For the future you want

LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 4 MARCH 2022

14:00hrs, Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present: Victoria Browning; Laura Craig; Audrey Cumberford; Rose Dodgson; Ross Laird; Neil Manning; Kerry McCormack; Jeanette Stevenson (Chair); Richard Swan; Jordan Wylie

In attendance: Andrew Brawley (Education Scotland); Jon Buglass; Nick Croft; Kerry Heathcote; Monica Hoenigmann; Jakki Jeffery; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Karen Stevenson; Scott Warden

1. **WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

    1.1   The Committee NOTED apologies from Ethelinda Lashley-Scott.

    1.2   The Chair welcomed Ross Laird and Kerry McCormack, Non-Executive Board Members, to their first meeting of the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience (LTSE) Committee as members.

    1.3   The Chair welcomed Richard Swan, Lecturing Staff Board Member, to his first meeting of the LTSE Committee as member, following his appointment to the Board of Management in December 2021.

    1.4   The Chair welcomed Andrew Brawley, HMI Inspector (Education Scotland) to the meeting for Item 5, *Education Scotland Progress Visit Report*. The Committee NOTED that Assistant Principals Curriculum, Jakki Jeffery and Scott Warden, would sit in attendance for Item 5.

    1.5   The Chair welcomed Karen Stevenson, Assistant Principal Curriculum, to the Committee for Item 6, *Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality & Business Report*. The Committee NOTED that, under its terms of reference, at least one Assistant Principal Curriculum would sit in attendance at each meeting of the LTSE Committee.

    1.6   The Committee NOTED that Ethelinda Lashley-Scott, a Co-opted Member of the Committee would leave her post at Edinburgh College in March 2022. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Ms Lashley-Scott for her contribution to the LTSE Committee over the past three years.

1.7   The Committee NOTED that current co-opted lecturing staff members tenures would end on 31 July 2022. The Chair advised the Committee that, before their last meeting on 20 May 2022, guidance on the recruitment of new co-opted lecturing staff members would be communicated to all members.

2.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1   No declarations of interest were received.

3.   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1   The Committee APPROVED the minutes of the LTSE Committee from 19 November 2021 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4.   MATTERS ARISING

4.1   MATTERS ARISING REPORT

4.1.1   Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda.

5.   EDUCATION SCOTLAND PROGRESS VISIT REPORT

5.1   The Committee NOTED a presentation from the HMI Inspector on the Education Scotland Progress Visit Report published on 8 February 2021. The HMI Inspector informed the Committee that progress visits were delivered to all 27 Scottish college during the academic year 2021/22, in collaboration with colleges, Education Scotland and the SFC.

5.2   The Committee NOTED the methodology of the Progress Visit, whereby the Education Scotland Team engaged with a range of staff, students and other stakeholders. The HMI Inspector advised the Committee that the Team explored the five themes linked to the College priorities (i.e., Curriculum learning and teaching, Services to support learning, Learner Engagement, Evaluation to facilitate improvement, and Learning progress and outcomes) and Covid-19 recovery.

5.3   The Committee NOTED that the outcome of the Progress Visit indicated that Edinburgh College, overall, had made 'Satisfactory Progress' in a number of areas. However, the HMI Inspector advised the Committee that the Report also highlighted that insufficient progress has been made in improving outcomes for learners.

5.4   The Committee NOTED that across the theme of *curriculum, learning and teaching* the College had achieved positive progress in several areas, including the role of curriculum teams and the impact of career long professional learning. The Committee DISCUSSED the need for further continued progress relating to 'Establishing learners' digital capability' and 'Digital Poverty', but NOTED that this was challenging due the size of the College and its advanced use of technology - in comparison to many other colleges.

5.5   The Committee NOTED several advancements in *services to support learning*, including improved access for learners to College services and the positive impact of the learning support team. The HMI Inspector advised the Committee that the allocation of Learning Development Tutors (LDTs) remained an area for further progress, with some students still not having access to an LDT.

5.6   The Committee NOTED that positive progress around l*earner engagement* had been achieved through ECSA, the use of online apps, creative induction approaches and responsive teaching staff. The HMI Inspector informed the Committee that, whilst the range of learner feedback approaches was good, Student Satisfaction Engagement Survey return rates remained low compared to the sector average.

5.7   The Committee NOTED that whilst several areas of progress had been highlighted relating to the theme of *evaluation to facilitate improvement*, there remained further areas for improvement. The HMI Inspector advised the Committee that staff awareness of revised self-evaluation arrangement, curriculum teams use of data for improvements, low learner success rates, and learning and teaching evaluation approaches were all areas where the College could make further improvements.

