

## LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF MEETING OF 8 SEPTEMBER 2023

Meeting held in via Microsoft Teams, 14:00hrs

**Present:** Annette Chapman; Jon Craig; Lorraine Farquharson; Daniel Holland; Ross Laird (Chair); Liz McIntyre; Luna Morrison; Carole Paterson; Ryan Quinn.

**In attendance:** Jon Buglass; Gail Graham; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

#### 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were NOTED from Hunia Arshad, Audrey Cumberland, Becky Duff, Skye Marriner, and Eleanor Sim.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Luna Morrison (ECSA Vice President Welfare) and Jon Craig (ECSA Vice President Activities) to the Committee as co-opted members, following their re-appointment and appointment – respectively – as sabbatical officers on 1 July 2023.

#### 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 LTSE Committee 19 May 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT

- 4.1 The Committee NOTED that actions from the previous meeting were either complete, overtaken or on the agenda.

- 4.2 ***Health & Wellbeing Strategy [Ref. 6.1.3/19.05.23]***

The Committee NOTED a proposal from the Chair to hold an in-person workshop on 17 November 2023 focussing on the development of a new Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The Committee DISCUSSED the proposal and AGREED that it would welcome an opportunity to conduct a long-form discussion, in a similar manner to the Curriculum Strategy Workshop held on 19

May 2023. The Chair confirmed that the Clerk would contact members of the Committee directly to confirm arrangements for the in-person event.

4.3 ***Education Scotland 'You said, we did' Communications [Ref. 8.5/19.05.23]***

The Committee NOTED a recommendation related to the communication of the 2022/23 Education Scotland Action Plan. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that communications relating to a series of improvements implemented by the College in response to the 2022 Education Scotland Progress Visit would be disseminated prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

## 5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

5.1 The Committee NOTED that the Code of Good Governance dictated that committees of the Board should regularly review their terms of reference to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

5.2 The Committee DISCUSSED its terms of reference and AGREED that its purpose and remit remained appropriate. The Chair advised the Committee that a Board Effectiveness Review was expected to take place in the coming months, and it was hoped that the Review would consider current LTSE Committee membership arrangements and the roles of attendees.

## 6. EDUCATION SCOTLAND PROGRESS VISIT

6.1 The Committee NOTED an Education Scotland Progress Visit Report published on 15 August 2023, following a progress visit held on the week commencing 12 June 2023. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised the Committee that the progress visit aligned with arrangements published in Education Scotland's External Quality Assurance, Engagement and Enhancement Guidance for Academic Year 2022/23.

6.2 The Committee NOTED the outcome of the progress visit which indicated that the College had made 'Satisfactory' progress overall, with further progress required in several areas. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement informed the Committee that Education Scotland had acknowledged the College's considerable progress on its improvement journey, with numerous examples of positive progress across quality indicators and successes relating to recruitment, retention, attainment, and progression.

6.3 The Committee NOTED that, although significant progress had been illustrated, there were three main points of action outlined by Education Scotland within the Report:

- (i) Senior managers should ensure consistency in approaches to collaboration between staff in curriculum and support services to improve overall rates of learner retention and attainment.

- (ii) Managers should take action to address rates of learner retention and attainment on FE level programmes, and in subject areas, where they are low.
  - (iii) Managers should support staff to improve the consistency and quality of self-evaluation to inform college-wide action planning for improvement.
- 6.4 The Committee welcomed the 'Satisfactory' outcome outlined in the Progress Visit Report and DISCUSSED the both the main points of action highlighted by Education Scotland and other specific areas of development outlined, including:
- (i) The Report as a fair reflection of the position of the College with regards to both the progress made and the improvements highlighted.
  - (ii) The issue of consistency, as outlined in the Report, and the challenges presented given the size of Edinburgh College and wide range of courses it provides.
  - (iii) The need to improve consistency across curriculum teams through the sharing of best practice and adherence to the self-evaluation protocol, whilst also creating safe spaces for teams to openly discuss approaches to learning, teaching, assessment, and student engagement.
  - (iv) The development of a new 2023/24 Progress Visit Action Plan based on the recommendations outlined within the Report.
  - (v) The communication of the Progress Visit Report to staff and students and, as outlined under Minute 4.3, the need to clearly outline any enhancements made to practice at the College.
  - (vi) The need to ensure that the College continues to improve across all areas outlined in the Progress Visit Report, to support the College's ambition to be sector leading.
- 6.5 The Committee AGREED that a new Progress Visit Action Plan would be presented to the next meeting of the LTSE Committee. The Chair advised the Committee that progress against recommendations would continue to be monitored throughout the academic year.
- 6.6 The Committee NOTED its thanks to all College staff (approx. 100) who participated in meetings and professional discussions with the Education Scotland Review Team, which included HMI Inspectors and Associate Assessors, over a four-day period. The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement, and her Team, for their endeavours to ensure the Progress Visit was a success.

