



For the future you want

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 29 SEPTEMBER 2021

Meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams

Start time: 14:00

Present: Bruce Cassidy; Mike Cowley; Audrey Cumberland; 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

Observers: Kevin Dixon; Donny Gluckstein

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 No apologies were received.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Rose Dodgson (ECSA Student President) and Jordan Wyllie (ECSA Vice President, Welfare) to their first meeting since their second terms as Student Sabbatical Officers commenced.
- 1.4 The Board NOTED that Andy Bamberry, Health & Safety Manager, would join the meeting for *Item 7; Health & Safety Annual Report 2020/21*.
- 1.5 The Board NOTED that Fiona Gray, Chair of the Edinburgh College Development Trust (ECDT), would join the meeting for *Item 9; ECDT Annual Report 2020/21*.
- 1.6 The Board NOTED that Judith Sischy, a Non-Executive Board Member, had resigned from the Board on 4 September 2021 - with immediate effect. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Ms Sischy for her significant contribution to the Board, and both its Academic Council and Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, over the course of her tenure.

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

- i) In June 2021, the College won a hat-trick of awards at the [Herald Higher Education Awards 2021](#), including; Outstanding contribution from a College Student (Social Science Student, Roseanna Campbell), Widening Access Award and Partnership Award (in collaboration with City of Glasgow College).
- ii) In July 2021, HND Visual Communications: Graphic Design student Gemma Gorton was recognised at the D&AD Awards, an [annual national design awards ceremony](#) for producing outstanding work in response to a creative brief.
- iii) In September 2021, the College was announced as a finalist in two categories at the [CDN College Awards 2021](#). The College received nominations in the Inclusive College and Digital Learning categories for work carried out to support students and those from vulnerable backgrounds in 2020/21, when students faced enormous challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- iv) In September 2021, the College was named as a finalist at the [Herald Digital Transformation Awards in the Best Use of Technology in Education Category](#) for its work with Fife College and partners on the Pathways web app. The Chair advised the Board that the winner of the award would be announced at a ceremony on 4 November 2021.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 The Board NOTED that Ross Laird, in relation to *Item 9, ECDT Report*, was a member of the ECDT.
- 2.2 The Board NOTED that Bruce Cassidy and Mike Cowley were both Staff Board Members, with reference to *Item 10.3.1, Staff Board Member Election Rules*.
- 2.3 The Board NOTED that all observers and the Executive Team would be asked to leave the meeting for *Item 15, Closed Items of Business*.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SCHEDULED MEETING

- 3.1 The Board APPROVED the minutes from 16 June 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.

- 4.1.2 The Board NOTED that the Scottish Government had approved a one-year extension to the tenure of Ann Landels, as a Non-Executive Board Member, until 1 March 2023. The Chair advised the Board that this extension to the tenure of the Interim Chair would support transition arrangements following the appointment of a new Regional Chair.

5. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 5.1 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 16 June 2021, and progress against its strategic key performance indicators.
- 5.2 The Board NOTED that the College, through its 5R Hub, was engaged with national bodies and programmes regarding planning for the academic session 2021/22 in light of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic. The Principal advised the Board that, in response to the Scottish Government's guidance for colleges and universities, the 5R Hub had implemented a cautious approach to the start of the academic year with a phased model towards increasing the number of class groups on campus.
- 5.3 The Board NOTED that the cautious approach to the start of the term would focus on priority groups attending on campus delivery and support, with a view to developing a hybrid model heading towards the October break. The Principal highlighted to the Board that it remained important that the College complimented and reinforced the UK and Scottish Government's communications to young people under the age of 18 to get vaccinated.
- 5.4 The Board DISCUSSED the following points with regards to phased approach to the start of the academic year:
- (i) The proposal to, in a professional and pragmatic manner, explore more 'agile' ways for staff to work over the academic year.
 - (ii) The need to ensure that equipment remains available to students and staff working on campus, and the work underway to repopulate resources with specific areas.
 - (iii) The continued challenges around Digital Poverty and the need to ensure all students could engage in online / hybrid learning.
- 5.5 The Board NOTED that its members had been unable to visit College campuses since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March 2020. The Chair advised the Board that, in line with the cautious approach outlined by the Principal, members would be invited to visit campuses and meet with either the Chair, the Principal and/or a member of the ECSA Team. The Board welcomed the opportunity to visit campuses again and AGREED that the Clerk to the Board should propose potential visit dates to members.
- 5.6 The Board NOTED that the draft 2021/22 Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) would be reviewed by the Academic Council on 19 November 2021, prior to its circulation to the Board for approval via correspondence. The Board DISCUSSED the review process for the 2021/22 ROA and AGREED that a final draft of the document would be circulated to members for their consideration prior to the SFC submission deadline on 30 November 2021.

