



For the future you want

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING OF 22 SEPTEMBER 2020

Meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams

Start time: 14:00

Present: Bruce Cassidy; Mike Cowley; Audrey Cumberland; Lesley Drummond; Rose Dodgson; Alex Killick; Ann Landels (Chair); Toni McAlindin; Niki McKenzie; Nigel Paul; Gwen Raez; Fiona Riddoch; Judith Sischy; Jeanette Stevenson; Jordan Wyllie

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Nick Croft; Kerry Heathcote; Michael Jeffrey; Bethany Parsons; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson

Observers: Don Gluckstein; Peter Sharma

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Ross Laird and Azra Sharif-Qayyum.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Jordan Wyllie (ECSA Student President) and Rose Dodgson (ECSA Vice President, Welfare), to their first meeting of the Board following their appointment as Student Board Members on 01 July 2020.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Alex Killick and Toni McAlindin to their first meeting of the Board following their appointment as Non-Executive Board Members by Scottish Ministers on 22 September 2020. The Board NOTED that, in line with the requirements of its skills matrix, both new Non-Executive Board Members brought significant HR and legal expertise to the Board.
- 1.4 The Chair welcomed Kerry Heathcote (Head of Curriculum Planning & Performance) and Bethany Parsons (Equalities Officer) to the meeting for *Item 4.2; Race Equality Update*.
- 1.5 The Chair welcomed EIS-FELA and UNISON representatives, Donny Gluckstein and Peter Sharma, to the meeting as observers. The Board NOTED that both 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.
- 1.6 The Board NOTED that the process to appoint a new Regional Chair to the Edinburgh College Board of Management had been postponed until further notice. The Chair advised the Board that the Scottish Government had indicated that the

appointments process would not recommence before February 2021, and it was therefore unlikely that a new Regional Chair would be appointed before the end of the academic year. The Board NOTED that the interim governance arrangements approved by the Board, on 24 September 2019, would continue until a Regional Chair appointment was confirmed by Scottish Government.

- 1.7 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Head of Student Experience for holding a pre-Board presentation on the work conducted by the Student Experience Team to transition student support services online in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Board NOTED that the Chair would formally write to the Student Experience Team to thank staff for their hard work in ensuring students remained supported during campus closures and subsequent social distancing restrictions.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 The Board NOTED declarations of interest from Ann Landels and Judith Sischy for Item 8, in light of their positions as members of the Edinburgh College Development Trust (ECDT). The Chair advised members that the Interim Vice Chair would act as Chair for this item of business.
- 2.2 The Board NOTED that, as observers, both Peter Sharma and Donny Gluckstein would be asked to leave the meeting for Item 9; Closed Item of Business.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 3.1 The Board APPROVED the minutes from 16 June 2020 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, with the exception of the Edinburgh College Ambassador Award 2020.

4.1.2 The Board NOTED that nominations for the Ambassador Award 2020 would continue to be welcomed from members of the Board until 08 December 2020. The Chair advised the Board that the Ambassador Award was bestowed upon individuals who had through direct involvement with the College made a significant and sustained contribution to the student experience, or through direct involvement with the organisation enable significant organisational transformation.

4.2 RACE EQUALITY UPDATE

4.2.1 The Board NOTED that, in response to subsequent conversations on racial inequality in the UK and around the work, a set of specific race equality actions had been agreed by the College. The Equalities Officer advised the Board that these actions would educate members of the College, identify

systemic inequalities and amplify BAME voices, in discussion with staff, students, trade unions and other partners.

4.2.2 The Board NOTED progress against the 10 actions on race equality ratified by the Board on 16 June 2020. The Equalities Officer informed the Board that further reporting on progress would be included in the 2021 Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report, and that the outcome of individual actions would inform the development of the next set of Equalities Outcomes.

4.2.3 The Board welcomed the progress outlined against agreed actions, and DISCUSSED the following:

- (i) The legal duties of the College and the Board under the Equalities Act (2010);
- (ii) the definition of a racial pay gap, and the identification of structural inequalities for BAME staff at the College;
- (iii) the unconscious bias training offered by the College to all members of staff;
- (iv) the decolonialisation of the College curriculum, and the work of individual curriculum areas to take this forward with awarding bodies.

4.2.4 The Board AGREED that, given the role of the Board in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the College, an unconscious bias training session should be held by the Equalities Officer for members in the current academic year.

