

EDINBURGH COLLEGE ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2014  
14.00, BOARD ROOM, MILTON ROAD CAMPUS

Present: Colin Arthur; Fiona Candlish; Diane Erasmuson; Moira Frizzell; Jeroen van Herk; Julie McCran; Nigel Paul (Chair); Jane Richardson and Graham Skirving

In attendance: P MacPherson (Clerk)

By invitation: Graeme Kirkpatrick (Observer); Iain MacArthur; Sharon McCue-Livingstone; Kevin McGlynn; Lea Ozuna; Susie Spalding

## **1 APOLOGIES**

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Jenni Behan, Zoe Croy, Jan Cutting, Mandy Exley, Nigel Kennington, Ray McCowan, Ian McKay and Richard Morris.

## **2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee Chair welcomed Jeroen van Herk (Student President), Diane Erasmuson (ECSA VP Education) and Iain MacArthur to their first meeting of the Academic Council.

The Committee Chair NOTED that the other new members of the Committee had submitted their apologies: Richard Morris (Staff Member); Nigel Kennington (Staff Member); Jenni Behan (ECSA VP Welfare) and Zoe Croy (ECSA VP Women).

- 2.2 The Committee Chair NOTED that last year's meetings provided a good baseline for the college as Members had discussed the first set of SARS and cross-college survey results. He advised Members that the Committee would now look to move forward from this baseline.

- 2.3 The Committee Chair NOTED that the Committee's terms of reference is very restrictive and today's meeting is not formally quorate. The Committee AGREED to go ahead with the meeting and ask the Board to change the Committees' terms of reference. The Committee AGREED that a quorum should consist of: Chairman; 1 Non Executive; 1 Executive; 2 College Staff; 1 Representative from ECSA

### **3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes of 16 May 2014 as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee Chair NOTED that all actions were either carried over or covered in the agenda items.

- 4.1 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that this year's induction process had went well and confirmed that no complaints had been received regarding bursaries.

4.1.1 Student President NOTED that ECSA had undertaken a small survey on the induction process and they had received both positive and negative feedback from the students. Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching advised that she is due to meet with ECSA and AGREED to go over these findings with them.

4.1.2 ECSA Manager NOTED that there had been clear progression from last year in regards to bursary funding and there was a marked improvement in terms of induction.

***[Lecturing Staff Member entered the meeting].***

- 4.2 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that her team are looking at the external and internal delivery of essential skills support. They are going to pilot essential skills support in two areas and she AGREED to present a briefing update paper on the pilot at the next meeting.

4.2.1 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that essential skills support would be fully implemented in 2015/16.

- 4.3 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that Jan Crawford left the College last November and confirmed that they have now appointed a new manager. It was AGREED that the first action would be removed from the action list until the new manager was in a position to submit a proposal on dual professionalism within FE to the Academic Council.

### **5 PERFORMANCE UPDATES**

#### **5.1 Education Scotland Review (Draft Action Plan)**

Head of Quality & Equalities NOTED that Sheila Page gave a presentation on the Education Scotland review at the last Board meeting. He advised that the

college have created an action plan based on the recommendations from Education Scotland.

- 5.1.1 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the Board asked the Academic Council to monitor the Education Scotland action plan alongside the MOP. She asked Members if they were happy for her to put the actions into place and give a status update report at the next meeting.
- 5.1.2 The Committee Chair asked if there would be engagement with staff and students on the Education Scotland action plan. Head of Quality & Equalities NOTED that ECSA have had access to the plan and AGREED to take the plan out to a wider audience.
- 5.1.3 The Committee Chair asked if the sub-groups could review the actions from the Education Scotland action plan. Head of Quality & Equalities AGREED that all sub-groups should provide feedback on the action plan.
- 5.1.4 It was NOTED that the college needs to ensure the correct selection process is undertaken to help reduce drop-out rates in courses like computing.
- 5.1.5 It was NOTED that the Head of Quality & Equalities had done a good job in translating the Education Scotland report into a student friendly document.
- 5.1.6 Student President was concerned that second year HND students do not have access to LDTs. He was also concerned that there would be a lack of LDT provision due to applications for Voluntary Severance.
- 5.1.7 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the college would not approve any application for Voluntary Severance from LDTs as it did not want to reduce its LDT provision.
- 5.1.8 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that the college was not in a financial position to provide LDTs for second year HND students.
- 5.1.9 Student President asked if it would be possible for HNC and HND students to share LDT support. Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that this was logistically impossible as the college currently does not have the resources in place to support this.
- 5.1.10 ECSA VP Education NOTED that HNC students don't see the purpose of LDT support and a lot of classes are not being attended.

