

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING OF 28 MARCH 2023

Meeting held in the Boardroom, Granton Campus

Start time: 14:00

Present: Bruce Cassidy; Sue Cook; Audrey Cumberland; Stewart Darling; Becky Duff; Fiona Doring; David Elder; Daniel Holland; Alex Killick; Ross Laird; Skye Marriner; Kerry McCormack; Liz McIntyre; Ian McLaughlan; Gwen Raez; Nora Senior (Chair); Eleanor Sim; Bill Troup

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Michael Jeffrey; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson

Observer(s): Kevin Dixon; Donny Gluckstein

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1.1 The Board NOTED that no apologies were received.
- 1.1.2 The Board NOTED that Sue Cook, Becky Duff, and Kevin Dixon had joined the meeting remotely, via Microsoft Teams.
- 1.1.3 The Chair welcomed Sue Cook, Liz McIntyre, Eleanor Sim and Bill Troup to the meeting following their appointment to the Board of Management as Non-Executive Members on 1 March 2023.
- 1.1.4 The Chair welcomed both EIS-FELA and Unison representatives, Donny Gluckstein and Kevin Dixon – respectively, to the meeting as observers. The Board NOTED that trade union representatives would remain as observers until the Code of Good Governance for Scotland’s Colleges had been updated to confirm legislative changes to Board membership arrangements.
- 1.1.5 The Board NOTED that Nina Munday (Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Lead), would join the meeting for Item 7, to present the Equalities Outcome & Mainstreaming Progress Report.
- 1.1.6 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked David Hiddleston (Curriculum Manager, Data Driven Innovation Skills Gateway) for his presentation prior

to the Board of Management on curriculum development related to the DDI Skill Gateway.

1.2 CHAIR OF THE BOARD'S UPDATE

1.2.1 The Board NOTED an update from the Chair of the Board on recent developments considered by the Colleges Scotland Board, including the continued financial challenges facing the college sector.

1.2.2 The Board NOTED that a report had recently been published outlining the conclusions of the College Regionalisation Inquiry, as undertaken by the Scottish Government's Education, Children and Young People Committee. The Chair advised the Board that the report considered the lessons learnt from Regionalisation over the past decade, with a view to understanding how it could inform future change within the college sector.

1.3 COLLEGE AWARDS

1.3.1 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, acknowledged recent national awards won by the College since the last meeting of the Board. The Board NOTED and commended the following award winners and nominees:

- (i) The College won the Responsible Business of the Year Award at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Awards for its work alongside ECSA in supporting students through the Cost-of-Living crisis.
- (ii) Professional Cookery student, John Michael Kochev, and lecturer Jack Evans, both won prizes at the Young Chef Olympiad, which was held in India in January 2023.
- (iii) Edina Ecosse Racing, the College's Motor Racing team, has won team of the year at this year's Scottish Motor Racing Club (SMRC) Awards Dinner.
- (iv) Broadcast Media lecturer Ravi Sagoo was shortlisted at the National Broadcast Awards for his work on the BBC programme, The Glasgow Mela 2022.
- (v) Community-based ESOL volunteer, Sally Griffiths, has recently been selected as one of four ESOL volunteer champions in Scotland by the National Association of Teaching English and Community Languages.
- (vi) The College won three awards and two commendations at the College Development Network Awards. The College was named winners in the Digital Learning, Inclusive College and Skills Development categories as well as being highly commended in Sustainability Action and commended in Digital Learning.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SCHEDULED MEETING

- 3.1 The Board APPROVED the minutes from 13 December 2022 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT

4.1 MATTERS ARISING UPDATE

- 4.1.1 The Board NOTED that actions from its previous meeting(s) were complete, overtaken or on the agenda.

4.1.2 COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS [REF. MINUTE 5.9/13.12.22]

The Board NOTED that the College had been invited by Shell Plc. to progress a formal tender for funding support by 31 March 2023. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Board that due diligence would be undertaken by the contracting team as the process progressed. Further to this, the Vice Principal Corporate Development highlighted that an update on due diligence procedures in relation to external partnerships would be provided at the next meeting of the Corporate Development Committee.

4.1.3 DISCRETIONARY FUNDING [REF. MINUTE 8.4.1/13.12.22]

The Board NOTED that the College had received an additional allocation of £526,758 of FE Discretionary funds. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Board that the additional allocation of funding was welcomed and would be administered in line with current SFC FE Discretionary Fund Guidance.

The Board DISCUSSED student counselling service funding and NOTED that there were currently no funds available for such provision in the academic year 2023/24. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that this was a major concern, as the repercussions of not having a Student Counselling Service would be felt across the College and would have a negative impact on both the student and staff experience.

