOTED the HM Inspector's comments that the College had begun to address key points of action in a positive manner.
- 5.3 The Board DISCUSSED the following matters relating to the presentation and outcomes of the AEV Report:
- (i) the College's lower success rate against sector benchmarks in some indicators;
 - (ii) the need for the Students' Association, as cited in the report, to engage widely with students across the College;
 - (iii) the Executive's progress in restructuring quality and planning within the College, through changes to senior and middle management;
 - (iv) lecturing staffs 'inconsistent' engagement with new processes aimed at improving the learner experience, and the wider context of this relating to 'culture and buy-in'.
- 5.4 The Board welcomed the Student President's comments that ECSA would aim to address the challenges highlighted in the AEV Report, and NOTED the work conducted over the summer to improve student engagement through Class Reps and Learning Development Tutors (LDTs).
- 5.5 The Board NOTED a response from the Teaching Staff Board Member relating to 'inconsistent' engagement (paragraph 5.3iv refers), which he attributed to low morale amongst teaching staff and the limited support structures in place for lecturers. The Teaching Staff Board Member informed the Board that such structures had been in place at legacy colleges and that he hoped the College would be able to implement similar arrangements. The Principal informed the Board that through developments to the roles of Curriculum Managers and Curriculum Leaders, the College would improve support structure and develop more 'reflective practitioners' - capable of taking appropriate action on students' feedback.
- 5.6 The Chair thanked the HM Inspector for attending the Board meeting to present the AEV Report. The Board NOTED that Education Scotland would be moving towards a new self-evaluation model from September 2016 onwards, with engagement between the College and Education Scotland becoming a more integral part of the process. The Principal advised the Board that once finalised guidelines on the new model of inspection were made available to the sector that a report would be presented to the Policy &

Resources Committee, along with a strategy for the College's preparations for the new process.

Gill Ritchie left the meeting.

6. SFC POST-MERGER REVIEW REPORT

- 6.1 The Board NOTED an SFC Post-Merger Review Report, as previously circulated to the Board on 13 July. The Principal informed the Board that the Executive welcomed the report and were pleased the SFC had acknowledged that the Business Transformation Plan was appropriate to address concerns and ensure the College's successful future.
- 6.2 The Board DISCUSSED progress on the actions raised within the Post-Merger Report, and were reassured that the SFC would switch from the merger review process to a programme of ongoing additional scrutiny through the transformation plan and the normal regional outcome agreement process.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

7.1.1 MINUTES 23.08.16

The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 23 August.

The Board NOTED that following recent court decisions in favour of Edinburgh College and other colleges, in relation to there been no legislative basis to pay Lennartz VAT repayments, a tender for shared legal representation was undertaken by APUC. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that, following Committee approval, a letter of engagement with the successful tenderer had been signed.

7.1.2 BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PLAN REPORT

The Board NOTED a verbal update from the Principal on progress relating to the transformation plan following a meeting of the Strategic Programme Board on 07 September.

The Board NOTED a report from a recent Review of Edinburgh College Business Transformation Plan, conducted by Scott-Moncrieff. The Principal informed the Board that the report had been agreed between the College, the SFC and Scott-Moncrieff on 15 September, and was tabled for Board members' information.

The Board NOTED an overview of the report and the recommendations arising, as provided by the Principal, and DISCUSSED the following aspects of the report:

- (i) the dialogue between the College, the SFC and Scott-Moncrieff during the report drafting process, and the views of the Funding Council on the final document;

- (ii) the continued importance of communications between senior management and staff on the financial issues faced by the College;
- (iii) the Chief Operating Officer's efforts to retain oversight of financial sensitives as the College's deficit position changes;
- (iv) the development of key initiatives such as the Learning & Teaching Strategy, which were seen as essential to the financial success of the College going forward.

The Board NOTED that the report would be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee along with a management response from the Executive.

7.1.3 STUDENT RECRUITMENT DASHBOARD

The Board NOTED an update from the Assistant Principal, Recruitment & Retention, on the College's performance against its 2016/17 recruitment and credits targets. As of 20 September, 99.6% of the credit total for August full-time courses had been achieved.

The Board NOTED that although it was too early to say whether the College's credit targets would be achieved, recruitment figures were significantly better than those reported in the 2015/16 (year to date).