## **7. CURRICULUM STRATEGY 2022-25**

- 7.1 The Committee NOTED that, at its meeting on 19 May 2023, it had held a workshop event specifically focussed on the development of a new Curriculum Strategy. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that following the consideration of feedback and guidance from members a Curriculum Strategy 2022-25 had been drafted for review by the LTSE Committee, prior to its presentation to the Board of Management for approval on 26 September 2023.
- 7.2 The Committee NOTED that the refreshed Curriculum Strategy aimed to demonstrate how the College would deliver a curriculum that addressed skills

gaps, met the needs of employers and community stakeholder and, in doing so, contributed to the economic and social needs of the region. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that the Strategy aimed to drive changes to the estate, reverse the downward trend in enrolments and move the College towards a more sustainable position.

7.3 The Committee welcomed the Curriculum Strategy 2022-25 and the accompanying 'Strategy on a Page' slide provided by the Vice Principal Education & Skills. The Committee DISCUSSED the following points in relation to the draft Strategy:

- (i) The succinctness and accessibility of the strategic document.
- (ii) The clear links outlined with feedback provided during the LTSE Committee workshop session in May 2023.
- (iii) Cross-links between the new Strategy and points raised within the Education Scotland Progress Report, for instance, the sharing of best practice across the curriculum teams.
- (iv) The development of curriculum planning practices and the timely implementation of frameworks for enhanced outcomes.
- (v) The potential for AI to drastically change education and the need to capture this in future mid to long-term planning.
- (vi) The guidance provided by the Strategy on the College's approach to integrated curriculum services.
- (vii) The Strategy's ambition to address poverty across the City of Edinburgh, Midlothian, and East Lothian.

7.4 The Committee NOTED that the Senior Management Team would meet on 13 September 2023 to consider interdependencies between the five strategic pillars (Curriculum; Finance; People; Commercial; Digital). The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that the Curriculum Strategy underpinned each of the pillar strategies and was central to the overall success of the Edinburgh College Strategic Plan.

7.5 The Committee AGREED to endorse the Curriculum Strategy 2022-25 to the Board of Management, for approval.

***Ryan Quinn left the meeting***

## **8. STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT**

### **8.1 STUDENT EXPERIENCE UPDATE**

8.1.1 The Committee NOTED an update from the Student Experience Team, as provided by the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance.

8.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the Student Funding Team had processed a significant number of bursary applications over recent weeks, with the current turnaround time for applications approximately 10 working days. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance informed the Committee that current waiting times for the processing of applications were positive and would support student retention figures in Semester 1.

- 8.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the difficult decision not to fill some vacant posts across the College and utilise savings to support the continuation of vital wellbeing and counselling services, where regular funding had not been established in AY 2022/23.
- 8.1.4 The Committee NOTED that Learning Development Tutor (LDT) staffing levels were currently lower than expected and any gaps would be filled as required. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that, in the short-term, the College was currently working to fill a vacant part-time LDT Team Leader post.
- 8.1.5 The Committee DISCUSSED safety concerns relating to the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in schools, colleges and universities and its potential impact on the student experience. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance informed the Committee that the SFC and College Staff had been informed that RAAC was present in the following areas of the Sighthill Campus: print room, stores, automotive workshops, and electrical workshops.
- 8.1.6 The Committee NOTED that restrictions placed on affected areas would remain in place while further structural assessments were undertaken. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance highlighted to the Committee that the College was doing all it could to minimise disruption for all student and staff users of the affected areas.
- 8.2 EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION UPDATE
  - 8.2.1 The Committee NOTED the ECSA Priority Objectives for the academic year 2023/24. The Chair informed the Committee that the ECSA Priority Objectives would be considered by the Board of Management at its next meeting on 26 September 2023.

## **9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

- 9.1 ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE
  - 9.1.1 The Committee NOTED its thanks to the Acting Assistant Principal Student Experience, Nicola MacKenzie, who had acted in the role for almost 16 months. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that Ms McKenzie would be leaving the College next month to join the University of Edinburgh.
  - 9.1.2 The Committee NOTED that Anna Vogt, the new Assistant Principal Student Experience, would be joining the College on 19 September 2023. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance informed the Committee that the new Assistant Principal Student Experience would attend the next meeting of the Committee to participate in discussion around the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and update on all other relevant matters relating to the Student Experience.

9.2 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK

9.2.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the 2023/24 academic year.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10.1 The next meeting of the LTSE Committee will take place on 17 November 2023.

***Meeting closed at 15:20***