5.1.11 The Committee Chair NOTED that this was an ongoing debate and would not be resolved at this Committee meeting.

5.1.12 The Committee AGREED that the Education Scotland actions should be taken forward but that they should be developed further with OD and the sub-groups. The Committee Chair thanked Head of Quality & Equalities and his team for their help with the Education Scotland review.

## **5.2 Monitoring Our Performance 2013-14 and Update**

Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience provided an update on the MOP from 2013/14.

5.2.1 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that there were a total of 64 objectives and 139 targets in last year's MOP and the Academic Council monitored 42 objectives and 83 targets. She added that a lot of the data would not be available from the Funding Council until the end of the year and AGREED to provide the final figures on the purple targets at the November meeting.

5.2.2 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the Committee needed to decide how to deal with the red indicators. She felt that the red indicators would be covered in the new strategic plan objectives and the Outcome Agreement.

5.2.3 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that most of the red actions are covered in the new strategic objectives. The only one that is not in the new strategic objectives is customer 6 however, it would be very easy to add that into the new strategic objectives.

5.2.4 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the full MOP will include the revised strategic objectives, Outcome Agreement measures and the ECSA agreements. She added that the Council has a leading role within the college in monitoring performance and asked if the Council wanted to look at how future agendas would cover this heavy amount of monitoring.

5.2.5 The Clerk AGREED to cross reference where the actions are covered in the revised strategic objectives (see details below):

<b>Red 2013-14 ACAD Indicators</b>	<b>Revised Strategic Objectives</b>
Establish Edinburgh College in East Lothian in partnership with a University and the local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address skill gaps and shortages in the regional and national economy by better preparing students for the world of work.</li> </ul>
To be rated as "best" by external benchmarks for students and staff	<p>This indicator is covered by a number of the revised strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all students are equipped with essential skills to support their learning and progression to a positive destination</li> <li>• Create opportunities for all students to feel part of a supportive institution</li> <li>• Enable innovation in learning and teaching through the effective use of technology</li> <li>• Support staff to be appropriately skilled to facilitate learning</li> <li>• Work in partnership with students to enhance engagement in their learning</li> <li>• To develop the full potential in our staff and create opportunities for those with aspirations to become Educators of the Future</li> <li>• Enable staff and students to shape the direction of learning and teaching and assessment</li> </ul>
Increase the proportion of enrolments from specific protected characteristic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address skills gaps and shortages in the regional and national economy by better preparing students for the world of work</li> <li>• This indicator is also covered by the equality outcomes.</li> </ul>
Increase student satisfaction (evidenced through three student surveys)	<p>This indicator is covered by a number of the revised strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all students are equipped with essential skills to support their learning and progression to a positive destination</li> <li>• Create opportunities for all students to feel part of a supportive institution</li> <li>• Enable innovation in learning and teaching through the effective use of technology</li> <li>• Support staff to be appropriately skilled to facilitate learning</li> <li>• Work in partnership with students to enhance engagement in their learning</li> <li>• To develop the full potential in our staff and create opportunities for those with aspirations to become Educators of the Future</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable staff and students to shape the direction of learning and teaching and assessment</li> </ul>
Embed the College's arrangements for effective student engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with students to enhance engagement in their learning</li> <li>• Enable staff and students to shape the direction of learning and teaching and assessment</li> </ul>
Provide an Integrated Employability Service across the City for unemployed people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address skill gaps and shortages in the regional and national economy by better preparing students for the world of work</li> </ul>
Increased response rates to student destination surveys and analyse by key employers and sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities for all students to feel part of a supportive institution</li> </ul>
Focus on positive destinations of students through a professional information, advice and guidance service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all students are equipped with essential skills to support their learning and progression to a positive destination</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Review of Strategic Plan Objectives

Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the strategic plan objectives are currently in draft and will be going to the Board in November. She asked if the committee was happy for the objectives to be put forward to the full Board.

5.3.1 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching AGREED to contact heads of centre to confirm the college's strategy to deal with a current lack of core skills lecturers at Granton.

5.3.2 The Committee Chair NOTED it would be useful to have the themes of activity provided to make sure things are moving forward in those areas.

5.3.3 It was noted that a 100% positive destination for every student may be overly ambitious. Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience AGREED to recommend that this is changed to a more realistic target that reflects the PI baseline data.

5.3.4 The Committee Chair NOTED that the college should be ranked in the upper quartile and Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience AGREED to add this into the strategic plan objectives.

5.3.5 It was noted that due to financial constraints it may not be possible to run the stakeholder and destination analysis surveys for part-time students. The Committee AGREED that all surveys should be undertaken but with further consideration regarding their timing to allow actions to be followed up. Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience AGREED to discuss the surveys with the Executive team. She also AGREED to work out the best way to get part-time students to complete the surveys.

5.3.6 The Committee APPROVED the revised strategic plan objectives with the amendments noted above.

#### **5.4 Outcome Agreement**

Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that a set of agreed student measures had been approved in the last academic year. An Outcome Agreement workshop has been arranged to look at how ECSA and the college are going to achieve these targets. The Committee APPROVED the agenda and it was NOTED that the tentative date for the workshop was Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014.

***[Quality Enhancement Officer entered the meeting].***

#### **5.5 Learning & Teaching Survey 2013-14**

The Committee Chair NOTED that this survey was covered at the last meeting and there were no further questions about the report.

#### **5.6 Pre-Exit Survey**

Quality Enhancement Officer NOTED that there had been a low response rate to the pre-exit survey. She advised that most students enjoyed studying at the college. However, 10% reported that they had seen instances of unfair treatment at the college. Quality Enhancement Officer NOTED that all questions were ranked in the lowest quartile.

5.6.1 It was NOTED that it was difficult to comment on the survey because there wasn't a high enough response rate. The Committee Chair was uncomfortable that this was the second consecutive survey that put the college in the bottom quartile. He asked for assurance that the strategic plan would improve the college's ranking.

5.6.2 Lecturing Staff Member was critical of the benchmarks and cited the college's excellent Health and Safety record as an example of how the benchmarks do not match up to real college life.

5.6.3 It was NOTED that a lot of the questions are very subjective and we need to understand why students are responding negatively.

- 5.6.4 Head of Quality & Equalities NOTED that these results are not published and are only used by the survey company (QDP) to create the benchmark. However, the results are submitted as part of the SFC review so are semi-public.
- 5.6.5 ECSA VP Education asked if there was a college policy to make sure classes were covered during staff absence. She also asked if there would be an analysis of the low satisfaction rates from Midlothian Campus.
- 5.6.6 Head of Quality & Equalities NOTED that all issues raised by the pre-exit survey would be discussed at the sub-groups.
- 5.6.7 Quality Support Officer NOTED that lecturers should keep a record of students' completed training in their EV folder.

## **5.7 Induction Survey**

The Committee APPROVED the Induction Survey 2014-15.

***[Quality Enhancement Officer left the meeting.]***

## **6 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

### **6.1 Future Agenda Items**

The Committee AGREED that future agenda items can be submitted to the Clerk after the meeting.