The Board NOTED that, in response to lobbying from the college sector, it was hoped that additional funding would be identified to support counselling services, however, this could not be guaranteed and will not be known until the publication of the SFC's Indicative Funding Allocation. The Board AGREED that an update on student counselling service funding should be provided to the Board once the SFC's Indicative Funding Allocation had been published.

5. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 5.1 The Board NOTED an update on activities undertaken by the College since its last meeting on 13 December 2023, and progress against its strategic key performance indicators. The Principal outlined to the Board the significant financial challenges

facing both the College and the sector as a whole and the process currently underway to secure savings and to implement a focused re-shaping of curriculum.

- 5.2 The Board NOTED a letter submitted to the Board by the local EIS-FELA Branch relating to the voluntary severance consultation process, which the Chair of the Board had agreed to table at the meeting. The Chair advised the Board that the letter also outlined that a survey had recently been carried out by the EIS-FELA Branch which highlighted allegations of bullying.
- 5.3 The Board NOTED a concise appraisal of the letter by the Lecturing Staff Board Member and the EIS-FELA Observer, which outlined EIS-FELA Branch Members primary concerns. The Board DISCUSSED the following in response to the points highlighted by the Lecturing Staff Board Member:
- (i) The position of the college sector in relation to Scottish Government Public Pay Policy guidance on compulsory redundancies.
 - (ii) The need to ensure that the College culture continues to provide a safe and supportive environment for all staff and students.
 - (iii) The rationale of continuing to accept voluntary severance applications even though 98% of in-year savings target had been achieved.
 - (iv) The need to ensure that the College was 'the right size and shape' to remain financially sustainable.
 - (v) The challenges of undertaking a targeted voluntary severance scheme at an organisation the size of Edinburgh College.
 - (v) The continuation of lobbying activities by the College, ECSA and EIS-FELA to ensure that the college sector is appropriately funded.
 - (vi) Communications to the Board surrounding the voluntary severance consultation and the important oversight role of the Board in providing constructive challenge to senior management.
- 5.4 The Board AGREED to reiterate its commitment to avoiding compulsory redundancies – if possible. Further to this, the Board AGREED that it would continue to engage with recognised trade unions to find innovative solutions to both the immediate challenges and those facing the College over the longer term.
- 5.5 The Board DISCUSSED the survey carried out by the EIS-FELA Branch and AGREED that the findings would be presented to the Local Negotiating Committee at its next meeting. The Board AGREED that both the Senior Management Team and the EIS-FELA Branch should work together to agree what measures needed to be put in place to address areas of concern, and the matter would be returned to the next meeting of the Board on 13 June 2023.
- 5.6 The Board NOTED its continued support for the Senior Management Team in what it acknowledged to be a hugely challenging situation. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, stressed the need for management and trade union colleagues to work collaboratively for the benefit of the College, its students, and its staff.
- 5.7 The Board NOTED a revised financial forecast from 2022/23 to 2025/26 based on flat-cash funding. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that flat cash would mean that the College would be required to self-fund pay awards and voluntary severance payments, whilst also responding to inflationary increases for supplies and services.

5.8 The Board NOTED that the publication of the SFC's Indicative Funding was originally expected to be published on 23 March 2023, however, it had subsequently been delayed by the Scottish Government - following the appointment of a new First Minister. The Board DISCUSSED the adverse impact of flat cash funding and AGREED that an updated financial forecast should be circulated to Board members, once the SFC's Indicative Funding Allocation had been published.

6. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN CASCADE AND KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

6.1 The Board NOTED that work had been undertaken to produce a user-friendly version of the Strategic Plan document approved by the Board of Management on 13 December 2022. The Principal advised the Board that, to ensure appropriate staff and student engagement, the Strategic Plan would be cascaded to stakeholders over the April to June 2023 period.

6.2 The Board NOTED an internal communications plan which outlined both the schedule and communications channels to support the cascading of the Strategic Plan. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Board that the communications plan placed emphasis on: '*Where we are now and where we want to be*'; '*what are our priorities and why*'; '*what are we trying to achieve*'; and '*what will success look like and how will we share and celebrate that success*'.

6.3 The Board NOTED that the deliverables and objectives of the Strategic Plan had been analysed and put into two categories. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance informed the Board that the first of these categories included 10 specific KPIs which would enable the College to realise its ambition of People, Place and Performance, whilst the second category related to the five strategic pillars underpinning the Strategic Plan.