- 5.7 The Board NOTED that College Scotland and sector representative had met with the Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, Jamie Hepburn MSP, on 23 August 2021 to provide initial sector feedback on the recently published SFC Review. The Board DISCUSSED progress on the Review and the formal response provided by Edinburgh College as part of the consultation process.

Donny Gluckstein joins the meeting.

6. STRATEGIC DISCUSSION: DRAFT EDINBURGH COLLEGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 The Board NOTED a presentation on the development of the Edinburgh College Strategic Framework, which included a draft strategic ambition, values, and purpose. The Principal outlined the following three proposed strategic themes within the Framework: People; Place; and. Performance.
- 6.2 The Board NOTED a summary of the six 'Goals' related to the strategic themes and associated draft key performance indicators. The Principal advised the Board that the Executive aimed to have a tangible Strategic Framework by the end of 2021, to allow the College to begin a consultation exercise with students, staff and other stakeholders.
- 6.3 The Board DISCUSSED the following in relation to the draft Strategic Framework:
- i) Current UK-wide issues around employment rights, and how the College could empower its students further by preparing them for employment.
 - ii) The importance of meta skills for student moving into employment.
 - iii) The need for a collective approach, with regional and national partners, to meeting strategic goals.
 - iv) The move towards an agile working approach for College staff.
- 6.4 The Board welcomed the progress made towards developing a draft Strategy Framework and AGREED to endorse the continued development of the strategic themes outlined by the Principal. The Principal advised the Board that the draft Strategic Framework would be presented to the next meeting of the Board, prior to a consultation exercise with stakeholder taking place.
- 6.5 The Board NOTED that a scheduled Board Strategy Session would be held on 26 October 2021. The Principal advised the Board that the proposed focus of the session related to feedback from recent staff surveys and the development of an agile working approach at the College. The Committee DISCUSSED the session and AGREED to the proposal put forward by the Principal.

7. HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Health & Safety Manager joined the meeting

- 7.1 The Board NOTED an Annual Health & Safety Report 2020/21, as presented by the Health & Safety Manager, which included an updated Health & Safety Policy.

- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The Board DISCUSSED the mechanisms for monitoring health & safety whilst staff worked from home, and the benefits of being able to review comparative annual data on incidents.
- 7.4 The Board NOTED that there were no material changes within the 2021/22 Health & Safety Policy and APPROVED the updated Policy for publication.

The Health & Safety Manager 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 the three full-time Sabbatical Officer were re-appointed on 01 July 2021.
- 8.2 The Board NOTED the ECSA Priority Objectives for 2021/22, as formulated and agreed by the new ECSA Sabbatical Team. The ECSA Vice President (Welfare) informed the Board that the 2021/22 priorities would be reactive to any requirements placed on the Students' Association through both national and College-wide guidance relating to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 8.3 The Board DISCUSSED the initial feedback received by ECSA at the start of the academic year, in response to the blended learning model implemented by the College. The ECSA Student President advised the Board that no major issues had been highlighted at the start of terms, with student funding arrangements generally functioning well.
- 8.4 The Board AGREED to endorse the key priorities outlined and wished ECSA well in achieving their targets over the course of the year.

