EDINBURGH COLLEGE ACADEMIC COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING OF 31 JANUARY 2014
14.00, BOARD ROOM, SIGHTHILL CAMPUS

Present: Nigel Paul (Chair); Colin Arthur; Jan Cutting; Craig Wilson; Fiona Candlish;
             Julie McCran; Jane Richardson; Ray McCowan; Kevin McGlynn; Graham
             Skirving; Moira Frizzell and Kelly-Marie Parry

In attendance: M Walker; P MacPherson (minute taker)

By invitation: Kevin McGlynn, Lea Ozuna; Nick Murton

1   APOLOGIES

1.1   Apologies had been received from Mandy Exley, Katy Nixon, Raphael
        Lehmann and James Moohan.

2   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2.1   The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - Paper A

Decision: The Minutes of 29 October 2013 were approved as an accurate record of
the meeting.

4   MATTERS ARISING – Paper B

4.1   VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that the Teaching staff
        qualifications are being analysed and new progression routes are being
        designed. Jan Crawford will give a presentation on Educators of the Future at
        the next meeting.

4.2   The Operation Plan for the Students' Association will be presented at the next
        Board meeting.

4.3   VP, Customer & Student Experience to update members on the Education
        Scotland review at the next meeting.

5 PERFORMANCE UPDATES

5.1 Performance Indicators – Paper C

Head of Quality & Equalities confirmed that the two main Performance Indicators are Completed Successfully and Retention (which is the combined completed successfully and Completed Partial Success). These PIs are linked to the Outcome Agreement and are used to measure student success.

It was noted that HE full time figures decreased by 3%. Head of Quality & Equalities confirmed that the College was looking into this decrease.

Head of Quality & Equalities confirmed that quality teams were looking at the whole College and not just individual curriculum areas. They are providing support to guidance as well as learning and teaching. He confirmed that one of the recommendations was a review of how the College supported part time and second year HE students.

Head of Quality & Equalities noted that the College should have this year's retention figures soon. He confirmed that the early withdrawal figure for 2012-13 was 7% across the legacy colleges.

Decision: Head of Quality & Equalities to distribute retention figures to Members when they are available. VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that the figures will also be brought to the next meeting.

5.2 Self-Assessment Reports – Paper D

Head of Quality & Equalities informed Members that both curriculum and support staff complete self-evaluation reports. The College collate the self-evaluation reports and publish as one document. The reports will show both key areas of strength and identify areas for improvement.

He confirmed that the SAR publication will be ready for the next meeting.

Decision: SAR document to be distributed to Members once finalised with a two page executive summary.

It was asked if it would be possible to provide comparative SAR data. Head of Quality & Equalities confirmed that this was not possible as this was the first year that Edinburgh College had undertaken self-assessment reports. The Chair asked for comparative data to be available in the future.

5.3 Monitoring Performance – Paper E

VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that since the last meeting some of the Academic Council objectives had been moved to the Commercial & International Committee. VP, Customer & Student Experience to present a

one page summary of the objectives at the next meeting and will report by exception. The full report will be provided for information.

5.3.1 Objective 1 – VP, Educational Leadership confirmed that the College is actively engaged with the community planning partnership to see if it is possible to use another community partner building in East Lothian. He is also talking to QMU about the possibility of a purpose built centre. VP, Educational Leadership and Acting Principal have been to Dunbar to look for possible sites.

The Chair asked if there was a timescale for these options. VP, Educational Leadership confirmed that if there was an ideal piece of estate within the community planning partners audit then the College could act on this relatively quickly. Dunbar would be an 18 month option as a curriculum review would be required.

5.3.2 Objective 6 – VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that the College did not achieve the upper quartile and this would be discussed later in the meeting.

5.3.3 Objective 14 – VP, Educational Leadership advised Members that getting the WSUM figures was a logistical challenge. He confirmed that large parts of this year's curriculum would remain the same for next year and this would help reduce the number of issues

5.3.4 The Chair noted that a lot of the objectives seemed to be waiting on the curriculum review. VP, Educational Leadership advised Members that the curriculum review would be covered later in the agenda.

