



For the future you want

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING OF 15 NOVEMBER 2019

14:00hrs, Boardroom, Granton Campus

Present: Laura Craig; Audrey Cumberland; Carla Ford; Ethelinda Lashley-Scott; Neil Manning; Kevin Maloney; Sandra Morrison; Ryan Quinn; Fiona Riddoch (Chair)

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Nick Croft; Kerry Heathcote; Monica Hoenigmann; Ann Landels; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Iris Aitchison, Mike Cowley, Seoras Hearton, Julian Henderson, Judith Sischy, Jeanette Stevenson; and Shannon Young.
- 1.2 The Committee NOTED that, due to unforeseen circumstances, the Academic Council did not have a quorum of members present. The Committee Chair informed members that, in line with the Standing Orders of the Edinburgh College Board of Management, the meeting would proceed and should any approval of documentation be required the Committee would require ratification at the next meeting of the Board on 10 December.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Ann Landels, Interim Chair of the Board, to the Academic Council.
- 1.4 The Committee NOTED that a fourth student representative would be confirmed by ECSA once its new Executive Group had been established. The Chair advised the Committee that it was hoped that a fourth student representative would be present at its next meeting of the Committee.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were received.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes of the Academic Council from 13 September 2019 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 MATTERS ARISING REPORT

- 4.1.1 Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda, with the exception of the following:

4.1.2 ENHANCE AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT (*Minute 4.3.4/13.09.19 refers*)

The Committee NOTED that an update on the performance management frameworks in place at the College had been provided to the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee on 09 October. The Chair advised the Committee that the Head of HR & OD had indicated that the College is planning a relaunch of Enhance in 2020 and which would include further promotion to all staff,

4.1.3 COUNSELLING AND SAFEGUARDING (*Minute 6.1.6/ 13.09.19 refers*)

The Committee NOTED that, at the Academic Council's request, a presentation on counselling and safeguarding arrangements would be presented to the Board at its meeting on 24 March 2020.

5 COLLEGE SATISFACTION SURVEYS

5.1 INDUCTION SURVEY 2019/20 UPDATE

- 5.1.1 The Committee NOTED that the 2019/20 Induction Survey had closed on 01 November, and the results and recommendations arising would be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Council on 28 February.

- 5.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the ongoing analysis of survey data, and welcomed the breakdown of information to provide feedback for individual cohorts.

6 STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

6.1 ECSA CLASS REPS UPDATE

- 6.1.1 The Committee NOTED that 587 Class Reps had been registered by ECSA, compared to 500 at the same point last year. The ECSA Student President advised the Committee that over 280 Class Reps had received training, and it was hoped that the remainder of students would be trained before the first Class Reps Conference commenced on the week commencing 25 November.

- 6.1.2 The Committee NOTED that reports from the four Class Reps conferences would be presented to the Academic Council at its meetings in February and May 2020.

The Head of Student Experience joined the meeting

6.2 STUDENT EXPERIENCE UPDATE

- 6.2.1 The Committee NOTED a report on developments to improve the experience and retention of students, since the last meeting of the Academic Council in September.
- 6.2.2 The Committee NOTED that the Scottish Government had confirmed funding to support Scottish Colleges in providing student counselling services. The Head of Student Experience advised the Committee that the College would receive £122,000, and that this would help support the work of the Wellbeing Team going forward.
- 6.2.3 The Committee NOTED that the Student Experience Team continued to be challenged with the volume and complexity of students' additional support requirements. The Head of Student Experience highlighted, as an example, that 585 students studying at the Sighthill Campus required personal learning plans.
- 6.2.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the impact of additional support needs on assessments, and the difficulties providing invigilation support. The Head of Curriculum Planning & Performance advised the Committee that the College had challenged the SQA on their guidance around invigilation support to address such issues. The Committee AGREED that a further update on exam invigilation for those with additional support needs would be provided to a future meeting.

7 HOW GOOD IS OUR COLLEGE? REPORT

7.1 HOW GOOD IS OUR COLLEGE? UPDATE

- 7.1.1 The Committee NOTED the Edinburgh College Quality Enhancement Plan 2018-21 (QUEP), and reviewed progress against the areas of improvement highlighted within the Plan. The Head of Curriculum Planning & Performance outlined the primary drivers of the Enhancement Plan, which included: recruitment; retention; attainment; student satisfaction; learning, teaching and assessment; work-integrated learning; and, future proofing of the College curriculum.
- 7.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the Foundation & Modern Apprenticeship provision at the College, and NOTED that the increase in enrolments on Foundation Apprenticeships was significant.

The Principal & Chief Executive joined the meeting

7.2 REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

- 7.2.1 The Committee NOTED information pertaining to the recently submitted Edinburgh College Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) Self-Evaluation Report, and the

associated Short-Term Action Plan. The Head of Curriculum Planning & Performance advised the Committee that both the SFC and Education Scotland were content with the submitted document.

