



EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 05 MAY 2015

14:00 Boardroom, Milton Campus

Present: Colin Arthur; Kellie Bradford; Sandra Cairncross; Martin Crewe; Jan Cutting; Guy Hughes; Alan Johnston; Elaine Lee; Ian McKay (Chair); Niki McKenzie; Nigel Paul; Robin Stimpson; Jeroen Van Herk; Ian Young.

In attendance: Su Breadner; Annette Bruton; Penny Davis; Ray McCowan; Julie McCran; Pauline MacPherson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Craig Wilson; Alan Williamson.

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Diane Erasmuson.
- 1.2 The Board NOTED that the Interim Principal, Elaine McMahon, had left the College on 29 April. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Interim Principal for her contribution to the College over the past six months.
- 1.3 The Board NOTED that the Deputy Principal would act as Principal until 18 May, the new Principal's official start date.
- 1.4 The Chair welcomed the newly appointed Principal, Annette Bruton, to the meeting as an attendee.

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 24 March 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 items:

4.1.1 FINANCIAL MONITORING (Minutes 7.2.1/24.03.15 refers)

The Board NOTED that the Policy & Resources Committee had asked the Director of Finance to liaise with Board members to consider how to enhance the financial monitoring information provided to the Board. The Chair confirmed that such meetings would be arranged by the Clerk in due course.

4.1.2 CO-OPTED MEMBER (Minutes 7.2.2/24.03.15 refers)

The Board NOTED that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee would seek to co-opt an additional member with public service expertise prior to the start of the 2015/16 academic year. The Chair confirmed that the Committee Chair would look to identify a suitable candidate with the support of fellow Board members.

5 PROJECT WORKING GROUP

- 5.1 The Board NOTED a verbal update from the Chair of the Project Working Group following a meeting of the Group on 27 April.
- 5.2 The Board NOTED that the Development Plan's 'key milestone targets' were on track, and the Deputy Principal confirmed that a number of revised leadership strategies were to be presented to committees of the Board for approval in May and June.
- 5.3 The Board NOTED that the SFC had approved the College's revised and reduced funding application, and that formal confirmation was expected shortly.
- 5.4 The Board DISCUSSED the status of the Project Working Group and, in line with its own recommendation, AGREED to dissolve the Group now that a Development Plan had been established and consolidated.
- 5.5 The Board APPROVED a proposal to transfer oversight of the Development Plan to the Policy & Resources Committee, under a new standing item, to which SFC representatives would be invited to attend. The Board NOTED that regular operational engagement with the SFC would continue through the Deputy Principal.

6 PRINCIPAL AND EXECUTIVE REPORT

6.1 STRATEGY AND PLANNING

- 6.1.1 The Board NOTED that the new Principal, the Interim Principal and members of the Executive team had carried out a series of roadshows on 27 and 28 April, across three College campuses. The Deputy Principal informed the Board that the roadshows had provided an opportunity to update staff on the implementation of the Development Plan, and the new Principal's vision for the College.
- 6.1.2 The Board NOTED an update on the 2014/15 WSUMs position, and the Vice Principal, Academic Leadership, confirmed that activity remained in

line with schedules presented to the Board at its last meeting. The Board NOTED that the Executive expected the College to achieve its WSUMs activity targets for 2014/15.

- 6.1.3 The Board NOTED an update on applications and credits for 2015/16, as of 24 April. The Vice Principal, Academic Leadership, informed the Board that application activity had been 'very strong' when compared with last year's activity, and that every area of the College had observed a significant increase in applications. The Board NOTED a number of actions relating to applications and enrolment that had emerged from two recent Rapid Improvement Events (RIE), and the College's subsequent response.

The Board DISCUSSED the applications and credits status outlined by the Executive. The Board AGREED that its Members should be provided with historical information on application to enrolment conversion rates, for benchmarking purposes, and a regular breakdown of conversion data and targets.

- 6.1.4 The Board NOTED that in 2015/16 the college sector's funding methodology would change from WSUMs to credits. The Vice Principal, Academic Leadership, informed the Board that this provided an appropriate opportunity to review staffing requirements in order to achieve the College's credit targets. The Board NOTED several actions to improve efficiencies going forward, relating to zero based budgeting and greater scrutiny around class sizes.

The Board DISCUSSED the actions outlined by the Executive, and the implications of changes to the funding methodology for the sector. The Board AGREED that it would welcome a report on how the College could best align itself with future Scottish Government/SFC policies, in order to gain a sense of the current climate and the funding available.

6.2 FINANCE

- 6.2.1 The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College, as highlighted in the Financial Accounts to March 2015.

- 6.2.2 The Board AGREED that it would be useful to receive an update on the use of temporary staff across the College, to see which departments were regularly deploying short-term academic and support staff cover.

6.3 HUMAN RESOURCES AND STAFF ENGAGEMENT

- 6.3.1 The Board NOTED an update on the Voluntary Severance Scheme, as approved by the Policy & Resources Committee. The Director of OD & Communications confirmed that the College was awaiting SFC approval, prior to implementation of the Scheme.