Mike Cowley left meeting

9. EDINBURGH COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT TRUST (ECDT) REPORT

The Chair of the Edinburgh College Development Trust joined the meeting

- 9.1 ECDT UPDATE 2020/21
 - 9.1.1 The Board NOTED an update from the Chair of the ECDT on the progress made by the Trust over the past academic year. The Chair of the ECDT advised the Board that although the Covid-19 Pandemic had presented significant challenges, the Trust had continued to work positively with the College to support students and staff.
 - 9.1.2 The Board NOTED that, following the departure of Judith Sischy a former member of both the Board and the ECDT (Minute 1.6 refers), the Chair of the ECDT invited the Board to nominate a current non-

executive member to join the Trust. The Chair advised the Board that this matter would be considered further by members at their next meeting.

- 9.1.3 The Board DISCUSSED the potential for the EC DT to begin generating funds again now that Covid-19 restriction had eased, and the future opportunities available to spend its current funds. The Chair of the EC DT informed the Board that work between the College and the Trust to develop alumni activity would be an important avenue going forward.

9.2 EDINBURGH COLLEGE AND EC DT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING 2021/22

- 9.2.1 The Board NOTED a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Edinburgh College Development Trust (EC DT) and the Board, for the academic year 2021/22.
- 9.2.2 The Board NOTED that the MOU defined the key principles on which the relationship between the College and the EC DT 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 EC DT would continue to benefit both students and staff at Edinburgh College.
- 9.2.3 The Board welcomed the MOU and its joint development between the College and the EC DT and APPROVED its implementation for 2021/22.

The Chair of the Edinburgh College Development Trust left the meeting

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

10.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

10.1.1 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 College had achieved and exceeded all its SFC targets in 2020/21, including its overall credit target by 6,276 credits. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Board that in previous years this achievement would not have generated any additional income, however, in 2020/21 the College was able to claim all additional credits against Covid-19 related funding – through both the Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) and the National Transition Training Fund (TTF) initiatives.

The Board NOTED that the College had been set an activity target of 192,349 credits for the 2021/22 academic year. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Board that since applications opened there had been an increase of 24% in offers made and a 15% increase in offers accepted (as

of August 2021) compared to the same point last year, due to improvements carried out internally to the applications process.

10.1.2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS SUMMARY TO JULY 2021

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

The Board NOTED that the College would receive £1.8m of credit based unbudgeted YPG and NTT funding from the SFC to support 16-24 years and age 25+ years students, the unemployed and those at the risk of redundancy due to Covid-19. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that the College had also received £1.5m of additional non-recurring funds to address financial sustainability, protect jobs and help students finish their courses and gain qualifications.

10.2 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

10.2.1 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Board NOTED an annual report from the Corporate Development 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 Corporate Development Committee:

- i) *External Profile.* The development, and the significant importance, of the new Edinburgh College Website and Customer Relationship Management system.
- ii) *Stakeholder engagement.* The significant number of relationships / partnerships the College currently deals with, and the ongoing work to rationalise such partnership going forward.
- iii) *Income sources and diversification.* The efforts of the College over recent years to broaden its client base.
- iv) *Performance.* The excellent work done by the Commercial and International Teams during a challenge period for the college sector due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and EU withdrawal.
- v) *Strategic Impact.* The strategic importance of corporate development in response to a greater focus on innovation, knowledge exchange, industry collaborations - as highlighted in the Cumberford-Little Report and more recently in the SFC Phase 3 Report on sustainability.

The Board welcomed the report and DISCUSSED the ongoing recruitment of a new Director of Innovation and Knowledge Exchange, following the departure of the Head of Commercial in August 2021.

10.3 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

10.3.1 STAFF BOARD MEMBER ELECTION RULES

The Board NOTED the updated Election Rules for lecturing and support staff members of the Board, which were reviewed the Nominations Committee on 9 September 2021. The Board Secretary advised the Board that prior to the next

round of lecturing staff elections, scheduled in October 2021, the Board had agreed that the Election Rules should be reviewed.