5.3.5 It was asked if the College had reached the WSUMs target for the January intake. VP, Educational Leadership confirmed that the College did not yet have the figures but were hoping to generate around 25,000 of WSUMs.

5.3.6 Objective 19 – VP, Educational Leadership confirmed that a lot more proactive work was required in order for the College to meet its target on increasing the proportion of enrolments from specific protected characteristic groups and that it may take some time before the College sees a meaningful impact.

The Chair asked if the College will see progress in November. VP, Educational Leadership did not think that the College would be able to achieve its target by November.

Decision: VP, Educational Leadership to provide an action plan showing how the College will achieve its target on specific protected characteristic groups at the next meeting.

VP, Customer & Student Experience advised Members that the equality outcome action plan details how the College will address working with people with protected characteristics and is available on the College website.

5.3.7 Objective 27 – VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that the base line figures have changed from the last report and will update Members on retention rates once early retention figures are available.

5.3.8 Objective 33 – VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that the quality ratings feedback from Education Scotland had changed since the objectives were originally created. Outcomes from the report will now be one single judgement of effectiveness alongside four statements that support the judgement. VP, Customer & Student Experience to update the objective to reflect the new review structure.

5.3.9 Objective 38 – Induction survey to be discussed later in the meeting.

5.3.10 Objective 39 – Student awareness of the student rep system is quite low. Student President confirmed that ECSA are looking into the figures to identify areas for improvement.

5.3.11 Objective 40 – VP, Educational Leadership confirmed that this was at a similar position to protected characteristics. However, he confirmed that the response from the council regarding an Integrated Employability Service was positive as it is an economic development priority.

5.3.12 VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that the College had not conducted the learning and teaching survey. At this point it is scheduled to start on Tuesday 4th February 2014. The objective is purple as this is a two year target.

5.3.13 VP, Educational Leadership advised Members that the Curriculum Strategy will be presented at the next meeting. One of the key outcomes in the strategy is the development of internships.

The Chair noted that it would be good to progress with internships quickly in order to take advantage of governmental and European initiatives.

L Ozuna and N Murton entered the meeting at this point.

5.4   Induction Survey - Paper F

Quality Enhancement Officer, Quality advised Members that the College had received a response rate of 55% to the induction survey. The survey showed

that students enjoyed coming to the College. It also showed a high satisfaction rate in the teaching quality.

Areas for review included the College's performance against the UK benchmark, questions regarding financial support, Freshers' Fair, work experience and employment opportunities.

The College did not score in the highest quartile for any of the questions on the benchmark. 18 questions were ranked in the lowest quartile.

Acting Principal confirmed that front end admissions are working with MIS to help give students a more seamless transition into the College. It was suggested that an online induction course should be provided to students. Acting Principal confirmed that the Executive are currently reviewing the induction process.

Decision: A summary report on the second semester induction process to be presented at the next meeting.

It was asked how the survey response rate could be raised. Student President confirmed that students wanted to know their suggestions would be listened to and taken seriously by the College. She agreed that students should be encouraged to use their College email.

J Cutting left the meeting at this point.

5.5 Learning & Teaching Survey 2014 – paper G

Quality Enhancement Officer, Quality confirmed that the survey has been streamlined and that a equality and diversity question has been included.

Decision: The Committee approved the Learning & Teaching Survey.

L Ozuna and N Murton left the meeting at this point.

6 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 Employer Councils: Curriculum

VP, Educational Leadership confirmed that the College planned to develop employer councils. The College would have an employer council for each curricular area and these councils would help design and develop the curriculum to ensure that the courses met both the employers and students' needs.

The Chair confirmed that Board members would be happy to use their contacts to help establish the employer councils.

6.2   Presentation to the Board of Management on Edinburgh College Curriculum: June 2013 – Paper H

VP, Educational Leadership confirmed that this paper was originally presented to the Board in June. Today's presentation would update Members on the current status of the Curriculum Strategy.