- 6.3.2 *Paragraph 6.3.2 presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30, Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.*

6.4 MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE

6.4.1 The Board NOTED that an Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit would take place at the College on 12 and 13 May. The Vice Principal, Quality, Performance and Student Experience, outlined the purpose and focus of the annual engagement visit. The Board NOTED that a written summary report on Education Scotland's findings would be presented to the Board.

6.4.2 The Board NOTED a summary of priority KPIs for April, and the additional actions taken to address areas marked 'amber' and 'red'. The Board AGREED that it would be beneficial to receive benchmarking information for each KPI, to support effective performance monitoring.

The Board NOTED that KPIs related to Estates would require further development. The Board NOTED that space utilisation at the College currently stood at approximately 25% capacity, well below the desired level. The Chair emphasised the importance of the College holding a 'flexible' estate to provide appropriate provisions throughout the year.

6.5 RISK

6.5.1 The Board NOTED that the 'risk indicator' RAG on the College's Top Risk Register would now indicate risk severity.

6.5.2 The Board DISCUSSED the presentation of risk monitoring information to the Board, and the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee Chair highlighted the need to consider the following:

- (i) the identification of individual risks, which are currently embedded in wider risks;
- (ii) the further identification of risks pertaining to the Development Plan;
- (iii) the capturing of dynamic risks associated with the College's reshaping.

6.5.3 The Board AGREED that the Director of Finance should consider further changes to the Risk Register to ensure the RAG status aligns with the outlined risk.

6.5.4 The Board AGREED that the 'Top Risk' and 'Monitoring Our Performance' should be considered as part of a wider discussion on financial monitoring.

7 REALIGNMENT OF SENIOR STAFF STRUCTURE

7.1 The Board NOTED that the Development Plan submitted to the SFC had highlighted the need to reconfigure the executive and leadership staffing structure, in line with the Curriculum Strategy. The Board NOTED that the new Principal had worked with the Interim Principal to development the realigned senior staffing structure.

- 7.2 The Board NOTED the rationale behind the reduction of the Executive Team staff structure by two posts, and the realignment of accountabilities into three strands – each reporting directly to the Principal. The Board NOTED that a standalone corporate affairs and stakeholder engagement function would also report directly to the Principal.
- 7.3 The Board DISCUSSED the realignment proposal, focussing on the following points:
- (i) the process of matching post holders to the executive and leadership roles, and the ongoing consultation process with senior staff;
 - (ii) the free-standing title of 'Deputy Principal', and its current attachment to the 'Vice Principal People, Planning and Performance' role;
 - (iii) the combining of the two Vice Principal roles to create a 'Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality' post;
 - (iv) the importance of communicating the rationale behind the realignment to stakeholders, whilst emphasising that executive capacity would remain consistent;
 - (v) the important role of the Board in testing the efficiencies of the new structure.
- 7.4 *Paragraph 7.4 presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30, Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.*
- 7.5 The Board APPROVED the proposed Executive staffing structure, and its implementation by the new Principal and Deputy Principal.

8 EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Jenni Behan (ECSA Vice-President, Welfare) and Graeme Kirkpatrick (ECSA Manager) joined the meeting.

8.1 ECSA UPDATE

- 8.1.1 The Board NOTED a report on ECSA's activities and upcoming projects, introduced by the Student President.
- 8.1.2 The Board NOTED that as part of ECSA's long-term strategic planning it had participated in the NUS Scotland's Student Associations Impact Survey. The Student President informed the Board that the College had recorded the highest level of student participation in Scotland.
- 8.1.3 The Board NOTED the ECSA Financial Accounts had been signed off by OSCR.
- 8.1.4 The Board NOTED that ECSA had been nominated for an award at the SPARQS annual conference in recognition of its work within the College.
- 8.1.5 The Board NOTED an update on the Student Reviewers pilot programme. The Student President informed the Board that, since his last update, three Reviewers had resigned as a direct result of an EIS-FELA grievance. The

Vice Principal, Educational Leadership, confirmed that the grievance would be heard in due course.

8.2 2015/16 BLOCK GRANT SUBMISSION

8.2.1 The Board NOTED a 2015/16 Block Grant Submission from ECSA, for consideration prior to approval of the College budget at the next Board meeting.

8.2.2 The Board NOTED a presentation to support the Block Grant Submission from the Student President and the Vice-President (Welfare). The Board NOTED the challenges faced by ECSA and the College, the Association's focus for 2015/16, and the level of funding requested. The Student President also provided a brief overview of the many successes and achievements of ECSA since its establishment.

8.2.3 The Board welcomed ECSA's core ambitions to improve 'retention rates' and the number of students achieving 'positive destinations'. The Board DISCUSSED the proposal to develop a 'Wider Education Achievement Record' to log students' non-academic achievements. The Board NOTED comments from Board Members, with experience of similar schemes in higher education, regarding the central role of Student Services in projects of such complexity.