The Head of Curriculum Performance & Planning and the Equalities Officer left the meeting

5. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

5.1 PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE

5.1.1 The Board NOTED an update on developments related to the delivery of a 'Future Proofed College' and the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Principal updated the Board on the actions taken by the College since the reopening of its campuses, and ongoing activities across the college sector.

5.1.2 The Board NOTED that College Principals continued to support the Cumberford-Little Report, and its proposed recommendations, as the core position of the sector. The Principal advised the Board that the Scottish Government was now in the process of considering the impact of the Report on the shape of Scotland's Economic Action Plan.

5.1.3 The Board NOTED that, on 01 September 2020, the First Minister had outlined the [Programme for Government](#) which set out the actions of the Scottish Government for the year ahead. The Principal highlighted to the Board that following its publication a further details of the [Scotland's Youth Guarantee](#), which aims to give young people the chance to succeed despite the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, were outlined.

- 5.1.4 The Board NOTED that the Principal had been invited to sit on the SFC Co-Production Advisory Group (CPAG), which aimed to support the Funding Council in its review of provisions. The Principal advised the Board that the CPAG first phase report would be published in October 2021.
- 5.1.5 The Board NOTED developments relating to a collaboration of colleges in East Central Scotland, which included Edinburgh, West Lothian, Fife and Forth Valley Colleges. The Principal informed the Board that the venture between regional colleges aimed to support young people, adults, businesses and schools during challenging economic times, and through the post Covid-19 recovery.
- 5.1.6 The Board NOTED an update on the progress of the College in delivering its 5R Plan, a themed approach to managing the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Principal advised the Board that both the 're-imagining and re-invent' and the 'reform' themes were, to a large extent, defined by the recommendations of the Cumberford-Little Report, the Commission of the College of the Future Report, and the recently announced SFC Review of the Tertiary Sector.
- 5.1.7 The Board NOTED that over recent weeks the Edinburgh region had seen a significant rise in the number of positive cases of Covid-19, including a small cluster of cases linked to Edinburgh Napier University. The Principal informed the Board that the four Edinburgh universities and the College would be releasing a joint statement to reaffirm their commitment to the health of staff and students, and the importance of ownership of behaviours as institutions began to commence a hybrid model of face-to-face and remote learning.

5.2 BOARD STRATEGY DAY 27.10.20 PROPOSAL

- 5.2.1 The Board NOTED that due to the delay in publishing the CPAG first phase report (Minute 5.1.4 refers), it was not possible to discuss any pending outcomes. The Principal advised the Board that a strategic discussion around the recommendations arising from the report, and a number of other high-level reports due for publication, would be considered at the Board Strategy Day on 27 October 2020.
- 5.2.2 The Board NOTED that the Principal wished to use the Strategy Day to consider the position of the College and the potential operating restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Principal advised the Board that it was important that the College tested its strategic priorities and objectives against the changing environment.
- 5.2.3 The Board welcomed the proposal outlined by the Principal and DISCUSSED the following points:
- (i) The disparity between the college and university sectors around HE funding;
 - (ii) the current levels of funding to support the development of IT infrastructure;
 - (iii) strategic objectives around staff and student health and wellbeing;
 - (iv) the opportunity to look ahead beyond the immediate impacts of Covid-19 and EU withdrawal, and consider potential scenarios and impacts.

5.2.4 The Board AGREED that any further suggestions should be fed back to the Chair and the Principal by 12 October 2020, for inclusion on the Board Strategy Day agenda.

6. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2019/20

The Health & Safety Manager joined the meeting

- 6.1 The Board NOTED an Annual Health & Safety Report 2019/20, as presented by the Health & Safety Manager, which included an updated Health & Safety Policy.
- 6.2 The Board NOTED that over the reporting period the Health & Safety Team had continued to monitor the standard of health, safety and welfare within the College. The Health & Safety Manager informed the Board that accidents involving staff and students had reduced significantly due to Covid-19 restrictions, although staff continued to have the opportunity to report home-working accidents.
- 6.3 The Board DISCUSSED the mechanisms for monitoring health & safety whilst staff worked from home, and the essential work undertaken to conduct Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments.
- 6.4 The Board NOTED that there were no material changes to the extant Health & Safety Policy, and APPROVED the minor amendments to the 2020/21 Health & Safety Policy.

