For the future you want

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

12:00 Boardroom, Milton Road Campus

Present: Beth Anderson; Bruce Cassidy; Audrey Cumberford; Ian Diamond (Chair); Bob Downie; Lesley Drummond; Sarah Hay; Niki McKenzie; Nigel Paul; Fiona Riddoch; Azra Sharif-Qayyum; Judith Sischy; Jeanette Stevenson; Ian Young.

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Allan Colquhoun (Development Trust); Nick Croft; Michael Jeffrey; Jonny Pearson; Sheena Stone (Development Trust); Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson.

1.   WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1   Apologies were received from Sam Hogrefe and Ann Landels.

1.2   The Chair welcomed Sarah Hay, the newly elected ECSA Student President to her first meeting as a Board Member.

1.3   The Chair welcomed the new Principal & Chief Executive, Audrey Cumberford, to her first meeting of the Board.

1.4   The Chair, on behalf of the Board, welcomed Allan Colquhoun, Chair of the Development Trust, and Sheena Stone, Development Trust Manager, to the meeting for Item 3.

1.5   The Board NOTED that it had received a presentation from Access and Continuing Education (ACE) staff and students on its Sun Print Project, which showcased a creative way to engage students with the Community College Garden at the Milton Road Campus. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked ACE Lecturer Eleanor Symms and her students for the presentation and advised the Board that a formal letter of thanks would be circulated in due course.

2.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1   The Board NOTED a declaration of interest from Ian Young in relation to Item 3, in light of his position as a member of the Edinburgh College Development Trust.

3.   EDINBURGH COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT TRUST ANNUAL UPDATE

3.1   The Board NOTED an update from the Edinburgh College Development Trust on its recent successes, and the challenges it had faced, over the past year. The Chair of the Development Trust advised the Board that £259k had been raised during 2017/18, and 376 students had been supported during this period.

3.2   The Board NOTED the membership of the Development Trust, and the current governance arrangement in place.

3.3   The Board DISCUSSED the success of the Development Trust over the past year, and the funding and student support opportunities available going forward. Further to this, the following points were DISCUSSED by the Board:

(i)   The support to the Development Trust currently offered by the college, in line with the memorandum of understanding and service support offer agreed between the two bodies;

(ii)   the operational costs associated with the Development Trust, and how its funding model compared with other trusts in the sector;

(iii)   the need for the Development Trust to be aligned with the strategic objectives of the college;

(iv)   the importance of partnerships with business and the local community in effective fundraising;

3.4   The Board NOTED a request from the Development Trust for further operational support, and AGREED that the Trust should bring forward a new business plan that sets out an ambitious vision and strategic aims for the Trust, and clearly indicates the long-term support required from the college.

3.5   The Chair thanked the Chair of the Development Trust for his update and, on behalf of the Board, commended the valuable work of the Trust to date.

The Chair of the Edinburgh College Development Trust and the Development Trust Manager left the meeting

4.   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1   The Board APPROVED the minutes from 12 June 2018 as an accurate record of the meeting.

5.   MATTERS ARISING

5.1   Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda with the exception of the following:

5.1.1 PEFORMANCE MONITORING (MINUTES 6.2.4 / 19.09.17 REFERS)

The Board NOTED that it would consider appropriate key performance indicators

at its Board Development Day on 30 October, prior to a performance monitoring dashboard being produced.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

5.1.1 *MINUTES 21.08.18*

The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 21 August.

The Board NOTED that the Policy & Resources Committee had approved the closure of the Business Transformation Plan, and commended with acclaim the final report and the work carried out by staff to effectively implement the plan. The Vice Chair advised the Board that although no representative from the SFC was present at the Committee, the Chair of the Board had subsequently received confirmation from the Chief Executive of the SFC indicated that the Funding Council were content with the closure of the Business Transformation Plan. Further to this, it had been agreed that the Policy & Resources Committee would conduct a light-touch review following the closure of the Plan at its meeting in May 2019.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had reviewed an Annual Human Resources Dashboard for 2017/18, and discussed the potential for a targeted staff survey in the near future. The Principal advised the Board that engagement with staff through an appropriate survey would be welcomed, and was currently included within a programme strand of the Strategic Blueprint.

