



For the future you want

CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 01 JUNE 2021

15:00, Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present: Bruce Cassidy; Rose Dodgson; Lesley Drummond (Chair); Ann Landels; Gwen Raez; Azra Sharif-Qayyum

In attendance: Nick Croft; Jane Grant; Janyce Holmes (Observer); Michael Jeffrey; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 The Committee NOTED that no apologies had been received.

1.2 The Chair welcomed Janyce Holmes, a Non-Executive Board Member, to the Corporate Development Committee as observer.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 02 March 2021 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT

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

4.2 *COLLAB PARTNERSHIP (Minute 4.3/17.11.20 refers)*

4.2.1 The Committee NOTED a verbal update on the COLLAB partnership from the Vice Principal Corporate Development. The Vice Principal advised the Committee that the College continued to work with the COLLAB Partnership

around various apprenticeship opportunities and would continue to subscribe to the Partnership until next year.

4.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the return on investment of the College's participation, and whether or not there was added value if it continued its membership, in the COLLAB Partnership.

5. COMMERCIAL, INTERNATIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING REPORT

- 5.1 The Committee NOTED an overview of the commercial income in the academic year 2020/21, and the proposed approaches of the Commercial UK and International Teams for 2021/22.
- 5.2 The Committee NOTED that May 2021 had seen a decrease in the number of levy paying employers signing up to the *Flexible Workforce Development Fund* (FWDF). The Head of Commercial advised the Committee that there remained a further two months for the College to achieve its 2020/21 commercial income target, although the sign-up for FWDF would be significantly influenced by the operational priorities of organisations coming out of lockdown.
- 5.3 The Committee NOTED that the international forecast could be positively adjusted due to the potential delivery of 2020/21 contract for the Guangzhou Open University 4+4 Online Course. The Head of Commercial informed the Committee that whilst some international delivery could potentially go ahead, the College had decided to cancel the Summer School 2021 due to continued uncertainties around international travel.
- 5.4 The Committee NOTED that the CRM was launched on 29 April 2021. The Head of Commercial advised the Committee that the Employer Engagement Group would now be reconvened to begin the process of consolidated employer interventions and longer-term strategic partnership plans.
- 5.5 The Committee NOTED the draft Commercial Budget 2021/22. The Head of Commercial informed the Committee that 2021/22 would be viewed as a recovery year, given that several income lines would continue to be impacted due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 5.6 The Committee NOTED the focus for the Commercial Team in 2021/22 would be around the effective delivery of the FWDF. The Head of Commercial highlighted to the Committee that online delivery would become the norm going forward, and the College planned to deliver more and better content online - including the transition of some scheduled courses online.
- 5.7 The Committee NOTED that, with the completion of EU Withdrawal negotiation, the College found itself as one of six Scottish colleges with (what was formerly known as) a Tier 4 sponsor license. The Head of Commercial informed the Committee that Tier 4 sponsor status was significant as the College could continue to enrol students from the EU, who are now classed as international students.
- 5.8 The Committee DISCUSSED the following with regards to commercial and international activity moving into the academic year 2021/22:

- (i) With courses moving online, the potential to reach learners anywhere in Scotland or beyond;
 - (ii) The strengths of the College in terms of the quality of its online teaching, and the support it provides to learners;
 - (iii) The causes for concern moving into 2021/22, and the continued importance of FWDF delivery.
 - (iv) The continued development of international partnerships, and the checks completed by the College to ensure its international partners were appropriate.
- 5.9 The Committee NOTED that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee on 26 May 2021 had reviewed an International Contracts Internal Audit. The Chair advised the Committee that the audit had provided 'substantial assurances' around the controls in place around international contracts.
- 5.10 The Committee NOTED that the Head of Commercial would be leaving the College to begin a new role in the college sector in August 2021. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, commended the Head of Commercial for her contribution to the development of commercial and international activity at the College over recent years.