The Health & Safety Manager left the meeting

7. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (ECSA) REPORT

- 7.1 The Board NOTED a report from ECSA covering a range of activities at the College since the three Full-Time Sabbatical Officer were appointed in 01 July 2020.
- 7.2 The Board NOTED that ECSA had pushed its Class Reps recruitment back to allow for an extended period of time to conduct Class Rep elections online. The ECSA Student President advised the Board that all Class Reps activities would remain online for Semester 1, and if required these arrangements would continue for the remainder of the academic year.
- 7.3 The Board NOTED the 10 ECSA Priority Objectives for 2020/21, as formulated and agreed by the new ECSA Sabbatical Team. The ECSA Vice President (Welfare) informed the Board that the 2020/21 priorities would aim to help students stay connected and receive online support during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 7.4 The Board DISCUSSED the initial feedback received by ECSA at the start of the academic year, in response to the blended learning model adopted by the College. The ECSA Student President advised the Board that anecdotal feedback through the Students' Association's Virtual Campus showed that the main points raised related to IT issues, and whether or not students would return to a face-to-face learning and teaching model in the current academic year.

- 7.5 The Board AGREED to endorse the key priorities outlined, and wished ECSA well in achieving their targets over the course of the year.

8. EDINBURGH COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT TRUST: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING 2020/21

The Interim Vice Chair, Nigel Paul, assumed the role of Chair

- 8.1 The Board NOTED a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Edinburgh College Development Trust (ECDT) and the Board, for the academic year 2020/21. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Board that the MOU had been developed over the past 12 months by a working group comprising of ECDT Trustees, the Interim Chair of the Board and College staff.
- 8.2 The Board NOTED that the MOU defined the key principles on which the relationship between the College and the ECDT were based, whilst outlining the key strategic responsibilities of both parties to ensure good governance, and efficient and effective partnership working. The Vice Principal Corporate Development highlighted to the Board that partnership working between the College and the ECDT would continue to benefit both students and staff at Edinburgh College.
- 8.3 The Board welcomed the MOU and its joint development between the College and the ECDT, and APPROVED its implementation for 2020/21.

The Interim Chair reassumed the role of Chair

The Academic Staff Board Member left the meeting to attend a prior engagement

Peter Sharma and Donny Gluckstein left the meeting (Minute 2.2 refers)

9. CLOSED ITEM OF BUSINESS

9.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

9.1.1 CLOSED MINUTES 01.09.20

The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee closed minutes from the meeting held on 01 September 2020.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had considered a four-year Workforce Development Plan, and subsequently approved a Voluntary Severance Scheme Business Case. The Chair advised the Board that the Business Case had been submitted to the SFC and the College awaited a response.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Peter Sharma re-joined the meeting

10.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

10.1.1 MINUTES 01.09.20

The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 01 September 2020.

The Board NOTED that the College had been formally notified that the College catering provider, Gather & Gather, had commenced a redundancy consultation process with their staff. The Chair informed the Board that the College continued to maintain dialogue with Gather & Gather to establish what support it could offer individual staff.

10.1.2 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION DASHBOARD

The Board NOTED an overview, from the Vice Principal, Education & Skills, of the performance of the College against its 2019/20 recruitment and retention targets. The Vice Principal Education & Skills reminded the Board that the SFC had set the College an activity target of 187,947 for the 2019/20 academic year.

The Board NOTED that, in recognition of unprecedented circumstances, the SFC had 'relaxed' some of their guidance around credit claims - including the removal of the 'one-plus' limit and permitting claims for guidance delivered to Full-Time Higher Education students.

The Board NOTED that, although the cancellation of face-to-face learning had meant the College was unable to start any of its planned additional credit bearing course after 20 March 2020, it was still able to achieve its core credit target for 2019/20. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Board that the College had surpassed its activity target by 26 credits.

The Board commended the Executive Team on reaching the 2019/20 credit target and DISCUSSED the successful adoption of a holistic delivery and assessment models to achieve a reduction in Further Withdrawals. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Board that although the Early Withdrawals had increased by 0.2% in 2019/20, the College would continue to target a reduction in withdrawal rates.

10.1.3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO JULY 2020

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College as outlined in the Management Accounts to July 2020.

The Board NOTED that over 250 employees were on, or had participated in, the UK Government's Job Retention Scheme (JRS). The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that the College had received over £600k of JRS income, and this figure had been recognised in the College's year-end projections.