5.8   The Committee NOTED that, in relation to the *learner progress and outcome* theme, the introduction of new management roles and the effective use of Pro-Monitor had led to improvements in full-time HE attainment rates. However, the HMI Inspector highlighted to the Committee that full-time FE and part-time FE and HE attainment rates were in the lower quartile nationally.

5.9   The Committee DISCUSSED attainment rates and the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The HMI Inspector advised the Committee that whilst the Pandemic had impacted on all colleges attainment rates, Edinburgh College had an historical issue with achieving successful outcomes for learners.

5.10   The Committee NOTED that, to tackle low attainment rates, it was essential for the College to get 'the right students on the right course'. Further to this, the HMI Inspector advised the Committee that an appropriate level of student support, during their period of study, would also be vital to help students to completion.

5.11   The Committee DISCUSSED the associated financial value of credits at the College, in comparison to other colleges in the sector, and whether this might be a contributing factor to low student attainment rates. The Chair advised the Committee that, although positive progress around student wellbeing and digital poverty had been made with additional funding provided during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Draft Scottish Government Budget could present further challenges in addressing issues highlighted in the Report.

5.12   The Committee NOTED that, whilst the Progress Visit outlined several areas for further progress, the Report highlighted that the College had made significant progress across all five themes. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that the Senior Management Team welcomed the Report, as the Team were aware of the key issues and had already responded by making appropriate changes to the curriculum management structure.

5.13   The Committee NOTED that the College had developed an action plan based on the recommendations of the Progress Visit Report. The Vice Principal

Performance, Planning & Innovation advised the Committee that an updated version of the action plan would be submitted to the next meeting of the LTSE Committee for further consideration.

The HMI Inspector (Education Scotland) left the meeting

The Assistant Principals Curriculum, Jakki Jeffery and Scott Warden, left the meeting

6. **FACULTY OF TOURISM, HOSPITALITY & BUSINESS**

6.1   The Committee NOTED a presentation from the Assistant Principal Curriculum which provided an overview of the Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality & Business' performance over the past 12 months. The Chair informed the Committee that the presentation was the third of four faculty presentations to the LTSE Committee.

6.2   The Committee NOTED that the Faculty consisted of six Schools: Construction, Enterprise and Commerce, Community ESOL and Modern Languages, College ESOL and English Language Teacher Training, Travel and Tourism, Hairdressing and Beauty, and Professional Cookery, Hospitality, Retail and Events. The Assistant Principal Curriculum advised the Committee that the Faculty currently employed 155 members of staff and taught almost 10,000 students.

6.3   The Committee NOTED the income targets for the Faculty, which included a significant amount of non-SFC income through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) and International contracts. The Assistant Principal Curriculum informed the Committee that income to date had progressed well despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 Pandemic and subsequent restrictions.

6.4   The Committee NOTED the 2021/22 operational planning process and the four key areas of course improvement identified by the Assistant Principal Curriculum. The Assistant Principal Curriculum, in line with feedback from the Education Scotland Progress Report, highlighted that assessment redesign / reduction and enhanced learning and teaching approaches were two key areas of development.

6.5   The Committee welcomed the presentation and DISCUSSED the following:

(i)   The Faculty's work piloting a JISC digital capabilities tool, which aimed to enhance students' digital capacity.
(ii)   The impacts of the Pandemic on the hospitality and tourism sector, and the College's role in supporting economic recovery in this area.
(iii)   The recent changes to the curriculum management structure and how this had been welcomed by curriculum teams.
(iv)   The integration of work placements into courses, and how the College could actively promote its achievements in this area further.

6.6   The Committee NOTED the progress made by the Faculty over the past 12 months during a challenging period for the College. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that the Assistant Principal Curriculum had achieved an immense amount in her first year in the role,

especially given that Covid-19 restrictions limited face-to-face contact time with the curriculum teams.

7. STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

7.1 STUDENT EXPERIENCE UPDATE

7.1.1 The Committee NOTED that staff across the Student Experience Team had returned to campus, where applicable, with demand on services remaining high. The Assistant Principal Student Experience advised the Committee that a hybrid model of student services support would ensure that learners remained supported whilst staff undertook a phased return to campus.

7.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the College continued to develop services with 2021/22 SFC Wellbeing Funding, however, it had been confirmed that the SFC would not continue the funding beyond 2022. The Assistant Principal Student Experience informed the Committee that discussions remained ongoing regarding how the College could continue to support counselling and wellbeing activities.