- 6.1.1 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the future agenda items paper would be submitted to the sub-groups to help align their discussions with the Academic Council.
- 6.1.2 The Committee Chair NOTED that the Committee spends a lot of its time looking at reports. He wanted to include more discussion time in the meetings.
- 6.1.3 Head of Quality & Equalities NOTED that the induction survey is run in the first semester to gather the students' first impression of the college. The learning and teaching survey looks at the students' experience of the college as a whole and is not run until the second semester.
- 6.1.4 The Committee AGREED that there should be a focus on each of the three strategies during the year and there should also be a discussion on the road map.



6.1.5 Student President NOTED that although ECSA approved of the Curriculum Strategy they felt that some amendments were required. ECSA Manager NOTED his concerns that the strategy had not been officially signed off and disagreed that the strategy had been approved.

6.1.6 The Committee Chair NOTED that the Board approved the current version of the Curriculum Strategy in April 2014. However, he added that the strategy would be constantly reviewed and updated by the Academic Council. Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience AGREED to set up a meeting between ECSA and Vice Principal Educational Leadership to discuss the Curriculum Strategy.

## **6.2 Academic Council – Communications**

The Committee Chair NOTED that it was important for the Academic Council to engage with staff across the college. The Committee AGREED to move ahead with the proposed communication plan to help enable greater engagement with staff.

6.2.1 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that due to budgetary constraints they are looking to produce the Envision magazine quarterly. She AGREED to include a section about the Academic Council in Envision with regular updates from both the Academic Council and sub-groups.

6.2.2 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the sub-groups are part of the Academic Council and they should have the power to undertake actions discussed within their groups. It was AGREED that there should be a meeting of the sub-groups to look at how messages from the Academic Council and sub-groups can be delivered to all staff.

## **6.3 Wood Commission Event**

The Committee Chair NOTED that Vice Principal Educational Leadership had given his apologies for the meeting. It was AGREED that the presentation should be postponed until the next meeting. It was also AGREED that Vice Principal Educational Leadership should present a paper on the curriculum offer at the next meeting.

***[Business Partner Organisational Development entered the meeting].***

## **6.4 The Professional Development of Teaching Staff in the College**

Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that the paper answers some of the questions set by the Academic Council on TQFE, CPD road map and the GTC pilot.

- 6.4.1 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that a lecturer's contract commits them to gaining the teaching qualification within a set period of time.
- 6.4.2 Business Partner Organisational Development NOTED that you already have to be teaching at a college to undertake the TQFE qualification offered by Dundee University and Aberdeen University. She added that Stirling University offers a part-time alternative for those lecturers without a full-time teaching role.

***[Head of Quality & Equalities left the meeting.]***

- 6.4.3 The Committee Chair NOTED it was useful to see the skills audit but asked for further data (i.e. TQFE numbers divided into different areas; number of people training).
- 6.4.4 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that there is a lot of value in the PDA and she was keen to establish a school for education just for staff to develop ongoing skills.
- 6.4.5 Quality Support Officer NOTED that the quality enhancement unit also deliver qualifications for staff on assessing and verifying skills.

***[Head of Quality & Equalities entered the meeting.]***

- 6.4.6 Business Partner Organisational Development NOTED that the college is creating its own progression model.

***[Student President left the meeting.]***

- 6.4.7 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience AGREED to bring the roadmap to the Committee in February 2015.
  - 6.4.7.1 Staff Member, Lecturer Institute of Construction & Building Crafts NOTED that the college employs a lot of instructors and we need to be able to see the progression route from instructor to lecturer in the CPD route map.
- 6.4.8 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the college were asked to take part in a GTC pilot. The college did not go ahead with this pilot as resources were focussed on the PDA and TQFE

***[Student President entered the meeting.]***

- 6.4.9 The Committee Chair NOTED that it would be good for the college to talk to those colleges already involved in the pilot but added that it was up to the college whether it wanted to proceed with the pilot or not.