6.4 The Board NOTED an overview of the KPIs, and the associated KPI Tracker, from the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance. Further to this, the Board DISCUSSED the following points:

- (i) The proposed KPI relating to Staff Satisfaction and the benefits of focussing on 'staff engagement', as an indicator which would be more quantifiable.
- (ii) The need to focus on student satisfaction as it strongly correlated with achievement in other high-level KPIs.
- (iii) The presentation of KPIs to include trend data over the lifespan of the Strategic Plan, to ensure targets were being met.
- (iv) The more detailed KPIs list reviewed by senior management and the thought process behind the formation of the high-level KPIs, as presented to the Board.

6.5 The Board welcomed the update provided and AGREED to approve the Strategic KPIs for implementation by the Senior Management Team.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Lead joined the meeting

7. EQUALITY OUTCOMES & MAINSTREAMING PROGRESS REPORT

- 7.1 The Board NOTED a report highlighting the progress that had been made in relation to Equality Outcomes published in April 2021, and the continued mainstreaming of equality within the normal business of the College. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Board that the report enabled the College to fulfil its Public Sector Equality Duty and Specific Duties of Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2 The Board NOTED that high-level findings in relation to retention and attainment gaps had not changed significantly for the groups specified in the equality outcomes over the period since April 2021. The EDI Lead highlighted that the most significant increase in attainment gap related to disabled students, where a 1.2% increase between the academic years 2019/20 and 2021/22 had been recorded.
- 7.3 The Board NOTED that the pay gap report showed that mean pay gaps existed in the College for gender, race, and disability. The EDI Lead highlighted to the Board that the race related pay gap was the highest at 12.2%, due to the lack of BAME staff presence from management level upwards.
- 7.4 The Board DISCUSSED the following in relation to points raised within the progress report:
- (i) The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on performance of the College against its equality outcomes.
 - (ii) The return towards the equality outcomes 'baseline' in 2022/23, following the complete reintroduction of face-to-face teaching across the College.
 - (iii) The characteristic of 'Religion' and the lack of data provided within the report relating to this characteristic.
 - (iv) The current gender pay gap and comparative data available with both the college and public sectors.
 - (v) The need to ensure that language used within data tables was consistent, concise and clear.
 - (vi) The need to acknowledge non-binary within the gender characteristic information provided, whilst recognising sensitivities related to the number of individuals cited.
 - (vii) The College's partnership with the Black Leadership Group and the vital role of the College in demonstrating equality leadership.
 - (viii) The current diversity on the Board of Management and the development of timeframe to introduce greater diversity to the Board and its committees.
- 7.5 The Board AGREED to approve the Equalities Outcome & Mainstreaming Progress Report for publication on the College website, subject to appropriate amendments being made in relation points raised under Minute 7.4. The Board NOTED that it was fully committed to improving representation across different protected characteristics among its own membership.
- 7.6 The Board AGREED that a short life working group (SLWG) should be convened to focus on the development of an action plan, including set targets, to support greater equality, diversity, and inclusion on the Board of Management. The Chair invited members of the Board to contact her directly if they wish to participate in

the SLWG, prior to the membership (and terms of reference) of the Group being confirmed via correspondence.

- 7.7 The Board AGREED that the SLWG should report to the next meeting of the Nominations Committee with its recommendations.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead left the meeting

8. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT

- 8.1 The Board NOTED a report from ECSA covering a range of activities at the College since its last meeting on 13 December 2022.

- 8.2 The Board NOTED that ECSA had held its student elections to elect its full-time officers for the academic year 2023/24, with online voting taking place on the week commencing 13 March 2023. The Student President informed the Board of the outcome of the election, as follows:

- (i) Skye Marriner, ECSA Student President
- (ii) Luna Morrison, Vice President (Activities)
- (iii) Jon Craig, Vice President (Welfare)

- 8.3 The Board NOTED that newly appointed officers would come into post on 1 July 2023, and a decision was to be taken as to which two officers would join the Board as members. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, congratulated the newly appointed officers and advised Board members that it would be an opportunity to thank the incumbent Student President, David Elder, for his significant contribution to the learning experience of students over the academic year.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

9.1.1 RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & CREDITS DASHBOARD

The Board NOTED an overview of the performance of the College against its 2022/23 activity targets. The Vice Principal Education & Skills reminded the Board that the SFC had set the College a total activity target of 183,174 credits for the academic year.

The Board NOTED that, as of 28 March 2023, the College had accumulated 96% of its core credits target. The Vice Principal advised the Committee that whilst there was a decrease in activity (year-to-date) on 2021/22, current SFC guidance provided less flexibility than in the previous year.

