



For the future you want

## EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MINUTES OF MEETING OF 15 JUNE 2021

Meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams

Start time: 14:00

**Present:** Bruce Cassidy; Mike Cowley; Audrey Cumberford; Rose Dodgson; Lesley Drummond; Janyce Holmes; Alex Killick; Ross Laird; Ann Landels (Chair); Toni McAlindin; Nigel Paul; Gwen Raez; Fiona Riddoch; Azra Sharif-Qayyum; Jeanette Stevenson; Jordan Wyllie

**In attendance:** Jon Buglass; Nick Croft; Michael Jeffrey; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson; Al Wilson (ECSA)

**Observers:** Janet Campbell (Education Scotland); Kevin Dixon; Donny Gluckstein

### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Judith Sischy
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Janet Campbell, HMI Inspector (Education Scotland) to the meeting as an observer.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Unison and EIS-FELA representatives Kevin Dixon and Donny Gluckstein - 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.
- 1.4 The Chair welcomed the ECSA Director, Al Wilson, to the meeting for *Item 7; ECSA Report*.
- 1.5 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:
  - In March 2021, Music students Daniel Middleton, Kirsten Reekie, Lynnette Cruickshank, Callum Stevenson, Ryan Cairney, Conal McIntosh and Shaun Cook were part of a team which received the *Outstanding Musical Initiative award at the Music and Drama Education Awards 2021* for their work volunteering with Scottish Charity Dads Rock - which provides music tuition and support to families across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

- In March 2021, BA Professional Photography student Stephen Rodger was named runner up in the student category at the *Scottish Nature Photography Awards 2020* for his portfolio titled Swan Lake on Fire.
- In April 2021, the College was announced as a finalist in two categories at the *TES FE Awards 2021* - the UK-wide annual celebration of achievements within the FE sector.
- In May 2021, the College was announced as a finalist in five categories at the *Herald Higher Education Awards 2021*.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 The Board NOTED that the Interim Chair of the Board would leave the meeting for *Item 10.3; Evaluation of the Chair of the Board 2020/21*, if required. The Chair advised members that the Interim Vice Chair would act as Chair for this item of business.
- 2.2 The Board NOTED that all observers and the Executive Team would be asked to leave the meeting for *Item 11; Closed Items of Business*.

## **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SCHEDULED MEETING**

- 3.1 The Board APPROVED the minutes from 23 March 2021 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 following:

#### **4.1.2 ALL STAFF SURVEY [Ref. 5.3/11.12.18]**

The Board NOTED that a staff survey had been undertaken by the College, which specifically focussed on health and wellbeing issues, and responses were currently being analysed by the HR & OD Team. The Principal advised the Board that an initial feedback session for the Senior Management Team (SMT) would be held on 01 July 2021, and a more detailed analysis would be provided to the Board in the new academic year.

### **4.2 EQUALITY OUTCOMES & MAINSTREAMING REPORT 2021-25: SHORT-LIFE WORKING GROUP MINUTES**

- 4.2.1 The Board NOTED the minutes of a Short-Life Working Group (SLWG) which had been created by the Board to consider revisions to the *Draft Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Report 2021-25*. The Chair informed the Board that the SLWG had met on 22 April 2021, and had endorsed a final version of the Report for approval by Board members.

- 4.2.2 The Board NOTED that, on 29 April 2021, the Board had approved the *Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Report 2021-25* for publication on the College website. The Chair advised the Board that the SLWG had also

recommended that members review an Equality Outcomes Performance Monitoring Dashboard annually, at the end of each academic year, to monitor progress against agreed outcomes.

4.2.3 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the SLWG for its detailed consideration of the Equality Outcomes and the final Report published by the College.

## **5. BOARD STRATEGY SESSION 08.06.21 OUTCOMES & NEXT STEPS**

5.1 The Board NOTED that it had held a Board Strategy Session on 08 June 2021, with members of the Executive and the SMT, to consider how the College reshapes its current strategic priorities (2017-22) in support of its future ambitions and strategic direction. The Chair advised the Board that members had welcomed the opportunity to directly engage with the SMT around strategic matters.

5.2 The Board DISCUSSED the initial outcomes of the session, and NOTED a timetable for the development of a new Edinburgh College Strategic Plan. The Principal advised the Board that it was expected that a new Strategic Plan would be presented for approval at the Board meeting on 22 March 2022.

## **6. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

### **6.1 PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

6.1.1 The Board NOTED an update on recent developments and items of note, including the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Principal updated the Board on activities undertaken by the College since its last meeting on 23 March 2021, and progress against its strategic key performance indicators.