The Board NOTED that the draft Election Rules had been circulated to the local branches of EIS-FELA and UNISON for consultation from 18 June 2021 to 30 August 2021. The Board Secretary advised the Committee that one response had been received from the EIS-FELA Branch Convenor in relation to the eligibility of staff as defined in the draft Election Rules.

The Board DISCUSSED the eligibility of staff within the defined 'Lecturing Staff' and 'Support Staff' groupings and AGREED, with the proposal of the Nominations Committee, that the Election Rules should be amended to include Curriculum Managers under the Lecturing Staff designation.

The Board APPROVED the Election Rules for implementation prior to the upcoming Lecturing Staff Board Member Election.

11. GOVERNANCE REPORT

- 11.1 The Board NOTED a Governance Report highlighting developments related to internal and external governance matters, and the proposed actions within the 2021/22 Board Improvement Plan.
- 11.2 The Board NOTED an updated 2021/22 Board Improvement Plan which had been developed around the previous Plan and outcomes from the annual self-evaluation process. The Board DISCUSSED the Improvement Plan and AGREED to monitoring progress against actions throughout the academic year.
- 11.3 The Board NOTED recent changes to its non-executive membership and the subsequent decision taken by the Nominations Committee on 9 September 2021 to review committee membership. The Chair advised the Board that amendments to committee membership would be put forward to the next meeting of the Board on 14 December 2021.
- 11.4 The Board NOTED that, with the endorsement of the Nominations Committee, a proposal had been forward to seek a tenure extension for Fiona Riddoch, a Non-Executive Board Member whose tenure was scheduled to end on 20 October 2021. The Board DISCUSSED the rationale for the extension and AGREED that the potential for an extension should be explored with the Scottish Government.
- 11.5 The Board NOTED that its extant Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation, and the terms of reference of its committees. The Board Secretary advised the Board that it was considered best practice to review the Governance Framework on an annual basis.
- 11.6 The Board DISCUSSED proposed changes to the Academic Council Terms of Reference, and AGREED the outlined amendments put forward by the Council. The Chair highlighted to the Board that the Academic Council would now be known as the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee.

12. NATIONAL REPORT

- 12.1 The Board NOTED a verbal update from the Chair on national development in the College sector related to her role as a member of the Colleges Scotland Board.

13. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

13.1 DEPARTURE OF NON-EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER

- 13.1.1 The Board NOTED that the tenure of Non-Executive Board Member, Toni McAlindin, would end on 29 September 2021. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Ms McAlindin for her contribution to the Board and Policy & Resources Committees.

14. FOR INFORMATION

14.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES 31.08.21

- 14.1.1 The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 31 August 2021.

14.2 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES 07.09.21

- 14.2.1 The Board NOTED the Corporate Development Committee minutes from the meeting held on 7 September 2021.

14.3 ACADEMIC COUNCIL MINUTES 09.09.21

- 14.3.1 The Board NOTED the Academic Council minutes from the meeting held on 9 September 2021.

14.4 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT TO SEPTEMBER 2021

- 14.4.1 The Board NOTED a Risk Management Report to September 2021, which included the Top-Level Risk Register.

14.5 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

- 14.5.1 The Board NOTED a Freedom of Information (FOI) Annual Report 2020/21, which outlined FOI activity over the academic year.

14.6 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AGENDA PLANNER 2021/22

- 14.6.1 The Board NOTED draft agendas for its next three meeting over the course of the academic year 2021/22.

The Chief Operating Officer, the Vice Principals and both observers left the meeting

15. CLOSED ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- 15.1 Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session. Closed items were recorded under a separate minute (Closed Minutes 15/29.09.21 refers).

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16.1 The next meeting of the Board of Management shall take place on 14 December 2021.

Meeting closed at 17:00