

EDINBURGH COLLEGE ACADEMIC COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING OF 16 MAY 2014
14.00, BOARD ROOM, MILTON ROAD CAMPUS

Present: Colin Arthur; Fiona Candlish; Moira Frizzell; Raphael Lehmann; Ray McCowan; Julie McCran; Ian McKay; James Moohan; Katy Nixon; Kelly-Marie Parry; Nigel Paul (Chair); Jane Richardson and Graham Skirving

In attendance: P MacPherson (Clerk)

By invitation: Sharon McCue-Livingstone; Kevin McGlynn; Lea Ozuna; Craig Wilson

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies had been received from Jan Cutting and Mandy Exley.

2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2.1 The Committee Chair introduced Katy Nixon (ECSA VP Women) and Raphael Lehmann (ECSA VP Welfare) to their first meeting of the Academic Council.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes of 14 March 2014 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

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

4.1 Head of Quality and Equalities confirmed that action 12 had been completed.

5 PERFORMANCE UPDATES

5.1 Second Semester Induction Process

VP Strategy and Operations NOTED that a group was set up last November to look at the Second Semester induction process. The team have produced

a list of actions that will be put in place for the summer induction in September.

VP Strategy and Operations confirmed that the college is close to achieving its target WSUMS – currently sitting just under 24,000.

- 5.1.1 VP Strategy and Operations NOTED that user feedback will be picked up by the Head of Organisation Development in their review of lessons learnt from the previous year.
- 5.1.2 VP Educational Leadership NOTED that recruitment in 2014/15 has been split so that 90% of recruitment will take place in September and 10% in January.
- 5.1.3 The Committee Chair NOTED that it is good to see this level of detail as it allows the college to target recruitment.
- 5.1.4 It was noted that the college needs to showcase engineering as a career path.

VP Strategy and Operations left the meeting at this point.

5.2 Education Scotland Review

Head of Quality and Equalities NOTED that Education Scotland had visited the college w/b 28th April and that the feedback would be reported at the next meeting.

5.3 Monitoring Our Performance

VP Customer & Student Experience NOTED that since the last report there had been two negative movements (amber to red).

- 5.3.1 (Customer 6) VP Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the results from the student destination survey suggest that the college has just missed its target response rate. She added that further analysis was required and this may change at the next meeting.
- 5.3.2 (Customer 14) VP Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the college is predicted to reach its WSUMS target.
- 5.3.3 (Customer 1) VP Educational Leadership NOTED that the college is progressing with its plans for the East Lothian partnership but that the project is still only in the initial stages of discussion. He wanted to check that Members were happy with this position.

The Committee CONFIRMED that they were happy for this item to remain at red.

5.3.4 VP Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the Outcome Agreement for 2014/15 was now signed.

5.3.5 VP Customer & Student Experience AGREED to bring the report on the 2013/14 Outcome Agreement to the next meeting. She also AGREED to update the MOP document with the new Outcome Agreement targets for the next meeting.

5.4 Early Withdrawal Figures

Head of Quality and Equalities NOTED that both the early withdrawal figures and further withdrawal figures have reduced from last year.

He NOTED that he is currently working with MIS to produce a PI report that breaks the figures down in terms of team area and course.

Quality Enhancement Officer, Quality entered the meeting.

5.5 Learning & Teaching Survey 2013-2014

Quality Enhancement Officer, Quality NOTED that the survey had achieved a higher response rate compared with last year's survey although they still needed to improve the response rate from part time students.

The survey showed a high satisfaction rate with the courses provided by the college although the percentage rates were slightly down from last year.

Quality Enhancement Officer, Quality NOTED that a full analysis of the survey is still to be completed.

5.5.1 Quality Enhancement Officer, Quality AGREED to find out if the question 'When my lecturer is away, suitable alternative arrangements are made' had been asked last year.

5.5.2 Head of Quality and Equalities NOTED that this year's learning and teaching survey had received 3,000 more responses than last year's survey. He NOTED that last year's survey did not cover all four campuses and that this year's survey provided a base line for the college.