- 7.2.2 The Committee NOTED that, as part of current quality arrangements, colleges were required to produce an annual Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP). However, for the academic year 2018/19, colleges were not required to produce the EREP and would instead receive a progress visit from Education Scotland and the SFC to determine progress against the 2017/18 Enhancement Plan. The Head of Curriculum Planning & Performance advised the Committee that it was expected that following an initial engagement visit with Education Scotland on 02 December, the date of the College's progress visit in 2020 would be confirmed.
- 7.2.3 The Committee NOTED the ROA Self-Evaluation Report focused on the following four high-level Outcome Agreement priorities: Recruitment; Retention; Attainment; and, Progression.
- 7.2.4 The Committee NOTED that the College had graded itself 'Unsatisfactory' in the priority areas of Retention and Attainment for 2018/19. The Head of Curriculum Planning & Performance informed the Committee that the proportion of FTFE students aged 16-19 successfully completing their course was a serious concern, as 53.5% of this cohort had failed to complete.
- 7.2.5 The Committee DISCUSSED the challenges and priorities of the College to improve in the areas of retention and attainment. The Committee NOTED that progress against the Short-Term Action Plan was being reviewed regularly by the Senior Management Team. The Committee AGREED that it would, on behalf of the Board, continue to monitor the progress of the College against the high-level priorities outlined in the ROA.
- 7.2.6 The Committee DISCUSSED the roles of Curriculum Leads and Curriculum Managers in the self-evaluation process, and NOTED that there was currently no forum for Curriculum Leaders across the College to meet and share best practice. The Committee AGREED that the Head of Curriculum Planning & Performance should look to progress this matter and feedback to the Academic Council in due course.

8 A HIGH PERFORMING DIGITAL COLLEGE

The Learning Technology & Resources Manager joined the meeting

8.1 DIGITAL STRATEGY 2020-2025 UPDATE

- 8.1.1 The Committee NOTED a presentation on the development of a new Digital Strategy for the College. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning and Performance advised the Committee that the Digital Strategy 2020-2025 would position the College to be a UK leader in digital learning, teaching and operations, with data driven innovation at its core.

- 8.1.2 The Committee NOTED that a process of consultation had taken place with managers and staff across the College, and had yielded 232 unique responses which had been distilled into three strategic themes. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning and Performance advised the Committee that the three strategic themes were: (i) Digital and Data Skills for Staff and Student; (ii) Data Driven Innovation for Transformational Services; and, (iii) Developing a Resilient Digital Infrastructure.
- 8.1.3 The Committee welcomed the presentation provided by the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning and Performance, and DISCUSSED the following points:
- (i) The training and CPD available to staff to develop their digital skills further;
 - (ii) maximising the effective use of Microsoft Office 365 across the College;
 - (iii) the use of personal devices by students, and the need to encourage a 'bring your own device' culture;
 - (iv) the continued sharing of digital best across the College;
 - (v) the potential for 'paperless' assessments, and the requirement of the SQA that assessments be completed on paper.
- 8.1.4 The Committee NOTED that a Draft Digital Strategy 2020-2025 would be presented to the Board on 10 December - for approval.

8.2 MOODLE USAGE REPORT

- 8.2.1 The Committee NOTED a statistical overview of usage, access and engagement with Moodle, the Edinburgh College virtual learning environment (VLE), in 2018/19. The Learning Technology and Resources Manager advised the Committee that the provided an online education platform which could be used to create lessons, manage courses, upload material, host assessments, and as a communication medium.
- 8.2.2 The Committee NOTED that approximately 74% of student had accessed Moodle within the last 90 days, whilst 87% of timetabled staff were also active users. The Learning Technology and Resources Manager informed the Committee that there had been a significant increase over the past four years of users accessing Moodle through mobile and tablet devices. Further to this, the Committee NOTED that desktop usage of Moodle (in Semester 1) had decrease from 84.7% in 2016/17 to 71.7% in 2019/20 (year-to-date).
- 8.2.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the following in relation to Moodle and its usage across the college:
- (i) Improvements to the hosting of the VLE and the confidence this had given staff and students in the platform;
 - (ii) the extent to which Moodle usage can continue to grow, and ways best practice could be encouraged through the VLE;
 - (iii) the number of course complaints relating to lecturers not using Moodle;
 - (iv) the geographic access of Moodle, with a number of students accessing Moodle outside the UK.

8.2.4 The Committee NOTED that Moodle did not run on Microsoft Internet Explorer, which was currently the College's default web browser. The Committee AGREED that the College should look to change the default web browser to ensure that access to Moodle was not impeded.

8.2.5 The Committee welcomed the update provided and NOTED that it would continue to receive an annual report on Moodle usage across the College.

The Learning Technology & Resources Manager left the meeting

9 HORIZON SCANNING REPORT

9.1 The Committee NOTED a Horizon Scanning Report which outlined major political, economic, social, technological, legal and/or environmental developments that could impact on the five strategic plan aims of the college. The Head of Communications, Policy and Research advised the Committee that further to this, the report also indicated what the College was doing to address these impacts.

9.2 The Committee AGREED that the Horizon Scanning Report would be placed higher on the agenda for the next meeting of the Academic Council, to allow for a more detailed discussion around key points of interest. Further to this, the Committee AGREED that the Head of Communications, Policy and Research should prepare a brief presentation, for its next meeting, focusing on key items within the report of relevance to the Academic Council.

10 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10.1 'I LIKE, I WISH AND I WONDER' EXERCISE

10.1.1 The Committee NOTED a consolidated list of points raised through the 'I like, I wish and I wonder' exercise conducted at the last meeting of the Academic Council. The Chair welcomed the positive comments provided by members in relation to the Academic Council's diverse membership, open discussions and its well-planned agendas.

10.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the broad themes outlined in the report and AGREED that points raised under 'I wish' and 'I wonder' should be incorporated into the agenda planner for future meetings. The Chair advised the Committee that, as requested by members, future agendas would aim to include items of business focused on the academic staff experience.

10.2 ACADEMIC COUNCIL AGENDA PLANNER 2019/20

10.2.1 The Committee NOTED an agenda planner for the academic year, which aimed to provide members with an opportunity to review upcoming items of business.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The next meeting of the Academic Council will take place on 28 February 2020, in the Boardroom, Sighthill Campus.

The meeting closed at 16:00