The Board DISCUSSED ongoing recruitment and the monitoring of retention data, including the following:

- (i) student numbers at recent welcome events and the impact of attendance at such events on retention;
- (ii) the generally positive feedback from new students recorded by ECSA;
- (iii) the measures in place to enhance retention, and the utilisation of KPIs from 2015/16 to predict early retention and partial successes;
- (iv) current areas of under recruitment, and considerations related to the triangulation between student numbers, employers and the economy;
- (v) the levels of recruitment in Construction and Engineering, and the identification of the latter as a future area of development - in line with Scottish Government priorities.

The Board AGREED that it would welcome a briefing note from the Executive outlining the various pathways from which students come to the College, including details on apprenticeship models and the role of managing agents.

7.1.4 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO JULY 2016

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College, as highlighted in the financial accounts to July 2016.

The Board NOTED that a late review of year-end fixed assets had resulted in adjustments which would adversely affect the forecast outturn. The Chief Operating Officer reassured the Board that a new procedure had been implemented to review fixed assets on a monthly basis.

The Board NOTED the financial impact of items not included in the Management Accounts that would be included in the Annual Accounts to 31 July. The Board AGREED that the Management Accounts should be reviewed by the Head of Finance, with assistance from the Internal Auditors, in order to produce a

document which supports effective monitoring of the monthly accounts and closely replicates the format of the Annual Accounts.

The Board DISCUSSED the transfer of credits to SRUC, and AGREED that a more detailed update on the credit situation should be reported to a future meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

The Board AGREED that following queries raised by members relating to lower than forecast catering and nursery income, the Policy & Resources Committee should receive a more detailed report on the matter at a future meeting.

7.1.5 COLLEGE BUDGET 2016/17

The Board NOTED the College Budget 2016/17 and a supporting presentation by the Chief Operating Officer which outlined: positive developments; potential risks and (within the budgeting process) recent/ongoing work to improve financial controls.

The Board NOTED that the Policy & Resources Committee endorsed the deficit Budget put forward by the Executive, with the caveat, that it be formally recorded that the College and the SFC had maintained a dialogue on the level of deficit and the budgeting process. The Board NOTED that the Review of Edinburgh College Business Transformation Plan, conducted by Scott-Moncrieff, was the mechanism by which reassurance could be sought that the SFC were aware that funding to cover the deficit would be required as part of the transformation plan.

The Board DISCUSSED the Budget 2016/17 and how the more positive student recruitment figures (Paragraph 7.1.3 refers) indicated that the annual budget was realistic. The Chief Operating Officer provided further reassurances to the Board key savings through the Voluntary Severance Scheme and Priority Based Budgeting over the year would be achieved.

The Board APPROVED the College Budget 2016/17, based on the SFC's awareness of the College's deficit budget and the funding requirements through the transformation plan.

7.2 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

7.2.1 TOP RISK REGISTER 2016/17

The Board NOTED the Top Risk Register (TRR) to August 2016, which included a number of changes following a recent review by the Senior Management Group. The Board DISCUSSED the appropriateness of RAG indicators used to denote the mitigation of financial risks, and AGREED that the colours used should be reconsidered in the finalised version of the new TRR.

The Board NOTED that strategic risks would be considered as part of the Board Strategy Day on 31 October.

8. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

8.1 The Board NOTED progress on senior staff recruitment, including the recent Senior Management Group (SMG) level appointments which had been confirmed. The Board AGREED that once all SMG level appointments were

complete, the Principal would provide members with an overview of the College's external engagement through senior management and the Board.

- 8.2 The Principal thanked members of the Board who had participated in stakeholder and interview panels, as part of the senior management recruitment process. The Chair also wished to thank, on behalf of the Board, all those senior management colleagues who had taken on increased responsibilities to support transitional arrangements over recent months.
- 8.3 The Board NOTED that following a ballot by the UNISON national office, relation to the failure to reach a pay agreement in 2016, a single day of strike action took place on 06 September. The Principal informed the Board that the College had remained open on this date for business as usual, with teaching across all campuses continuing as normal.
- 8.4 The Board NOTED that following the drafting of a Section 22 Report by Audit Scotland in March 2016, the Auditor General for Scotland was automatically required to report to the Public Audit Committee. The Principal informed the Board that this report would take place shortly, and it may be appropriate for the Principal and/or the Chair to appear in front of the Committee. The Board NOTED that, in preparation for the Public Audit Committee, the College was in the process of drafting a written response to the Section 22 Report. The Chair informed the Board that the Public Audit Committee may provide an appropriate opportunity to set out the wider context relating to the funding of the college sector, which had impacted negatively on the College's development since merger.

9. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

9.1 ECSA REPORT

The Board NOTED that the ECSA sabbatical team for 2016/17 had taken office, and had undertaken a full induction into their roles through ECSA staff and NUS Scotland.