5.5.3 The Committee Chair NOTED that this report puts the college in the bottom quartile. He asked for assurances that plans

have been put in place to help the college reach the top quartile.

Head of Quality and Equalities NOTED that such plans were included in the quality process looking at the organisational effectiveness of the college.

- 5.5.4 The Chair of the Board of Management NOTED that a benchmark should be established so we can identify any changes next year.
- 5.5.5 The Chair of the Board of Management NOTED that a lot of the areas in the fourth quartile were pedagogical and asked how the college would address these issues.
- 5.5.6 Quality Enhancement Officer, Quality NOTED that she had yet to receive the full data and AGREED to provide a full report at the next meeting.
- 5.5.7 Student President NOTED that she was disappointed with the responses and added that some of the concerns are reflected in the student report for Education Scotland.
- 5.5.8 Head of Quality and Equalities NOTED that the data is being analysed and that the key themes will be extracted from the data.
- 5.5.9 VP Educational Leadership NOTED that the data provided a broad agenda for improvement and it should be used as the basis for an action plan.
- 5.5.10 It was NOTED that the college needs to look at the comparative figures for HNC students over a three year period.
- 5.5.11 Committee Chair NOTED that this was a good debate which has identified clear messages for the Quality team. The Academic Council and the Academic Council sub-groups need to take this agenda forward in the next academic year.

VP Customer & Student Experience AGREED to action this.

Quality Enhancement Officer, Quality left the meeting.

6 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 Student Review Process

Head of Quality and Equalities NOTED that a student review is due to take place at the end of May 2014.

- 6.1.1 It was noted that the Student Review paper was a joint paper developed by the college and ECSA.
- 6.1.2 ECSA VP Education NOTED that students are trained by the quality enhancement team to undertake these reviews.
- 6.1.3 Head of Quality and Equalities NOTED that once the process has been approved it will be shared on the intranet and with programme managers. He confirmed that the review looks at the whole learning experience and is about identifying best practice within the college.
- 6.1.4 Teaching Staff Member NOTED that staff will feel threatened by the student review process. He added that the intranet is not a good way of communicating the process to staff and NOTED that further discussion was required.
- 6.1.5 Head of Quality and Equalities NOTED that he will speak to teams about the process.
- 6.1.6 The Chair of the Board of Management NOTED that such reviews protect staff against wrongful allegations and complaints.
- 6.1.7 Student President NOTED that formal complaints are dealt with separately through the complaints process.
- 6.1.8 The Committee Chair NOTED that two separate issues had been raised and were possibly causing confusion around the student review process. Formal complaints need to go through the proper complaints procedure. The review process is a separate process that is fundamentally about helping to improve the student experience at the college. He NOTED that the college needs to be clear that these are two separate things and asked for this to be made explicit in any communication with staff.
- 6.1.9 The Committee Chair acknowledged that the Teaching Staff Member was not happy with the Student Review Process.

6.1.10 The Committee APPROVED the Student Review Process with three conditions:

- The student review is to be used in a supportive manner
- Provide a clear explanation of the process to both staff and students
- Appropriate training needs to be provided

6.1.10 VP Customer & Student Experience AGREED to look at how the Academic Council and the sub groups could provide clear messages to staff and students about the role of the professional educator within the college.

The Chair of the Board of Management left the meeting.

6.2 Role of the LDTs

Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that LDTs were now in place across all campuses. She NOTED that the rationale for case load comes from the legacy college and it works out at 180-200 students per LDT (200 optimum for resources).

6.2.1 VP Customer & Student Experience NOTED that the college looks at the LDT case load year on year.

6.2.2 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that LDTs have moved from an historical pastoral role to a first point of call role. They focus on development of essential skills such as citizenship, sustainability and employability.

6.2.3 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that the role of the LDT has to be under constant review so it can react to the changing needs of students.

6.2.4 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that time with LDTs is a timetabled activity.

6.2.5 Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that the Leadership Team is currently discussing whether to provide second year HND students with an LDT. She also NOTED that the college is looking to provide a more structured timetable for LDTs.