***[Business Partner Organisational Development left the meeting.]***

## **7 UPDATES**

### **7.1 ECSA Update**

ECSA VP Education NOTED that the student review was very successful. She added that five class reps had been trained by sparqs and the class rep meetings were going ahead as planned.

7.1.1 As a result of the Imagine Tomorrow paper, ECSA VP Education NOTED that she would like to have reps from each department to gauge performance across campuses.

7.1.2 The Committee Chair NOTED that Imagine Tomorrow was a very good report. He asked how the other messages from the report were being taken forward by ECSA. ECSA VP Education NOTED that these messages were currently being discussed and would form part of the discussions around the Outcome Agreement.

7.1.3 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience AGREED to include a section at the student engagement meeting to discuss how ECSA and the college will take forward the issues raised in the Imagine Tomorrow report.

### **7.2 Sub-Group Reports**

Quality Support Officer NOTED that the equality and diversity sub-group needs to actively recruit a male member as it is currently composed of all females. She asked ECSA to consider sending a male student representative to the sub-group meetings. She NOTED that the group looked at future agenda items at their first meeting and they AGREED to look at the pre-exit survey and a zero-tolerance policy across the college.

7.2.1 Quality Support Officer NOTED that the group needs to find out if there is any budget to fund a zero-tolerance campaign. Quality Support Officer added that they are progressing with their idea to get students to film an advert/message that can be used for this campaign.

7.2.2 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that ECSA VP Women should be involved in the discussions around the zero-tolerance campaign. Quality Support Officer AGREED that ECSA VP Women would be involved and NOTED that the sub-group thought that ECSA VP Women should also be involved in school visits to encourage women into STEM. Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching suggested that a male LDT should join the group.

7.2.3 Staff Association Co-ordinator NOTED that he was standing in for Program Area Leader, Design Media and Computing. The sub-group had discussed the lack of reference to Quality and Diversity within the Curriculum Strategy. They had also discussed how the college does not promote success stories very well. It was suggested that the college needs to collate these success stories in order to help share good practice. He added that a new entrepreneur executive is working at the Business Gateway and the sub-group discussed the feasibility of shared apprenticeships.

7.2.4 Staff Association Co-ordinator NOTED the sub-group had discussed the East Lothian Campus project and thought this may present a huge budgetary challenge to the college.

***[Lecturing Staff Member left the room.]***

7.2.5 The Committee Chair NOTED that it was unlikely anything would happen regarding the East Lothian project in the near future and added that he hadn't heard anything about it recently.

7.2.6 Staff Association Co-ordinator NOTED that the group had discussed the possibility of the college bringing back evening provision. Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that analysis of evening provision from last year had resulted in the college only being open two nights per week this term. She added that the Curriculum Review is ongoing and this will look at evening class provision.

***[Lecturing Staff Member entered the meeting.]***

7.2.7 Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the Student Experience & Engagement sub-group had talked about the Education Scotland Review and role of the LDT. The group also discussed how equality and diversity can be promoted across the college and were looking to get in contact with the Equalities, Policy and Research Manager to move some of these ideas forward.

7.2.8 Lecturer, Institute of Construction & Building Crafts NOTED that his sub-group had looked at IT issues and Moodle. He added that Moodle usage across the college had increased substantially from last year.

## **8 FOR INFORMATION**

### **8.1 ECSA Engagement Minute**

Vice Principal Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the first ECSA Engagement meeting will take place soon and the minutes will be discussed at the next Academic Council meeting.

### **8.2 Student Experience Report**

The Committee NOTED the report

### **8.3 Student Record Report**

The Committee NOTED the report

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **9.1 Annual Evaluation**

The Committee APPPROVED the annual evaluation document.

## **11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is now scheduled for **Friday 21 November 2014** at 2pm, Sighthill Campus.

***The meeting closed at 1630 hrs.***