6.1.2 The Board NOTED the work of the 5R Hub Team to plan for the academic year 2021/22, in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the emergence of the Delta variant across the UK. The Board DISCUSSED ventilation standards at the College, and the potential impact (on the number of students allowed on each campus) of social distancing guidance changing from two metres down to a single metre.

6.1.3 The Board NOTED that a short-life working group of staff from across the College had been established, to consult with staff and students around ways to reimagine and reinvent systems and operations at the College. The Principal advised the Board that the first phase of the 'Lessons Learnt Project' would include responses from the recent Staff Survey, which would be used to help inform the next steps of the Project.

6.1.4 The Board NOTED that the College continued to deliver positively on the skills strand of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. The Board DISCUSSED the high levels of engagement between the College and local community partners, to establish business opportunities and improve community links.

## 6.2 DRAFT WORKFORCE PLAN 2021-23

- 6.2.1 The Board NOTED a Draft Workforce Plan 2021-23 which outlined the business process to align the changing operational needs of the College with its People Strategy (2021-24). The Principal advised the Board of the need for effective workforce planning to provide agile people solutions to compliment the future direction of the College.
- 6.2.2 The Board NOTED the following strategic objectives of the Workforce Plan:
- (i) Transitional and transformational change;
  - (ii) Digital enabled redesign for learning and teaching, and professional support staff;
  - (iii) A sustainable and valued workforce;
  - (iv) A financially sustainable College.
- 6.2.3 The Board NOTED that the Workforce Plan provided a number of options to achieve the strategic aims of the College, whilst providing a model for reviewing progress against planned actions to ensure their completion. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that the Workforce Plan aligned with the Vision and Mission of the College, as set out in our 2017-22 Strategic Plan.
- 6.2.4 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to consider the Draft Workforce Plan, and DISCUSSED the following points:
- (i) The two-year lifespan of the Strategy, and its alignment with the College Strategy Plan and other strategic documents;
  - (ii) The current age profile of Edinburgh College staff, and the potential impact of low levels of staff turnover;
  - (iii) The College policy towards attracting talent, and the routes into lecturing and support staff roles;
  - (iv) Staff training, and the potentially differing needs of staff and employers;
  - (v) The Edinburgh College Staff Academy concept;
  - (vi) The role of the Learning and Teaching Unit in developing staff at the College, and how this could be publicised further.
- 6.2.5 The Board NOTED that the Draft Workforce Plan 2021-23 was a working document, which outlined the strategic direction of the College over the next 18 months.

## 7. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT

### 7.1 ECSA END OF YEAR 2020/21 REPORT

- 7.1.1 The Board NOTED an overview of activities conducted by ECSA in the 2020/21 academic year. The ECSA Student President introduced a short video of the ECSA sabbatical officers and the ECSA Director discussing the challenges faced in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and the significant impact of the Students' Association during '*a year like no other*'.

7.1.2 The Board NOTED ECSA's achievements over the year, including the continued development of the Virtual Campus, the transitioning of Class Reps activities online, and the use of livestreaming events to engage with a wide range of students. The ECSA Student President advised the Board that the continuation of the current sabbatical team would assist ECSA in maintaining its momentum moving into the next academic year, and allow for further developments to its virtual offerings.

7.1.3 The Board welcomed the detailed end of year report, and the accompanying video, provided by ECSA, and DISCUSSED its successes and the support provided to students in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The ECSA Student President advised the Board that both Sustainability and 'Go Green' initiatives had been important areas of work for the Students' Association, and it was hoped that its work in these could to impact on students' awareness of climate change.

7.1.4 The Board NOTED that following the Student Elections in March 2021, the current ECSA Student President and the ECSA Vice Principal (Welfare) would be swapping roles. The Chair advised the Board that both sabbatical officers would however remain Student Board Members in the academic year 2020/21.

## 7.2 ECSA STRATEGIC PLANNING & FUNDING 2021/22 REPORT

7.2.1 The Board NOTED a 2021/22 ECSA Funding Bid, which included an overview of the Students' Association's broad strategic aims for the coming academic year.

7.2.2 The Board DISCUSSED the long-term ambitions of the Students' Association and its aim to be a sector leader in sustainability. The ECSA Director advised the Board that in the immediate future its key focus would be to review its current physical spaces on campus, whilst continuing to develop its online engagement with students.

7.2.3 The Board welcomed the ECSA Funding Bid, and NOTED that the approval of funding would be confirmed as part of consideration around the Indicative College Budget 2021/22.