6.3 Essential Skills Support for Learning

Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that they are currently undergoing the essential skills project. Two full time staff are implementing the project which will start in August 2014. The essential skills draft document will go to Leadership first and then to the Academic Council.

6.4 Curriculum Strategy Update

VP Educational Leadership NOTED that there had been no further development to the strategy since it was presented to the Board on the 29th April.

6.4.1 VP Educational Leadership NOTED that the curriculum strategy has now gone for wider consultation and there will be planned focus groups with staff over the next few weeks. The strategy has also been sent out to 60 key employers; all local authorities; community planning partners and HE partners. He expects to receive all feedback by the end of the month.

6.4.2 VP Educational Leadership NOTED that there will be a half day meeting taking place next week with heads and programme managers. They will be looking at phased curriculum changes over the next 3 to 4 years.

6.4.3 VP Educational Leadership NOTED that the associated curriculum review process will run over the next 3 – 4 weeks. Every course on the portfolio will go through the review and concrete proposals will be developed over the summer.

6.4.4 The Committee Chair NOTED that engagement with staff, students and employers are essential to a successful curriculum strategy.

6.4.5 It was NOTED that the college needs to make sure it can deliver good quality STEM courses.

6.4.6 VP Educational Leadership NOTED that the college is leading on STEM at Midlothian and is looking to encourage more students into STEM. The college has put a proposal to the Funding Council for a curriculum model that focusses on STEM from S4 onwards.

ECSA VP Education left the meeting at this point.

6.4.7 VP Educational Leadership AGREED to discuss IT funding opportunities with Jane Richardson after the meeting.

- 6.4.8 It was NOTED that students had received conditional offers for an admin course at Sighthill and Milton Road. The course now no longer runs at Sighthill and there were concerns that students would either not be able to get a place or be unable to attend at Milton Road. VP Educational Leadership AGREED to look into this issue.

7 UPDATES

7.1 ECSA Update

Student President NOTED that 18 candidates were standing for election.

- 7.1.1 Student President NOTED that ECSA had received a lot of positive feedback on the Education Scotland Student Association Report.
- 7.1.2 Student President NOTED that a lot of work had been put into ECSA VP Education's report 'Engaging Vocational Students in Post 16 Education (Imagine)'. She noted that the report had reached demographics that ECSA would not normally reach and that it was carried out in partnership with NUS Scotland to produce a formal evidence based report.

The Committee Chair NOTED that it was a very good piece of work.

ECSA VP Education entered the meeting at this point.

- 7.1.3 VP Customer & Student Experience NOTED that 'Engaging Vocational Students in Post 16 Education (Imagine)' will go to the ECSA Engagement meeting for discussion.
- 7.1.4 The Committee Chair NOTED that there is a lot of information being produced by the college (SAR; ECSA's report; learning and teaching survey). He NOTED that the key messages need to be taken from the documents and actions put in place.

7.2 Sub Group Reports

- 7.2.1 Quality Support Officer, Quality & Administration NOTED that the sub-group had held discussions on how to challenge unacceptable behaviour. A training resource has been created using scripts written by students and will be used at the staff day.
- 7.2.2 Lecturer, Institute of Construction & Building Crafts NOTED the launch of the envision magazine and advised that another sub-group meeting would take place next week.

8 FOR INFORMATION

8.1 ECSA Engagement Minute

Nothing.

8.2 SAR

The Committee Chair NOTED that it was a good document.

8.3 Envision Project

Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching NOTED that the envision project is now available on the intranet for staff. It provides information from all of the support departments in bite size pieces that do not take any longer than 6 minutes to complete (demonstrations / workshops / short videos).

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Annual Evaluation

Clerk to update the Annual Evaluation form with all comments received from Members.

9.2 Student President NOTED that this was the last meeting for the current ECSA sabbatical team. She thanked the Committee for working with the Students' Association.

The Committee Chair thanked the ECSA sabbatical team for their excellent contribution throughout the year and wished them good luck in their future careers.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is now scheduled for **Friday 19 September 2014** at 2pm, Milton Road Campus.

The meeting closed at 1615 hrs.