The Board APPROVED a proposal from ECSA for the Student President to join the External Engagement Committee and the Vice President (Welfare) to join the Nominations Committee, in line with both Committees' terms of reference.

9.2 ECSA OPERATIONAL PLAN 2016/17

The Board NOTED the annual priority objectives for the new sabbatical team as outlined in the ECSA Operational Plan 2016/17.

The Board DISCUSSED the Operational Plan and welcomed the encouraging progress already made by the ECSA sabbaticals in the first months of their tenure. The Board AGREED that in future it would welcome more information on priority objectives which were not progressing satisfactorily, in case the Board could be of assistance.

10. GOVERNANCE REPORT

10.1 GOVERNANCE REPORT

- 10.1.1 The Board NOTED an update on progress (at a national and College level) against each of the Scottish Government's Good Governance Task Group recommendations published in March 2016.
- 10.1.2 The Board NOTED progress on support for Board member development and the comments of members who had attended recent national training events.

10.2 BOARD STRATEGY DAY 31.10.16

- 10.2.1 The Board NOTED a proposed schedule for the Board Strategy Day on 31 October, which had been arranged to coincide with key points in the College's planning cycle.
- 10.2.2 The Board DISCUSSED the topics for consideration outlined by the Principal, and the following suggestions were NOTED:
 - (i) The Board's operation in relation to the Business Transformation Plan, in particular how information is presented to members;
 - (ii) the need for members, especially those new to the Board, to get to know one another and the broad skills/knowledge each member provides;
 - (iii) the need to consider an appropriate venue and structure for the sessions, in order to support group work between Board members.
- 10.2.3 The Board APPROVED the proposed schedule for the Board Strategy Day, subject to the incorporation of points raised by members (under Minute 10.2.2).

10.3 CHAIR EVALUATION 2015/16

The Chair left the meeting. Nigel Paul assumed the role of Acting Chair.

- 10.3.1 The Board NOTED that in accordance with good practice, and as part of the overall evaluation of the Board, an in-depth evaluation of the Chair was conducted by the Vice Chair. The Governance Director outlined to the Board the methodology used and a summary of the results.
- 10.3.2 The Board NOTED the written report provided by the Vice Chair and were content with its positive and constructive findings. The Board welcomed the formal, and thorough, process of evaluation conducted by the Vice Chair which was considered in line with best practice.

The Chair returned to the meeting.

10.4 BOARD AND COMMITTEE CALENDAR 2016/17

- 10.4.1 The Board NOTED a list of upcoming Board events and an overview of the schedule for the graduation ceremony on 30 October.

11. NATIONAL REPORT

11.1 The Board NOTED a verbal update from the Chair on ongoing national bargaining arrangements through the National Joint Negotiating Committee.

11.2 The Board NOTED that a College Board Members' Conference, organised by the College Development Network (CDN), would be taking place on 25 October in Glasgow. The Chair informed the Board that Shirley-Anne Somerville, the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science would be providing a keynote speech.

12. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2016

12.1 The Board NOTED a report outlining the volume of FOI requests received by the College between July 2015 and June 2016. The Governance Director informed the Board that, although numbers were generally low, the College had received more FOI requests during this period than any other college in the sector.

12.2 The Board DISCUSSED the guidance and processes in place to reduce response times, in order to minimise the occurrence of late responses.

12.3 The Board AGREED that to provide members with a better understanding of the types of requests received by the College, a report drawing together such data should be drafted and circulated for information.

13. RIDDOR REPORT

13.1 The Board NOTED the RIDDOR reportable incidents between 01 January and 01 September 2016.

13.2 The Board NOTED that it had received an Annual Health & Safety Report 2016 from the Health & Safety Manager prior to the Board meeting. The Board APPROVED updates to the Health & Safety Policy as considered as part of the annual report.

14. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

14.1 The Board NOTED that representatives from EIS-FELA, UNISON and senior management had been invited to the next meeting of the Board to present a report on their progress towards annual partnership working.

14.2 The Board NOTED a query in relation to the College's reporting on environmental sustainability. The Chair confirmed that such matters would be followed up by the Policy & Resources Committee, and reported appropriately to the Board in due course.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 The next meeting would be held at 14:00hrs on 13 December 2016 at the Milton Road Campus.

16. CLOSED BUSINESS

16.1 Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session. Closed Items were recorded under a separate minutes (*Closed minutes 16/20.09.16 refers*).

Meeting closed at 17:15

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