VP, Educational Leadership advised Members that he had met with Programme Managers and Curriculum Heads in a series of workshops since October 2013.

The first draft of the Curriculum Strategy will be taken to the Executive for principal approval on the 3rd March. It will then be taken to the Academic Council on the 14th March. If both the Executive and the Academic Council approve the first draft it will then be circulated to all staff, ECSA, EIS, Trade Union colleagues and some external stakeholders.

7   UPADATES

7.1   ECSA Updates – paper I

Student President confirmed that ECSA governance is progressing well and they have now finished their elections.

There will be a training day with the Executive and the National Union of Students next Thursday to establish the priorities for the next year.

Student President confirmed that a student body day was held to update them on outcome agreements. ECSA are also looking to strengthen their relationship with ESF.

She advised Members that Edinburgh College is the first college in Scotland to host the Imagine Tomorrow events. These events will form the NUS key strategies and policies for the next year.

Student President also highlighted ECSA's care leavers and looked after children event. This will be a stakeholder event with key VIPs attending. Board members will be invited to attend this event.

7.2   Sub Group Reports

7.2.1   Lecturer, Institute of Construction & Building confirmed that his sub-group have held two meetings. The sub-group had discussed Moodle

at their last meeting and identified the issue of data storage and server ability.

It was asked what percentage of staff had TQFE. VP, Customer & Student Experience to ask Jan Crawford to provide this information at the next meeting.

Acting Principal confirmed that the new HR system would have the capability to hold CPD information. VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that staff are expected to undertake six days of CPD per year.

Lecturer, Institute of Construction & Building to invite HR and IT to the next sub-group meeting to look at both IT and CPD storage issues.

7.2.2   VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that John McCran chaired the meeting in her absence.

The meeting looked at student support and mental health first aid training.

7.2.3   VP, Educational Leadership confirmed that the sub-group have held one meeting. He confirmed that the sub-group will be a consultation group for the Curriculum Strategy.

A concern was raised over the use of open badge as there is no assessment involved.

7.2.4   Quality Support Officer, Quality & Administration confirmed that the sub-group had met three times. The sub-group have recruited Susan Inglis (Equalities, Policy and Research Manager).

The sub-group would like to see acting and music students help with the provision of equality training for staff. At Telford all staff had to attend an equality workshop (from Principal downwards) and Susan Inglis is considering rolling this out to the whole College.

Jane Richardson confirmed that she is heavily involved with Women into IT. Quality Support Officer, Quality & Administration to pass Jane Richardson's contact details on to Susan Inglis.

7.2.5   Lecturer, Institute of Construction & Building noted that the sub-groups were meant to be chaired by College staff. VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that there had been a low response to the last advertisement and the College was planning to wait until March before re-advertising the posts.

Lecturer, Institute of Construction & Building suggested that since both current staff members are based at Granton it would be sensible to recruit from the other College sites.

8   FOR INFORMATION

8.1   ECSA Engagement Minutes

No comments from Members on information paper.

8.2   Annual Quality Report Session 2012-13

Teaching Staff Member noted that in the quality improvement cycle it indicates that the early retention analysis would be ready for November. Head of Quality & Equalities confirmed that the College does not have these figures. He confirmed that the cycle indicates when the College would normally expect to receive these figures.

8.3   Partnership Agreement

No comments from Members on information paper.

9   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1   VP, Customer & Student Experience suggested waiting until after the HMIE visit in April before re-advertising for co-opted members of staff for the Academic Council. Both VP, Customer & Student Experience and VP, Educational Leadership were happy to continue as sub-group leads.

Decision: Academic Council to re-advertise for three co-opted members of staff in April / May.

9.2   The Chair asked that key reports and events are taken into consideration when planning next year's Academic Council meetings.

VP, Customer & Student Experience confirmed that the Executive had received a request from Governance Administrator to identify key reports throughout the year. These dates would then be used to plan all Board and Committee meetings for 2014-2015.

10   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is now scheduled for **Friday 14 March 2014** at 2pm, Granton Campus.

The meeting closed at 1600 hrs.