8.2.4 The Board DISCUSSED the following points relating to the Block Grant Submission:

- (i) the alignment of ECSA initiatives with the core business of the College and its Student Services function;
- (ii) the current operational costs of the College, and the efficiencies undertaken by ECSA;
- (iii) the need to effectively coordinate ECSA's core funding, and the potential to fund 'one-off' projects outwith the Block Grant;
- (iv) third party funding, and potential for further social enterprise endeavours;
- (v) the need to develop ECSA, through sufficient investment, into an function befitting of the College's aspirations for its students.

8.2.5 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the ECSA representatives for their presentation and the creativity and professionalism shown in their funding bid.

8.2.6 The Board AGREED that the Block Grant Submission required further consideration, and requested that the Executive and ECSA produce a consolidated proposal for review by the Policy & Resources Committee on 03 June.

The ECSA Vice-President (Welfare) and ECSA Manager left the meeting.

9 COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1 ACADEMIC COUNCIL

9.1.1 EQUALITY DUTY APRIL 2015

The Board NOTED that the College publish an Equality Duty Report (outlining its progress in mainstreaming equality) on 30 April. The Chair of the Academic Council informed the Board that the Report had been approved by the Academic Council, outwith the committee cycle.

The Board NOTED that an Equality Duty action plan would be considered by the Academic Council in due course.

9.2 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

9.2.1 TOP RISK REGISTER

The Board NOTED the Top Risk Register for April 2015, and its earlier discussion regarding risk monitoring (Paragraph 6.5 refers).

9.3 CAPITAL & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

9.3.1 MEETING UPDATE 27.04.15

The Board NOTED a verbal update from the Chair of the Capital & Infrastructure Committee, following a meeting of the Committee on 27 April.

Paragraph presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 33, Commercial Interests and the Economy.

The Board NOTED that a lease had now been signed for Marine Drive, ensuring students gained free access to its leisure facilities from 09:00-17:00 during term time. The Board commended the Deputy Principal for securing an 'excellent' deal for the College, and its students.

9.4 NOMINATIONS & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

9.4.1 MEETING UPDATE 01.05.15

The Board NOTED a verbal update from the Chair of the Nominations & Engagement Committee, following a meeting of the Committee on 01 May.

The Board NOTED the work of a cross-functional project group to develop the brand wheel further, following a brand review earlier in the academic year. The Board NOTED a refined version of the brand wheel, which included feedback from a wide range of stakeholder workshops. The Committee Chair confirmed that the Committee were pleased with progress, but had agreed that further refinement would be required.

The Board NOTED an Edinburgh College Coat of Arms selected by the Committee as its preferred design option. The Committee Chair informed the Board that the chosen design reflected both the College's nautical, mining and engineering heritage, and its future aspirations.

9.5 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

9.5.1 MINUTES 23.03.15

The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 23 March 2015.

9.5.2 MINUTES 08.04.15

The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 08 April 2015.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had approved an updated Voluntary Severance Scheme, following feedback from the Board on 24 March.

The Board NOTED that a recommendation from the Executive to increase the age eligibility for Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) in the 2015/16 academic year had been approved by the Committee. The Committee Chair confirmed that adjustments to student support funding would have no adverse impact (financial or otherwise) upon existing students.

The Board NOTED the abolition of National Insurance contracted out rates for employers, from 06 April 2016, and the recent increase in Teachers Pension Scheme contribution rates from 14.9% to 17.2%. The Committee Chair informed the Board that the additional costs of such changes would have a significant impact on the College's finances.

Sandra Cairncross left the meeting

9.6 SCHEDULED COMMITTEE DATES

9.6.1 The Board NOTED the scheduled dates of upcoming committee dates, prior to the next meeting of the Board.

10 GOVERNANCE

10.1 GOVERNANCE UPDATE

10.1.1 The Board NOTED that a restructuring of the Board's committees would be implemented in the new academic year. The Governance Director informed the Board that principle objectives of the restructure were to align committee and executive structures and to reduce the number of committees reporting to the Board.

10.1.2 The Board NOTED that a national framework was currently under development to support best practice and consistency across the sector in-relation to induction, development and evaluation.

10.1.3 The Board NOTED that the Good Governance Steering Group, which oversaw the development of the sector's new Governance Code, would

undertake a series of follow-up activities to ensure the effective implementation of the Code. The Governance Director confirmed that the framework for induction, development and evaluation would be a key initiative, along with a new handbook, which would provide the Board with a succinct guide to their role.

10.2 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10.2.1 The Board NOTED an update from the Governance Administrator on upcoming Board and College events.

11 NATIONAL REPORT

11.1 The Board NOTED that ongoing national negotiations in-relation to the new RPA had delayed its sign-off.

11.2 The Board NOTED that the Chair of the Glasgow Colleges Regional Board, Henry McLeish, had stepped down, and was subsequently was no longer Chair of the Colleges Scotland Board.

11.3 The Chair informed the Board that he hoped that Colleges Scotland would have a new chair in-place shortly, which would allow the sector to move forward and progress its concerns regarding the future of college funding.

12 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

12.1 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Board NOTED that representatives from EIS-FELA, Unison and Management would be invited to the next Board meeting to present their partnership working reports.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 14:00hrs on 23 June 2015 at the Granton Campus.

14 CLOSED BUSINESS

No Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session.

Meeting closed at 17:00

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