***Al Wilson left the meeting.***

***Mike Cowley and Alex Killick joined the meeting.***

## 8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 8.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

#### 8.1.1 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION DASHBOARD

The Board NOTED an overview, from the Vice Principal, Education & Skills, of the performance of the College against its 2020/21 activity targets. The Vice Principal Education & Skills reminded the Board that the SFC had set the College an activity target of 187,869 for the 2020/21 academic year.

The Board NOTED that the current credit position, as of 04 June 2021, was 192,375. The Vice Principal, Education & Skills, advised the Board the College continued to liaise with colleagues at the SFC to establish whether additional in-year funding was available to support further credit activity.

The Board DISCUSSED the positive improvement in retention rates in 2020/21, which had decreased year-on-year (since 2018/19) to 3.4%. The Chair commended the work of College Staff throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic, to ensure that students remained engaged with their course.

The Board NOTED that the College continued to perform well against 2021/22 Full-Time recruitment targets. The Vice Principal, Education & Skills, advised the Board that, although the College continued to perform well, across the sector a number of colleges were facing challenges meeting their own student recruitment targets.

#### 8.1.2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS SUMMARY TO APRIL 2021

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College as outlined in the Management Accounts to April 2021.

The Board NOTED that the adjusted operating position of the College, and the favourable income variance afforded, in part, by the UK Government's Job Retention Scheme (JRS). The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that the JRS, and other temporary funding streams received in 2020/21, had masked the significant financial impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on colleges. For this reason, the Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that it was expected that the College Budget 2021/22 would provide a more realistic basis for longer-term financial planning.

The Board NOTED that, in addition to the JRS, a favourable income variance had also been achieved through the significant work undertaken by College management. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board the College was able to forecast a positive year end position through its Voluntary Severance Scheme savings, the review of contracts, and the placement of a hold on recruitment and non-priority spending.

#### 8.1.3 INDICATIVE COLLEGE BUDGET 2021/22

The Board NOTED an Indicative College Budget 2021/22 as put forward by the Executive, which outlined the budgeting process, budgeting pressures, additional costs, budget reductions, savings, impact on cash-flow, risks and mitigations, and sensitivity analysis.

The Board DISCUSSED and AGREED the Indicative College Budget 2021/22. Further to this, the Board AGREED that - once underlying assumptions had been confirmed - a final Draft College Budget would circulate to the Board outwith the meeting for approval.

#### 8.1.4 FINANCIAL FORECAST 2020/21 to 2024/25

The Board NOTED a five-year financial forecast aligned with the 2020/21 Indicative College Budget, to help members assess the future financial position of the College. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that the financial forecast was based against initial assumptions outlined by the

SFC for 2020/21, and highlighted the savings/budget reductions required in order to achieve a break-even underlying operating position.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Chief Operating Officer for the opportunity to review the financial forecast information and sensitivity analysis provided.

## 8.2 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

8.2.1 The Board NOTED the Nominations Committee minutes from the meeting held on 12 May 2021.

8.2.2 The Board NOTED that the tenure of Fiona Riddoch, a Non-Executive Board Member, would end on 20 October 2021. The Chair advised the Board that the tenures of three further non-executive members: Ann Landels (Interim Chair of the Board); Azra-Sharif-Qayyum; and, Nigel Paul (Interim Vice Chair of the Board) were all due to end before 01 March 2022.

8.2.3 The Board NOTED that Toni McAlindin, a Non-Executive Board Member, had indicated to the Chair her intention to step down from the Board due to other commitments. The Board AGREED that, inline with a recommendation from the Nominations Committee, Ms McAlindin would be invited by the Chair to remain on the Board until 29 September 2021.

8.2.4 The Board NOTED that the Nominations Committee had confirmed a recruitment process, in line with previously agreed guidelines, to recruit up to two new non-executive members to the Board before November 2021. The Chair advised the Board that a further update on the recruitment round would be provided to the members at its next meeting.

8.2.5 The Board NOTED that the Scottish Government had confirmed that it would reconvene a recruitment panel in June 2021, to begin the process of appointing a new Regional Chair. The Chair highlighted to the Board that it was unlikely that the appointment of a new Regional Chair would be confirmed before October 2021.

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

8.2.6 The Board DISCUSSED the need to ensure that appropriate transition arrangements were in place following the appointment of a new Regional Chair, and the end of tenure dates of both the Interim Chair and the Interim Vice Chair of the Board (Minute 8.2.2 refers). The Board AGREED that a one-year extension to the tenure of the Interim Chair of the Board should be recommended to Scottish Ministers.