The Board NOTED that a follow-up review of the Nursery would take place in February 2019, and that recommendations would be reported back to the Policy & Resources Committee in due course. The Board DISCUSSED the current Nursery provision on offer and the benefits it provided to students and staff.

5.1.2 *STUDENT RECRUITMENT DASHBOARD*

The Board NOTED an update from the Assistant Principal, Recruitment and Retention, on the performance of the college against its 2017/18 credit targets. The Assistant Principal informed the Board that college had achieved all of its 2017/18 activity targets and had over delivered by 5,732 credits at no extra cost.

The Board NOTED that in terms of 2018/19 full-time recruitment, which opened on 22 January, the college was on course to hit its annual targets. The Assistant Principal informed the Committee that, although the college had seen a 9.5% increase in the total number of applications, the number of full-time students had remained static over the last five years. The Board NOTED that such a trend indicated that potential growth would be governed by improved retention and increasing internal progression.

The Board welcomed the levels of student recruitment outlined and DISCUSSED the shifting focus of the college towards improved student achievement.

5.1.3 *MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO JULY 2018*

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the college, as highlighted in the financial accounts to July 2018. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that the operating position to July 2018 showed a deficit of £0.07m, which equated to a favorable variance of £0.4m in comparison to the full year budget.

The Board welcomed and DISCUSSED the underlying income achieved by the college in 2017/18, and NOTED that the Executive would be meeting with the SFC to discuss its favorable position. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that the college continued to seek guidance from Audit Scotland on the presentation of the financial position of the college in the end of year accounts to July 2018.

5.2 ACADEMIC COUNCIL

5.2.1 *MINUTES 07.09.18*

The Board NOTED the Academic Council minutes from the meeting held on 07 September.

The Board NOTED that the Academic Council had received an updated on the development of the Edinburgh College Blueprint, and the governance structure in place to support its delivery. The Chair of the Academic Council advised the Board that the two key programmes connected to its remit were the Student Experience Programme and Curriculum Excellence Programme.

Further to this, the Board NOTED that the Academic Council had received a presentation on progress made towards embedding learning analytics in it student support. The Chair of the Academic Council advised the Board that the Student Experience Programme of the Blueprint included a specific project entitled learning analytics.

5.2.2 *SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S LEARNER JOURNEY REVIEW*

The Board NOTED a report on the recommendations of the Scottish Government's '15-24 Learner Journey Review' published in May 2018. The Chair of the Academic Council highlighted the 17 recommendations outlined by the review, which aligned to five priorities for improvement. Further to this, the Board NOTED that the college was already well placed with regards to a number of the Review's recommendations, however, the proposals provided the college with an opportunity to enhance further its educational and vocational training offer - in partnership with other agencies operating in the education and skills sector.

The Board NOTED a presentation putting forward challenge questions regarding the implications and opportunities for the college as a result of the Review's recommendations. In response to the questions the Board strategically DISCUSSED the following recommendations:

(i) What does the Board believe Edinburgh College should prioritise?

- Improved communication of learner journey pathways to carers, parents and students;
- The need to clearly articulate where the college sits in the learner journey;
- the relationship between the college and regional universities, particularly around advanced standing and seamless student pathways;
- the targeting of student demographics that are not currently fully engaged with the college, for instance those students wishing to study in the evenings;
- the strengthening of workplace provisions, a key area of the learning experience at colleges.

(ii) What are the opportunities and the risks for Edinburgh College given the Learner Journey Priorities?

- The college's position as a 'pinch-point' between schools and universities, and how its role could be developed join up transitions between the two;
- Enhanced partnerships with Russell Group universities to help students achieve degree-level awards;
- Provides an opportunity for the college to consider its curriculum offer in full-time education.

(iii) What role could the Board and its members play in this strategic initiative for the learner post 15?

