

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 30 APRIL 2013

14:00 Boardroom, Granton Campus

Present: Ian McKay (Chair); Colin Arthur; Maidie Cahill; Mandy Exley; Alan Johnston; John Martin; Nigel Paul; Jane Richardson; David Rutherford; Robin Stimpson; Ian Young

In attendance: Penny Davis; Martin Kelso; Alan Williamson

1 APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Martin Crewe, Moira Frizzell and Karen McPhillips.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 None.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PAPER A

- 3.1 **Decision:** The Board approved the Minutes from 19 March 2013 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

PAPER B

- 4.1 Two actions from the previous meeting were deferred to 11 June 2013:
- 4.1.1 6.1.3 ESCA reporting on budget and transitional funding plan.
 - 4.1.2 8.2.2 Draft Communications Strategy paper.
- 4.2 In relation to item 10.2, Legal Advice, the Chair outlined advice received from Anderson Strathern following the meeting on 19 March 2013.

Paragraph 4.2.1 presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 36, Confidentiality of Communications.

- 4.3 Other actions were complete, on track or on the agenda.

5 EXECUTIVE REPORT

PAPER C

Paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30, Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.

- 5.1 -

5.2 -

5.3 C Arthur explained that some staff who had been in programme management roles saw that the new posts had a higher people management component that made them too different in scope, and had not applied on that basis. The Principal explained, however, that it may not be possible for management staff to revert to lecturing roles as these roles may already be filled.

5.4 Interim redeployment or management otherwise of staff who had chosen not to apply or had not been appointed to roles in the new structure was discussed. Detailed planning would be possible once numbers were clearer. The Principal would report further on this matter at the 11 June meeting.

5.5 The Chair noted, with reference to the recent EIS stress survey, that a key gauge of success during the current process would be the reduction of uncertainty among staff.

5.6 The Principal advised that a dialogue with teaching staff about future needs and structures for learning and teaching was being delayed by industrial relations.

5.7 The Principal provided feedback from the recent SFC 6-month review visit. While it was generally acknowledged that six months post merger may be expected to be a low-point in terms of staff relations, key observations highlighted the need to redouble communications activity:

5.7.1 It was felt there was a need for more direct and informal dialogue between staff and the Principal/Senior Management;

5.7.2 There was general concern, following press coverage of the EIS survey results, over the level of emotional support provided to staff;

5.7.3 Some staff had been concerned with the lack of dialogue over the rationale for management changes, for example, to timetabling;

5.7.4 Students had expressed concern over course locations and access.

5.8 It was agreed that consideration should be given to bringing in additional resource temporarily to address communications needs. The Principal would take this forward.

Paragraph 5.9 presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30, Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.

5.9 -

5.10 The Principal updated Members on progress with the Strategic Plan. There would be three versions of the plan: one with sufficient detail to drive operational planning; one less detailed for all staff; and a summary for stakeholders. The Principal asked that comments be fed back to either herself or M Kelso.

Paragraphs 5.11 and 5.12 presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30, Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.

5.11 -

5.12 -

5.13 The Chair reaffirmed the importance of communications in this context: there must be clarity for staff at the earliest opportunity. It was confirmed that development of a Communications Strategy would be the priority for the new Director of Organisational Development and Communications who would be in post from 1 July 2013 and that an interim paper on communications would be brought to the 11 June meeting.

6 FINANCIAL STRATEGY

PAPER D

- 6.1 A Williamson introduced a draft financial strategy for information and discussion, highlighting key considerations.
- 6.2 D Rutherford sought assurance over the forecast shortfall in WSUMS income. A Williamson explained that while there would be a negative impact on core WSUMS, overall WSUMS income would creep up. M Exley highlighted the role of strategic planning and collaboration to mitigate risk in this area.
- 6.3 A Johnston questioned the cessation of SFC merger funding when merger-related costs continued to impact on College finances. The Chair agreed that, while the College sought to comply with SFC arrangements, where results were materially detrimental to the College it may become necessary to challenge those arrangements.
- 6.4 M Frizzell sought assurance that figures for forecast WSUMS income were robust given the differences in reporting mechanisms previously used on different campuses. A Williamson confirmed that there was now a basis for greater confidence in that regard.
- 6.5 The Chair pointed out that Members were not necessarily conversant with the metrics used in the report and a more strategic perspective might be helpful.
- 6.6 Members were asked to pass any other comments on the draft strategy to A Williamson.

7 COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Nominations Committee

PAPER E

- 7.1.1 I Young outlined the recent recruitment process for new Board Members. He recommended the appointment of Jan Cutting and Sandra Cairncross.
- 7.1.2 **Decision:** The Board approved the appointments.

- 7.1.3 I Young asked that the Board be briefed on forthcoming events in which Members were expected to participate, including Graduation ceremonies and the Celebration of Achievement. It was confirmed that a calendar of events would be circulated as soon as this was available from Marketing.

7.2 **Audit Committee**

PAPER F

7.2.1 **Risk Management Update**

A Williamson outlined emerging risks including possible costs associated with a current complaint. The Board reviewed top risks to which there had only been minor changes since the previous meeting.

7.2.2 **Business Continuity**

The Board noted that work was progressing on the College's business continuity plan.

7.2.3 **Management Accounts**

The Board noted accounts to end March 2013. It was agreed that, while useful work had been done in this area, further attention should be given to simplifying financial information circulated to staff.

7.3 **Academic Council**

PAPER G

- 7.3.1 N Paul introduced minutes from the meetings on 30 January and 19 April for noting, and outlined main points discussed.

- 7.3.2 The Council was still developing its remit and would bring the final version to the Board for approval.

7.4 **Remuneration Committee**

- 7.4.1 Following cancellation of the April meeting, it was reported that a meeting date was being sought in June.

7.5 **Estates Working Group**

- 7.5.1 R Stimpson outlined discussion at the meeting held on 18 April.

- 7.5.2 An additional paper was tabled setting out draft terms of reference for a proposed Capital and Infrastructure Committee. Members were asked to forward comments to R Stimpson and M Kelso.

- 7.5.3 It was confirmed that the Sighthill project was on target for completion at the end of May 2013 and the expectation was that the August Board meeting would be held there to allow Members to view the final build.

8 STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION UPDATE

PAPER H

- 8.1 The Student President outlined recent activity, highlighting positive feedback about Edinburgh College received from the community.
- 8.2 It was agreed that the President Elect for 2013-14 would be invited to attend the 11 June Board meeting.
- 8.3 The ECSA Strategic Plan was under development and work had begun on an exit strategy following the end of SFC funding. The Chair added that he had met with Mike Barron (working for NUS/Change Partnership) who had been in dialogue with the students to support the planning process.
- 8.4 A paper on proposed structures would be brought to the 11 June meeting together with the ECSA end-of-year report.

9 POST-16 EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL UPDATE

PAPER D

- 9.1 The Chair outlined current developments, explaining that progress should be swift to conclude the Bill process by the end of June. Changes anticipated at Stage 2 included the introduction of a proposed Code on FE Governance.
- 9.2 Statutory instruments would be made available to the Board in due course.

10 AOB

- 10.1 There was none.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 11 June 2013 at Milton Road Campus.

The meeting closed at 1700 hrs.