7.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the additional support requested by new and prospective students, following the disruptions experienced by learners during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that additional funding for the Skills Boost Course, to support student transition to college, had been made available.

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7.2 ECSA CLASS REP MEETINGS UPDATE

7.2.1 The Committee NOTED that the first and second rounds of Class Rep Meetings had taken place between November and December 2021. The ECSA Student President advised the Committee that the first set of meetings focussed on 'Retention and Areas for Improvement', whilst the second conference considered 'Online Learning and Student Engagement'.

7.2.2 The Committee NOTED that the five major student concerns highlighted through Class Rep meetings related to the following:

(i)   Juggling work and other responsibilities alongside study.
(ii)   Student mental health.
(iii)   Money.
(iv)   Digital equipment.
(v)   Too many assessments in a short period of time / lack of communication and information from college staff and lecturers.

7.2.3 Further to the concerns highlighted, the Committee NOTED feedback from students on what the College could do better to support student mental-health. The ECSA Student President advised the Committee that there remained a high demand placed on students when it came to assessments, therefore appropriate timetabling was important to reduced associated stress and anxiety.

7.2.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the feedback provided through both Class Rep Meeting Reports, and the proposed response of the Students' Association and the Senior Management Team.

7.2.5 The Committee NOTED that reports from upcoming Class Rep Meetings would be reviewed by the LTSE Committee on 20 May 2022.

8. COLLEGE STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

8.1 STUDENT INDUCTION SURVEY REPORT 2021/22

8.1.1 The Committee NOTED a report on the results of the 2021/22 Induction Survey, which was designed to assess students' opinions regarding key aspects of their experience before starting at the College, and during their first few weeks of study.

8.1.2 The Committee NOTED the scope of the survey, which was made available to 16,000 students, via Moodle, during a six-week period between October and November 2021. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement acknowledged that the response rate of 14% was low and, in line with the feedback from the Education Scotland Progress Visit Report, the College would continue to promote the survey to student through both innovative technologies and LDT contact time.

8.1.3 The Committee NOTED that in all surveyed questions, except one, the College had recorded satisfaction ratings of 87% or above. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised the Committee that the questions around course information on the Edinburgh College website scored highly, with 95% of respondents indicated that the '*website contained enough information about my chosen courses'* (an increase of 1% on the previous year).

8.1.4 The Committee NOTED that the poorest performing question within the Induction Survey responses was, the *'financial support I was entitled to was in place at the start of my courses'*. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised informed the Committee that 78% of respondents agreed with this statement - an increase of 6% on the previous year.

8.1.5 The Committee DISCUSSED the results of the 2021/22 Induction Survey and NOTED the significant efforts of the College to rectify past issues around student funding.

8.1.6 The Committee NOTED that the information gleaned from the Survey, when triangulated feedback from the ECSA Class Rep Meetings, would present an opportunity to implement further improvements to the 2022/23 induction process.

8.2 STUDENT SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT SURVEY 2021/22

8.2.1 The Committee NOTED the 13 multiple choice questions which comprised the 2021/22 Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised the Committee that the SFC required an 'overall satisfaction rating' to be recorded and reported.

8.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the following points relating to the 13 questions:

(i) The need to clarify the term 'regularly' with Question 2.

(ii)   The need to test Question 4, with a small cohort of students, to ensure students understand the term 'influence'' in the context of the statement.

(iii)   The clarity of the question relating to online learning materials.

8.2.3   The Committee APPROVED the 2021/22 Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey, subject to minor amendments to Questions 2 and 4.

9.   LTSE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

9.1   The Committee NOTED that it had been asked by the Board to present an annual report to the Board on 22 March 2022. The Chair advised the Committee that the report would highlight key matters of business considered by the Committee and future areas of development.

9.2   The Committee DISCUSSED the report and AGREED that members would be invited to consider the report further - prior to its circulation to the Board. The Clerk to the Board advised Committee members that the deadline for feedback on the report would be Friday 11 March 2022.

10.   ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10.1   None.

11.   FOR INFORMATION

11.1   INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY OF DIGITAL LEARNING

11.1.1   The Committee NOTED that internal audit had conducted a review of the controls in place at Edinburgh College relating to the development and delivery of digital learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Chair advised the Committee that the internal audit report had been considered by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee on 23 February 2022.

11.2   COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2021/22 AND 2022/23

11.2.1   The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the academic year 201/22 and 2022/23.

12.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12.1   The Committee NOTED that its next meeting would take place on 20 May 2022.

The meeting closed at 15:45