- The need to support a culture shift across the education sector to encourage the learner journey, through lobbying and appropriate use of links within the sector and the region;
- the need to consider inventive ways in which the Board and Executive can seek to encourage further partnership working.

The Board welcomed the opportunity to discuss the strategic positon of the college in response to the Learner Journey Review, and AGREED that colleges had a central role to play in the development of the learner journey. Further to this, the Board AGREED that the points raised by members should be considered further by the Executive and the Senior Management Group.

5.3 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

5.3.1 SUMMARY TOP RISK REGISTER

The Board NOTED a Summary Top Risk Register (TRR) to August 2018, and the changes in top level risks since the last meeting of the Board on 19 June. The Head of Corporate Development advised the Board that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee would discuss the Edinburgh College Risk Appetite Statement at its next meeting on 10 October, and a further update would be brought forward to the Board at a future meeting.

The Board NOTED that 'staff mandatory training non-compliance' was a new risk on the TRR, and warranted further monitoring by the college. The Board DISCUSSED the general narrative provided within the TRR and AGREED that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee should consider a refreshed document in advance of the next meeting of the Board.

5.3.2 CYBER RESILIENCE UPDATE

The Board NOTED that Edinburgh College had attained a Cyber Essentials Plus Certificate, which would enable the Board to provide assurance to the Scottish Government that the college was embedding a mature and sustainable risk management from common internet based threats - as well as broader risks.

Beth Anderson joined the meeting.

5.4   EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

5.4.1 *MINUTES 28.08.18*

The Board NOTED the External Engagement Committee minutes from the meeting held on 28 August.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had received an update on progress relating to the City Region Deal and considered opportunities for the college relating to the areas of Construction and Data Skills. The Vice Chair advised the Board that staff had been invited to an awareness raising event in September to provide further information on the City Region Deal and the role of the college.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had received an update on progress against the Communications, Marketing and Engagement Strategy 2017/22. The Vice Chair advised the Board that the Committee were impressed with progress to date, however, further information had been requested on the impact of key Communications, Marketing and Engagement against the six strategic objectives of the Strategy.

6.   EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (ECSA)

6.1   ECSA QUARTERLY REPORT

6.1.1 The Board NOTED a report from ECSA covering a range of activities at the college since the last Board meeting.

6.1.2 The Board NOTED that ECSA were in the process of recruiting new class representatives, and commencing training sessions before the end of September. The Student President advised the Board that class reps conferences would take place in early October and would be concentrating on retention and supporting student through their first months at Edinburgh College.

6.1.3 The Board DISCUSSED the challenges faced by ECSA in engaging with class reps, and the benefits of social media as a communication tool.

6.2 ECSA PRIORITY OBJECTIVES 2018/19

6.2.1 The Board NOTED the ECSA Priority Objectives for 2018/19, based around the 'Pillars of Actions' outlined in the ECSA Strategic Plan 2017-20.

6.2.2 The Board welcomed the clear and concise report and DISCUSSED the priority objectives outlined. The Board AGREED to endorse the key priorities outlined, and wished ECSA well in achieving their targets over the course of the year.

7. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

7.1 The Board NOTED a report from the Principal covering a range of activities at the college since the last Board meeting.

7.2 The Board NOTED the strategic vision of the new Principal & Chief Executive which aimed to future-proof the college and further enhance its reputation. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, welcomed the vision outlined and looked forward to working with the new Principal to explore these aims.

7.3 The Board NOTED that the college had achieve a Health Working lives Gold Award in August 2018. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, congratulated the college on meeting the requirements of the Award which recognised excellence in the areas of employee health, safety and wellbeing.

8. GOVERNANCE REPORT

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8.1.1 BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Board NOTED that the reappointment of Fiona Riddoch, a Non-Executive Member, to the Board of Management for a further three years had been confirmed by Scottish Ministers on 06 August.

The Board NOTED that Stephen Dunn, a Non-Executive Member, had informed the Chair on 13 August of his decision to resign from the Board with immediate effect. The Chair advised the Board that a letter of thanks had been sent to Mr Dunn, acknowledging his services as member of the Board, and both its Policy & Resources Committee and Remuneration Committee.

