

## STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE

### APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING OF 26 MAY 2025



Meeting held via Microsoft Teams, 12:00hrs

**Present:** Audrey Cumberford; Becky Duff; Alan Holligan; Alex Killick (Interim Chair); Adam Lowe; Ian McLaughlan; Kate Signorini; Charlie Whitson; Andrew Youngson (Co-opted Member)

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

#### 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Eleanor Sim (Non-Executive), Mark Sheridan (Non-Executive) and Anna Vogt (Assistant Principal Student Experience).
- 1.2 The Interim Chair welcomed new Non-Executive Board Member, Kate Signorini, to her first meeting of the Student Success Committee. The Committee NOTED that Ms Signorini was expected to become Chair of the Student Success Committee for the Academic Year 2025/26.
- 1.3 The Interim Chair welcomed Andrew Youngson to his first meeting as a Co-opted Member. The Committee NOTED that Mr Youngson was currently employed by Queen Margaret University and had recent experience working for both the SFC and CodeBase.

#### 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 Student Success Committee on 6 March 2025 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, with the following exception.
- 4.2 *STUDENT GYM MEMBERSHIP PRICING [Ref. 7.6/06.03.25]*

The Committee NOTED that membership pricing at The Club had been discussed by the Finance, Business Development & Resources Committee on 25 May 2025, with the Vice Principal Corporate Development confirming that a pricing review would take place before the start of the new academic year.

## 5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 5.1 The Committee NOTED that, further to discussions held at its last meeting, several revisions to the Student Success Committee's Terms of Reference were proposed for Members' consideration. The Interim Chair informed the Committee that the revised document now included reference to internal sub-groups and the need to consider the 'added value' of the College experience.
- 5.2 The Committee welcomed the proposed additions and DISCUSSED the Terms of Reference. The Committee AGREED to endorse the Terms of Reference to the Board of Management, subject to the reference to 'social' impact (Paragraph 3.4) being changed to 'societal'.

## 6. TERTIARY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK (TQEF) UPDATE

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED a presentation from the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance on arrangements for an Institution-Led Quality Review (ILQR), a core competent of the TQEF, which would allow the College to demonstrate its commitment to quality enhancement. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance outlined the ILQR process, associated governance arrangements, and the potential benefits and challenges of the Review.
- 6.2 The Committee NOTED that the ILQR would take place in the academic year 2025/26 and DISCUSSED the following:
- (i) The roles and responsibilities of both the SFC and the QAA in the new review process.
  - (ii) The 2025/26 ILQR and the expected external review in 2026/27.
  - (iii) The autonomy available to the College around the ILQR, and the need to place stakeholders at the centre of the Review.
  - (iv) The challenges around staff buy-in and the workload placed on the Students' Association to actively participate in the process.
  - (v) The role of the Student Success Committee in supporting and monitoring the process and its outcomes.
  - (vi) Maximising the benefits of an institutional-led review to ensure that the process directly informed enhancements and was not a 'tick-box' exercise.
- 6.3 The Committee NOTED that it would have a key role in reviewing the ILQR Report, approving an accompanying action plan, and monitoring annual progress against actions.

## 6. ECSA STUDENT LIFE SURVEY 2025

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED the 2025 ECSA Student Life Survey, which focussed on aspects of student life including housing, finances, and travel. The ECSA Student President advised the Committee that this year's Survey also included several questions on belonging and students' general experiences at the College.
- 6.2 The Committee NOTED that the Survey was launched in February 2025 and opened for a period of six weeks, The ECSA Student President informed the

Committee that 905 survey responses had been received, which was the highest return rate for an ECSA student survey.

6.3 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to view the survey results and NOTED the following key headlines:

- (i) Most respondents felt safe and happy in their current living situation.
- (ii) Most respondents felt that they belong at Edinburgh College.
- (iii) Most respondents felt that Edinburgh College was a welcoming place.
- (iv) Most respondents have access to a digital device that they could use for online learning.
- (v) Most respondents felt positive about the College's facilities.

6.4 The Committee NOTED that, although responses overall were positive, students expressed concerns relating to the challenges they faced due to the Edinburgh Housing Emergency (as declared by the City of Edinburgh Council in November 2023). The Student President advised the Committee that difficulties with finances, precarious living situations and long commutes were damaging to students' mental health, wellbeing, and their ability to study.