9.1.2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS SUMMARY TO FEBRUARY 2023

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College as outlined in the Management Accounts to February 2023.

The Board DISCUSSED the challenges of managing cash through periods in the year, due to the timing of SFC funding and other income streams. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that since ONS reclassification the issue of liquidity had remained a concern for several Scottish colleges, although the SFC had become more flexible in their approach to providing liquidity support if required.

9.2 LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

9.2.1 LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Board NOTED an annual report from the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience (LTSE) Committee, which highlighted activities over the past 12 months and its future direction in the new academic year.

The Board NOTED the following matters raised by the Chair of the LTSE Committee:

- (i) The development of a new Edinburgh College Curriculum Strategy, which aims to provide institutional coherence, oversight, and leadership in relation to learning, teaching, assessment, and outcomes.
- (ii) The need for further progress to improve outcomes for learners, as highlighted in the Education Scotland Progress Visit Report 2022. The Board NOTED that the Committee continued to regularly review progress against an action plan based on recommendations from the Education Scotland Report.
- (iii) The work conducted to align and triangulate feedback / data from ECSA and other channels to ensure that the student voice is heard - and is central to decision-making processes across the College.

The Board welcomed the update provided and NOTED that the LTSE Committee on 19 May 2023 would consider a draft Curriculum Strategy, as presented by the Vice Principal Education & Skills.

9.3 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

9.3.1 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP PROPOSAL

The Board NOTED a Committee Membership Proposal as endorsed by the Nominations Committee.

The Board DISCUSSED the Committee Membership Proposal and NOTED that due consideration had been given to skills/expertise, length of tenure, and gender balance on each committee.

The Board APPROVED the Committee Membership Proposal. The Board AGREED that the Chair of the Board should continue to review

the membership of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee to ensure the appropriate mix of both audit committee expertise and an understanding of the College context were maintained.

The Board NOTED that the recent non-executive recruitment round, which concluded in February 2023, had identified a suitable candidate for co-option to the Corporate Development Committee. The Board DISCUSSED the co-option procedure and AGREED that Kirsty MacKenzie, a local SME owner, should be formally invited to join the Committee for an initial one-year term.

10. GOVERNANCE REPORT

10.1 The Board NOTED a Governance Report highlighting developments related to internal and external governance matters, and progress against the 2022/23 Board Improvement Plan.

10.2 Board NOTED a Top-Level Risk Register (TLRR) Summary graphic included within the Governance Report, which included a link to the main TLRR. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that there were no changes to the Top Risks outlined within the report, although the residual score related to *Failure to meet SFC funded activity targets and fees* had increased.

11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

11.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

11.1.1 The Board NOTED that following changes to the membership of the Policy & Resources Committee and recommendations within a recent Staff Wellbeing Internal Audit Report, amendments to the Committee's Terms of Reference were proposed. The Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee highlighted to the Board that a proposal to change the Committee title to the 'Planning & Resources Committee' had been endorsed by its members.

The Board DISCUSSED and APPROVED the proposed changes to the Policy & Resources Committee's Terms of Reference.

11.2 BOARD REFLECTION / FEEDBACK

11.2.1 The Board NOTED that it had held open discussions on significant matters related to both student and staff engagement, including the reshaping of the curriculum, the cascading of the Strategic Plan, and progress against the College's Equality Outcomes.

12. FOR INFORMATION

12.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES 21.02.23

12.1.1 The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 21 February 2023.

12.2 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 22.02.23

12.2.1 The Board NOTED the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 22 February 2023.

12.3 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES 28.02.23

12.3.1 The Board NOTED the Corporate Development Committee minutes from the meeting held on 28 February 2023.

12.4 LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 03.03.23

12.4.1 The Board NOTED the LTSE Committee minutes from the meeting held on 3 March 2023.

12.5 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES 15.03.23

12.5.1 The Board NOTED the Nominations Committee minutes from the meeting held on 15 March 2023.

12.6 RIDDOR REPORT

12.6.1 The Board NOTED a RIDDOR Report for the second Quarter of 2022/23.

13. FOR CIRCULATION

13.1 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

13.1.1 The Board NOTED a Risk Management Report and the Top-Level Risk Register to January 2023 included within.

13.2 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AGENDA PLANNER 2023/24

13.2.1 The Board NOTED an agenda planner for the 2023/24 academic year, which aimed to provide members with an opportunity to review upcoming items of business.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 The next meeting of the Board of Management is scheduled to take place on 13 June 2023.

Meeting closed at 17:00