### ***The Interim Chair reassumed the role of Chair***

## 9. NATIONAL REPORT

9.1 The Board NOTED a Draft College Sector Statement of Ambition 2021-25, as produced by Colleges Scotland. The Chair advised the Board that the document had been circulated to all college chairs and principals for feedback by 30 June 2021.

- 9.2 The Board DISCUSSED the Draft Statement of Ambition, and members AGREED that they were broadly content with the ambitions outlined by Colleges Scotland.

## **10. GOVERNANCE REPORT**

### **10.1 GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

- 10.1.1 The Board NOTED a Governance Report highlighting developments related to internal and external governance matters, and progress against the 2020/21 Board Improvement Plan.
- 10.1.2 The Board NOTED the 2021/22 Board Planner, which had been agreed with members outwith the meeting cycle in May 2021. The Board Secretary advised members that the first meeting of the Board in the new academic year would take place on 29 September 2021.
- 10.1.3 The Board NOTED that, at its last meeting, it had agreed that an annex to the Standing Orders of the Edinburgh College Board of Management should be drafted to ensure the orderly and effective conduct of virtual and hybrid meetings. The Board DISCUSSED the draft annex and APPROVED its inclusion in the Standing Orders.

### **10.2 BOARD EVALUATION REPORT 2020/21**

- 10.1.1 The Board NOTED feedback and actions arising from the 2020/21 Self-Evaluation Survey completed by members of the Board. The Chair advised the Board that the questionnaire results indicated the members were broadly content with governance arrangements at the College, with the Board agreeing with all 34 statements put forward in the Survey.
- 10.1.2 The Board NOTED that the Interim Chair had held one-to-one meetings with members of the Board during May 2021. Further to the results of the Survey, the Chair highlighted the additional challenges of maintaining good governance practices, and an appropriate level of Board interaction, whilst working solely in a remote working environment.
- 10.1.3 The Board DISCUSSED the feedback from the Self-Evaluation Survey and the one-to-one Board evaluations, and AGREED that actions arising should be included in the 2021 Board Improvement Plan.

#### ***The Interim Vice Chair assumed the role of Chair***

### **10.3 EVALUATION OF THE CHAIR REPORT 2020/21**

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

- 10.3.1 The Board NOTED that in accordance with good practice, and as part of the overall evaluation of the Board, an evaluation of the Interim Chair was conducted by the Interim Vice Chair. The Interim Vice Chair

outlined to the Board the methodology used and a summary of the results.

- 10.3.2 The Board DISCUSSED the written report provided by the Interim Vice Chair and were content with its positive and constructive findings. The Board welcomed the formal process of evaluation conducted by the Interim Vice Chair, which was considered in line with best practice.

***The Interim Chair reassumed the role of Chair***

***Janet Campbell (Education Scotland); Kevin Dixon; Donny Gluckstein left the meeting***

***The three Vice Principals left the meeting.***

## **11. CLOSED ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

- 11.1 Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session. Closed items were recorded under a separate minute (Closed Minutes 11/15.06.21 refers).

## **12. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

### **12.1 MESSAGE OF THANKS TO ALL STAFF**

- 12.1.1 The Board AGREED that, on its behalf, a message of thanks would be circulated by the Chair to all members of College staff thanking them for their commitment and innovation during a challenging academic year.

## **13. FOR INFORMATION**

### **13.1 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MINUTES 26.03.21**

- 13.1.1 The Board NOTED the Remuneration Committee minutes from the meeting held on 26 March 2021.

### **13.2 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES 18.05.21**

- 13.2.1 The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 18 May 2021.

### **13.3 ACADEMIC COUNCIL MINUTES 21.05.21**

- 13.3.1 The Board NOTED the Academic Council minutes from the meeting held on 21 May 2021.
- 13.3.2 The Board NOTED its thanks to the Chair of the Academic Council, Fiona Riddoch, for her significant contribution to the Committee. The Chair advised the Board that from 31 July 2021, Ms Riddoch would be stepping down as Chair of the Academic Council, in line with previously agreed succession planning arrangements.

13.4 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 26.05.21

- 13.4.1 The Board NOTED the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 26 May 2021.

13.5 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES 01.06.21

- 13.5.1 The Board NOTED the Corporate Development Committee minutes from the meeting held on 01 June 2021

**14. FOR CIRCULATION**

14.1 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

- 14.1.1 The Board NOTED a Risk Management Report, which included a Top-Level Risk Register to June 2021.

14.2 RIDDOR REPORT

- 14.2.1 The Board NOTED a RIDDOR Report for the third Quarter of 2020/21.

14.3 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AGENDA PLANNER 2020/21

- 14.3.1 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 29 September 2021.

***Meeting closed at 17:00***