6.5 The Committee DISCUSSED the following in relation to the ECSA Student Life Survey:

- (i) The excellent, and rich, data provided through the Survey.
- (ii) The degree to which the Survey reflected the demographics of the student body, and the need to capture more data from Milton Road and Midlothian based students.
- (iii) National campaigning by NUS Scotland around student housing.
- (iv) The data provided and how it could be linked to future student recruitment and retention.
- (v) The issues raised by students relating to on-campus WI-FI, and how this was being responded to.

6.6 The Committee DISCUSSED the disparity in financial support accessible to students studying at colleges and universities. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance informed the Committee that although considerable work had been done to connect tertiary education (e.g. TQEF), there remained a gap between approaches towards student funding.

6.7 The Committee NOTED that the Survey Report would be considered by the Senior Management Team (and other relevant internal College groups) in due course, then published on the ECSA website. The Interim Chair, on behalf of the Committee, recommended that ECSA try to promote the Survey results, and any actions arising, as widely as possible through a 'you said, we did' approach.

## **7. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION REPORT**

7.1 The Committee NOTED an overview of the performance of the College against its 2024/25 activity target. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that the SFC had set the College a total activity target of 164,857 credits for the academic year.

- 7.2 The Committee NOTED that the credits position of the College, as of 26 May 2025, was 161,715 (98.1% of activity target). The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that planned Semester 2 activity was expected to take the credit total further past the 98% credits threshold.
- 7.3 The Committee NOTED that full-time recruitment for the academic year 2025/26 was up on the previous year for both Further Education and Higher Education. The Vice Principal Education & Skills informed the Committee that in 2025/26 reporting to the Committee would focus on recruitment and retention trends and what it meant for the College.

## **8. COLLEGE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023/24**

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED that the SFC were expected to publish 2023/24 college performance indicators on the week commencing 2 June 2025. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that, in line with its Strategic Plan, the College aimed to be in the upper quartile for student success.
- 8.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the required percentage to achieve the top quartile across all modes of study and NOTED that the College would be astute to review its targets - once 2023/24 college indicators had been published. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement informed the Committee that national reporting mechanisms were expected to change and therefore a review of targets would also recognise these changes.
- 8.3 The Committee AGREED that 2023/24 college performance indicators should be circulated to Members - once they were published by the SFC. The Committee AGREED that the Senior Management Team should consider and approve the College's updated student success targets and present them to the Committee at its next meeting - for endorsement.

## **9. COLLEGE LEAVERS DESTINATION OUTCOMES REPORT**

- 9.1 The Committee NOTED a report on the results of the College Leaver Destination Survey 2022/23. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised the Committee that the SFC required all colleges to carry out the Survey, with information being gathered from a range of sources including internal college data, UCAS and feedback from a telephone survey.
- 9.2 The Committee NOTED that data had successfully been collated from 83% of the targeted 4,183 leavers. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement highlighted that the number of students achieving a positive destination stood at 97%, the same as the previous year.
- 9.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the results of the College Leaver Destination Survey 2022/23. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised the Committee that although 3% of College leavers had not achieved a 'positive destination' as defined by the SFC, this outcome showed parity with many other colleges across the sector.

- 9.4 The Interim Chair welcomed the report and highlighted the positive impact of the College in preparing students for their next step in life, whether it be continued education or employment.

## **10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

### **10.1 ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK APPETITE STATEMENTS**

- 10.1.1 The Committee NOTED that it was good practice for boards of management to review their risk appetite statements on an annual basis. The Clerk advised the Committee that, given that the College's Risk Appetite Statements were agreed in October 2023, and reviewed in June 2024, it had been decided that a light touch review would take place in the current academic year – with committees of the Board reviewing statements within their remit.
- 10.1.2 The Committee NOTED the two relevant statements relating to the Student Success Committee would be circulated to Members to consider the levels of risk appetite indicated. The Interim Chair advised the Committee that Members were invited to submit any comments or queries relating to the statements to the Clerk via email.

### **10.2 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2024/25**

- 10.2.1 The Committee NOTED that no formal review of committee operation was planned for the academic year, as the Student Success Committee had only held two meetings. The Interim Chair invited the Committee to feedback any comments or suggestions to the Interim Chair and/or Clerk via email.

### **10.3 DEPARTURE OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- 10.3.1 The Committee NOTED that the one-year term of Student Sabbatical Officer, Charlie Whitson, would end on 30 June 2025. The Interim Chair, on behalf of the Committee thanked the ECSA Vice President Activities for their contribution to the Committee over the past year.

## **11. FOR INFORMATION**

### **11.1 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2025/26**

- 11.1.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the academic year 2025/26.

## **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 12.1 The next meeting of the Student Success Committee shall be held on 13 November 2025.

***The meeting closed at 13:30***