

**EDINBURGH COLLEGE ACADEMIC COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING OF 29 OCTOBER 2013
14.00, BOARD ROOM, MILTON ROAD CAMPUS**

Present: Nigel Paul (Chair); Colin Arthur; Fiona Candlish; Julie McCran; James Moohan; Graham Skirving; Moira Frizzell and Kelly-Marie Parry

In attendance: P Davis; P MacPherson

By invitation: Nick Murton; Jan Crawford

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies had been received from Mandy Exley, Jane Richardson, Ray McCowan, Kevin McGlynn, Katy Nixon and Raphael Lehmann.

2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that since R McCowan was unable to attend items 13 and 14 would be deferred to the next Academic Council meeting.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - Paper A

3.1 F Candlish noted that there was a spelling error on page 5, item 12. It should say 'data' instead of 'date'.

Decision: The Minutes of 24 May 2013 were approved once the above amendment has been made.

4 MATTERS ARISING – Paper B

4.1 All matters arising were due to be dealt with on the agenda.

5 ECSA EDUCATIONAL UPDATE – Paper C

5.1 J Moohan presented the ECSA Education Update to the Academic Council. He apologised for any grammatical errors that appeared in the document and advised that it gave an overview of the progress made from the last Academic Council meeting.

Moira Frizzell entered the meeting at this point.

- 5.2 J Moohan advised that the in-house model of associate trainers had worked well. They were now looking to bring in communication ambassadors who would deliver key messages for ECSA within the College. He confirmed that the communication ambassadors would be in place by the second week of November.

ECSA have provided training for both staff and students to help support the class rep structure. They have developed a website (web database), lesson plan and induction video to make the process as simple as possible.

ECSA have also provided LGBT awareness training and they are trying to create an LGBT charter within the College.

ECSA are looking at ways to incorporate NUS Scotland National Society of Apprentices into their representational structure.

ECSA are looking to provide class rep training for students with special support needs and ESOL students.

J Moohan advised that class rep meetings have now taken place on all campuses.

Jan Cutting entered the meeting at this point.

The class rep working group has been added to the agenda of the ECSA engagement meeting. J Moohan advised that centre rep meetings have not happened yet. He also noted that the Students' Association are working with the Leadership team to ensure that those students without tutorial timetables receive student rep training.

J Moohan concluded his presentation by noting that the work undertaken by ECSA is positive and they are working hard to resolve any gaps that have been identified.

- 5.3 The Chair congratulated ECSA on their progress to date.

- 5.4 K Parry advised that those students without learning development tutors are either full time HND students or part time students.
J Moohan added that ESOL students don't have learning development plans.

5.4.1 M Frizzell noted that it was important all students had access to a learning development tutor.

5.4.2 J McCran confirmed that full time FE students and first year HND students have an LDT. LDT drop in sessions are provided for all other students twice a day across all campuses.

J McCran advised that when they had looked at the LDT structure it was felt that 2nd year HND students did not require the level of pastoral LDT support that 1st year students needed. However, student support and guidance support mechanisms are still in place for these students. J McCran noted that the provision of LDTs would be reviewed after the first year.

- 5.4.3 C Arthur understood that the decision not to provide 2nd year HND students with LDTs was to replicate the university student experience. He asked who would support them through the UCAS application.

F Candlish advised that at Granton members of the students' support service had provided drop in sessions to help students complete their UCAS application.

J McCran confirmed that LDT drop in sessions are provided twice a day on all campuses.

- 5.5 The Chair was happy that there was a mechanism in place and that it would be reviewed after a year.

- 5.6 K Parry advised that ECSA's position is very different from last year. They now employ 16 people (14 students) and will appoint their manager next week. They now have 36 clubs and societies in place around the College and at their last class rep meeting attendance was up over 100 per cent.

6 L&T AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

- 6.1 J Crawford is the learning and teaching and professional development manager at the College. She will have a team of 6 from next week and will be distributing a booklet to all staff advising them of her team's role. The role of the teaching and learning advisors is to deliver qualifications to staff. This then ensures the quality of lecturing across the College.

J Crawford advised that the booklet contains photos and quotations from students saying what they expect from a good lecturer.

Her team deliver qualifications to all teaching staff from level 6 to level 9.

- 6.2 J Crawford proposed a research project into dual professionalism within FE.

J McCran asked if the Academic Council would be willing to give their financial support to this research project.

Decision: The Chair confirmed the Academic Council's support for the research project and asked J Crawford to include what the College would do with the findings in her proposal. The proposal should contain information on

the numbers of staff to be looked at and the standards that they are vetted against.

6.3 J Crawford advised that Teaching and Learning Assistants (TLAs) will have a high profile on all campuses. They will be based near the libraries and will run workshops, provide resources, give tips and links, provide creative conversations and deliver customised training for teams.

6.3.1 The Chair asked how she would access people from across the whole organisation and bring them in to do training.

J Crawford advised that she needs HR to run a qualifications audit and thereafter she will contact programme managers directly.

6.3.2 The Chair noted that they should have a way of picking up those people who have not engaged with it.

6.3.3 J Crawford advised that they are hoping to hold a virtual learning week towards the end of April 2014.

Decision: The Chair gave the Academic Council's full support to the virtual learning week.

7 MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE –Paper D

7.1 J McCran advised that the College's performance is now measured against 234 items contained within 3 documents: strategic plan, outcome agreement and the equality outcomes. Her role within the Executive is to monitor the College's performance for the Leadership, Board and Board Committees.