The Commercial Manager left the meeting

6. RELATIONSHIPS REPORT

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED a Relationships Report which outlined key developments in relation to stakeholder engagement, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), community and third sector outreach, major partnership projects and Board engagement.
- 6.2 The Committee NOTED that the College remained engaged with the *Edinburgh Joined up for Jobs Partnership* to progress work on both the *Edinburgh Strategy Skills Pipeline* and the *Edinburgh Economic Strategy: Delivering Good Growth for Everyone*. The Head of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that there had been significant investment nationally in employability funding, and that a high degree of interconnectedness between regional partners was essential to ensure the appropriate allocation of resources.
- 6.3 The Committee NOTED that the College had participated in the development of an Improvement Plan for the Edinburgh CPP, in response to the findings of an Audit Scotland Best Value Audit. The Head of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that the College had maintained a high level of engagement with the Edinburgh CPP, which aimed to agree its Improvement Plan by September 2021.
- 6.4 The Committee NOTED that the College was fully engaged in the *Community Justice Partnership* for East Lothian, which had been tasked with addressing re-offending and the rehabilitation of offenders, specifically prison leavers. The Committee DISCUSSED the links between the Board and various community justice organisations, and the need to ensure that these networks were appropriately utilised.

- 6.5 The Committee NOTED that a *Board Core Script and Key Messages* document had been circulated to the Board, and initial feedback from members had been positive. The Head of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that information on Board engagement networks and organisation continued to be collated, and would be finalised with members in the new academic year.

7. BRAND AND REPUTATION REPORT

- 7.1 The Committee NOTED a Brand and Reputation Update which outlined progress on activities relating to communications, marketing, business intelligence, corporate development, policy research and public relations.
- 7.2 The Committee NOTED that the new Edinburgh College website would be launched in June 2021, with staff content management system training scheduled to begin on the week commencing 17 May 2021. The Head of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that the design phase was now complete, and the content gathering, proof reading and uploading phase was underway.
- 7.3 The Committee NOTED that social media analytics illustrated growing levels of engagement across all major platforms. The Head of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that a steady increase in the number of followers on LinkedIn would be beneficial going forward for alumni engagement purposes.
- 7.4 The Committee NOTED that the Corporate Development function at the College would be developing a new online business intelligence resource for Board members and the College Senior Management Team. The Head of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that this resource would replace the quarterly horizon scanning report presented to committees of the Board, and contain business intelligence information pertaining to the College strategic aims.
- 7.5 The Committee NOTED that the College's Waterfront Nursery had been taken over by the Corporate Development function, from the Estates function, in order to realign the service alongside other areas of commercial activity. The Committee DISCUSSED the positive financial projections for the Nursery in 2020/21, and ongoing discussions between the College and Edinburgh Council around nursery provision within the Granton area.

8. EDINBURGH COLLEGE RESEARCH UNIT UPDATE

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED a presentation on the newly established Edinburgh College Research Unit (ECRU), which aims to enhance the coordination of the College's approach to research. The Head of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that the ECRU aligned with the strategic ambitions of the College, and was consistent with emergent SFC review recommendations.
- 8.2 The Committee NOTED that an ECRU Group had been created to develop a research framework for the College, and oversee related activities - including research funding. The Head of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that ECRU activities could potentially lead to further improvements in:

the student experience; learning, teaching and assessment practice; partnership working; and, innovation with industry and partners.

- 8.3 The Committee welcomed the development of the ECRU, and DISCUSSED the level of student and staff representation across Research Unit activities. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, commended the significant efforts of staff to develop the Research Unit over the past year.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

9.1 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2020/21

- 9.1.1 The Committee NOTED that at the end of each academic year the Committee is required to review its annual activity. The Committee Chair advised the Committee that the same evaluation form, which asked members to consider the committee's operation and its performance monitoring and strategic roles, would be completed by all committees of the Board.
- 9.1.2 The Committee AGREED that its operation was compliant with its terms of reference, as outlined in 'Part 1' of the evaluation form.
- 9.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED its performance over the academic year, and AGREED that it was content with the review as a summary of its operation over the academic year.

10. FOR INFORMATION

10.1 HORIZON SCANNING REPORT

- 10.1.1 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.

10.2 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2020/21

- 10.2.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the upcoming academic year.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 The next meeting of the Corporate Development Committee will take place on 07 September 2021.

Meeting closed at 16:40