The Board NOTED that Mike Cowley, the Teaching Staff Board Member, had informed the Chair on 18 September of his decision to resign from the Board with immediate effect. The Head of Corporate Development advised the Board that following Mr Cowley's decision a teaching staff election would be held in due course, in line with the Board approved procedure.

8.1.2   CHAIR OF THE EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Board NOTED that following an open call for nominations to act as Chair of the External Engagement Committee a nominee had come forward. The Board AGREED that Ann Landels, a Non-Executive Board Member, would become Chair of the External Engagement Committee.

The Char advised the Board that, in light of recent changes, the Nominations Committee would consider Board and committee membership further at its next meeting on 30 October.

8.1.3   GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2019

The Board NOTED that a Governance Review Working Group, set-up by the Board at its last meeting, had proposed a terms of reference outlining its strategic purpose, objectives and governance arrangements. The Board DISCUSSED and APPROVED the terms of reference for the Working Group.

The Board NOTED that a revised version of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges was expected to be published in February 2019, and implemented fully by 01 August 2019.

8.1.4   BOARD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017/18

The Board NOTED that it had achieved the majority of its 28 objectives outlined in the Board Development Plan 2017/18, and DISCUSSED the five objectives which had not been fully met. The Board AGREED that its Development Plan would be rolled over to the new academic year, with particular emphasis to be placed on the five outstanding objectives to ensure that all actions were complete before the development of a new improvement plan - following the 2019 Governance Review.

8.2   GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

8.2.1   The Board NOTED amendments to the Board of Management Governance Framework, to align with model governance framework documents endorsed by the Good Governance Steering Group. The Head of Corporate Development outlined the key changes to the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation of the Board since they were last agreed in June 2015.

8.2.2   The Board DISCUSSED the revised Standing Orders and Scheme or Delegation and APPROVED the adoption of both documents, subject to further consideration around the number of working days given prior to calling a Board or committee meeting. The Board AGREED that a proposal, suggesting an amendment to the Standing Orders, should be brought forward to its next meeting.

8.2.3   The Board APPROVED amendments to the terms of reference of the Policy & Resources Committee and the External Engagement Committee, as endorsed by both committees.

8.2.4   The Board DISCUSSED the length of Board and committee papers and NOTED that further enhancements to reporting would be considered as part of the 2019 Governance Review.

9.   HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2018

The Health & Safety Manager joined the meeting

9.1   The Board NOTED an Annual Health & Safety Report 2018, as presented by the Health & Safety Manager, which included an updated Health & Safety Policy.

9.2   The Board DISCUSSED the Health & Safety Teams targets for the current academic year, and APPROVED the amendments to the Health & Safety Policy. The Chair thanked the Health & Safety Manager for his report and wished his team success in reach its annual targets and improving health & safety awareness across the college.

The Health & Safety Manager left the meeting

10.   FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT

10.1   The Board NOTED a report outlining the volume of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the College between July 2017 and June 2018. The Head of Corporate Development advised the Board that the college had received two decision notices from the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office in 2017/18, and in both cases the Commissioner's Office had found in favor of the college.

10.2   The Board NOTED the total estimated cost of responding to 71 FOI requests and seven Subject Access Requests during the period.

11.   NATIONAL REPORT

11.1   The Board NOTED the appointment of Richard Lochhead as Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, and his recent visit to the Midlothian Campus on 06 September. The Chair advised the Board that he would be writing to Mr Lochhead to seek an initial meeting in due course.

11.2   The Board NOTED that the Scottish Government's Spending Review 2019/20 would be announced shortly, and the need for the college sector to make its case for funding.

12.   ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

12.1 None.

13   CLOSED ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Principals left the meeting

13.1   Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session. Closed items were recorded under a separate minute (Closed Minutes 13/18.09.18 refers).

14.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 The next meeting would be held at 14:00hrs on 11 December 2018 at the Milton Road Campus.

Meeting closed at 15:00