The paper presented to the members contains all of the current objectives that need to be monitored by the Academic Council – 51 objectives. They mainly cover the customer element (stakeholders, students and staff) but they don't all link smoothly into the Academic Council.

J McCran suggested at the last Board meeting that another Committee should be introduced to help monitor all of these objectives. The new Committee will be submitted for proposal at the next Board meeting.

The Chair confirmed that this item will be discussed at the next meeting when the Academic Council can begin monitoring the objectives.

8 SUB GROUP REPORTS - Paper E

8.1 J McCran reported that at the last Academic Council it was agreed to set up 4 sub-groups. Three sub group meetings have taken place to date and J

McCran and R McCowan are leading two of the sub-groups due to the low response received from staff.

They have a wide range of staff involved in these meetings: delivery staff; students; support staff; curriculum programme managers; support managers.

Once all 4 groups have met the plan is for the leads to meet and send out a communication to all staff and students on the work of these sub groups.

8.1.1 The Chair was pleased with the progress and range of discussions in the groups. He commented that the groups would need to prioritise and carefully manage their work plans.

Decision: The Chair confirmed that the Academic Council was happy for issues arising out of the sub groups to go to the Leadership team for action. He also noted that any urgent issues for the Academic Council could be emailed round for consideration.

9 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – paper F

9.1 J McCran confirmed that the Educational Scotland Review will take place in April and that this will be discussed at the March meeting. She will provide a verbal feedback in May and the report will be ready for distribution at the next meeting.

9.2 The Chair noted that the Academic Council should receive PIs for every meeting.

Decision: J McCran to provide a self-assessment report to the Academic Council which would include PI data.

9.3 J Moohan suggested that employer councils should be discussed at the next meeting.

9.4 J McCran confirmed that SUMs will be reported under Monitoring our Performance and will be reported at every Academic Council meeting.

9.5 The Chair asked if there were any SUMs information that could be circulated to the Academic Council before the next meeting.

Decision: R McCowan to send information on SUMs to the Academic Council in two weeks' time.

10 EXIT SURVEY 2012-13 – Paper G

10.1 N Murton gave a presentation to the Academic Council on the pre-exit survey for 2012-13. The survey took place between May and June over a 5 week

period. His presentation looked at the response rate, strengths and areas for review that the survey highlighted.

N Murton confirmed there had been a disappointing response rate to last year's survey. There have been 2,100 responses to the current survey and they are working with LDTs to get paper copies out to all students. LDTs are now in place across all campuses.

10.2 J Cutting noted that last year's response rate was quite high for a business undergoing a merger.

10.3 The Chair asked what response rate was required to draw valid conclusions from the survey.

N Murton confirmed he would need a minimum 60 per cent response rate. He also confirmed that they target specific students to ensure that they are collecting data that reflects the real experience of students at the College.

10.4 The College's strengths were: a high satisfaction rate overall; students are aware of the next steps available to them; students feel supported while they're at the College and feel welcomed and respected.

10.5 Areas for review: provide practical skills for job seeking and Higher Education; class representation; facilities and services; individual learning plans.

10.6 Edinburgh College is currently ranked in the upper quarter for 3 of the questions against the UK benchmark. However, they are ranked in the lowest quarter for 16 of the questions. N Murton confirmed that there is room to achieve the gold standard.

He advised that the results have now been made available to the course managers and will be used to help their action planning for the next year.

10.6.1 C Arthur noted that a lot of these figures are actually okay. He knows that health and safety is very effective in the College.

10.6.2 N Murton confirmed that the benchmark is for illustration purposes only.

10.7 The Chair suggested that once the survey has been completed 2 or 3 times it would be possible to identify priority areas and it would not be advisable to rush in to any high level areas at the moment.

10.8 J Cutting asked how many times the College planned to issue these surveys. She advised it might be helpful if students know there would be an outcome to their responses.

11 SELF EVALUATION MAP – Paper H

- 11.1 J McCran presented the self-evaluation map to the Academic Council. She advised that it was based on the equality Scotland equality framework and that both academic and support teams are supplied with the data in order for them to reflect on their provision. The results will be pulled into the College self-assessment report (SAR).
- 11.2 A College evaluation report will be written using data from SAR. The evaluation report will then be approved by the Principal and the Board.
- 11.3 J McCran confirmed that they are using as much of the relevant information from the old Colleges as they can to help inform the process.
- 11.4 M Frizzell asked if the College had anything to be worried about regarding courses that have not performed well.
J McCran confirmed that there probably will be cases like this but that they will need to wait until the final FES run.

12 ECSA PLAN FOR INTEGRATION INTO CULTURE OF COLLEGE

- 12.1 K Parry confirmed that the Students' Association now have their operational plan in place. She will bring the plan to the next Academic Council and advised that it is available on the Students' Association website.

At the next ECSA partnership meeting they will cross check the operational plan to ensure the best possible integration for the Students' Association with the College.

13 EMPLOYER COUNCILS: CURRICULUM

- 13.1 Item to be moved to the next meeting.

14 PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ON EDINBURGH COLLEGE CURRICULUM: JUNE 2013

- 14.1 Item to be moved to the next meeting.

15 ECSA/COLLEGE WORKSHOP

- 15.1 J McCran advised the Academic Council that the workshop was arranged to help align ECSA with the College. Due to the high level of interest in this workshop there may be another one arranged.

16 INDUCTION SURVEY 2013-14

- 16.1 N Murton noted that only one question was changed after the survey had been confirmed by the Academic Council.

The results of the survey will be presented at the January meeting.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 None.

18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is now scheduled for **Friday 31 January 2014** at 2pm, Sighthill Campus.

The meeting closed at 1600 hrs.