10.2 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

10.2.1 MINUTES 18.09.20

The Board NOTED the Nominations Committee minutes from the meeting held on 18 September 2020.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had considered equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) in governance, and how the Board could lead on the promotion of ED&I in its recruitment, selection and development practices. The Chair advised the Board that although it had performed well against actions within an Inclusive Recruitment, Selection, Development and Governance Checklist, there remained areas where further enhancements could be made.

The Board NOTED that the Nominations Committee would continue to monitor procedural developments to support ED&I. The Chair informed the Board that in addition to its discussions around ED&I, the Committee had approved a Board Diversity Statement for inclusion in the Edinburgh College Annual Report and Accounts to 01 July 2020.

The Board NOTED that the Nominations Committee had considered a report on the overarching principles of student membership on committees of the Board. The Chair advised the Board that, in line with a recommendation from the 2019 Board Effectiveness Review, the Committee had endorsed the membership of a Student Board Member on the Policy & Resources Committee and the Remuneration Committee.

The Board DISCUSSED student representation on its committees and AGREED that a Student Board Member would sit on all committees, except the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee.

The Board NOTED that the Nominations Committee had considered current Board and committee membership, and recommended that the Chair should discuss with individuals their current membership arrangements and whether they wished to become a committee chair. The Chair advised the Board that a proposal on committee membership would be presented to the Board on 08 December 2020, following its initial consideration by the Nominations Committee on 04 November 2020.

The Board AGREED that, although the new Non-Executive Board Members (Minute 1.3 refers) had not yet been assigned to a committee, both should be invited to attend upcoming meetings as observers.

11. GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK REVIEW

11.1 The Board NOTED the Edinburgh College Board of Management Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation, which were last reviewed by the Board on 18 September 2018. The Board Secretary advised the Board that it was good practice for public bodies to regularly review their governance framework to ensure they remained fit for purpose.

11.2 The Board NOTED that no substantive amendments were proposed to the Standing Orders or the Scheme of Delegation, and APPROVED both documents.

11.3 The Board NOTED changes to the terms of reference of the Policy & Resources Committee and the Nominations Committee, as endorsed by both committees. The Board DISCUSSED and APPROVED the proposed amendments to both terms of reference.

11.4 The Board AGREED that, in furtherance of Minute 10.2.1, the terms of reference of the Policy & Resources Committee and the Remuneration Committee should be updated to include one Student Board Member.

12. NATIONAL REPORT

12.1 The Board NOTED a verbal update from the Chair on the outcomes and recommendations of two Colleges Scotland Chair's Groups; the Economic Recovery Group, and the Community, Inclusion and Learners Group.

12.2 The Board NOTED that the Interim Chair of the Board had been appointed a full member of the Colleges Scotland Chairs Group following the delay to the Regional Chair appointment process (Minute 1.6 refers). The Chair advised the Board that, since 01 November 2019, she had previously attended the Chairs Group as an observer.

13. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

13.1 None.

14. FOR INFORMATION

14.1 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MINUTES 04.06.20

14.1.1 The Board NOTED the Remuneration Committee minutes from the meeting held on 04 June 2020. The Chair advised the Board that a verbal update from the meeting had been provided to members of the Board on 16 June 2020.

14.2 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

14.2.1 The Board NOTED a Risk Management Report to September 2020, which included an update on the Covid-19 Risk Register.

14.3 ACADEMIC COUNCIL MINUTES 11.09.20

14.3.1 The Board NOTED the Academic Council minutes from the meeting held on 11 September 2020.

14.4 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES 25.08.20

14.4.1 The Board NOTED the Corporate Development Committee minutes from the meeting held on 25 August 2020.

14.5 GOVERNANCE REPORT

14.5.1 Board NOTED an update on matters of governance since the last updated circulated to the Board on 16 June 2020.

14.6 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

14.6.1 The Board NOTED a Freedom of Information (FOI) Annual Report for 2019/20, which outlined annual activity relating to FOI requests and Subject Access Requests.

14.7 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AGENDA PLANNER 2020/21

14.7.1 The Board NOTED an agenda planner for the 2020/21 academic year, which aimed to provide members with an opportunity to review upcoming items of business.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 The next meeting of the Board of Management shall take place on 08 December 2020.

Meeting closed at 16:40