Edinburgh College

LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 3 MARCH 2023

14:00hrs, Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present: Hunia Arshad; Becky Duff; Annette Chapman; Audrey Cumberford; David Elder; Lorraine Farquharson; Daniel Holland; Ross Laird (Chair); Skye Marriner; Kerry McCormack; Carole Paterson; Ryan Quinn

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Gail Graham; Alison Izatt; Nicola MacKenzie; Julia Maria Vethamony; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

1. **WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

    1.1   Apologies were NOTED from Luna Morrison and Jonny Pearson (Vice Principal Education & Skills).

    1.2   The Chair welcomed Gail Graham, Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement, to her first meeting of the LTSE Committee.

    1.3   The Chair welcomed Learning Development Tutors (LDT), Alison Izatt and Julia Maria Vethamony, to the meeting for Item 8.2; LDT Update.

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 18 November 2022 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **MATTERS ARISING REPORT**

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

5. CURRICULUM STRATEGY UPDATE

5.1 The Committee NOTED a verbal update from the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance on the development of a new Edinburgh College Curriculum Strategy.

5.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the central importance of the Curriculum Strategy, within the context of the wider Edinburgh College Strategic Plan, and AGREED that the LTSE Committee would hold an in-person meeting on 19 May 2023 to consider a Draft Curriculum Strategy in further detail.

5.3 The Committee AGREED that, in order to help members understanding how the curriculum was being reviewed, a 'journey map' should be circulated by the Vice Principal Education & Skills prior to the next meeting of the LTSE Committee. Further to this, the Committee AGREED that, to support preparations for the next meeting, brief updates on matters such as the curriculum review and the upcoming Education Scotland Thematic Review should be circulated to members (as appropriate).

The ECSA Vice President (Welfare) joined the meeting

6. STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

6.1 STUDENT EXPERIENCE UPDATE

6.1.1 The Committee NOTED the SFC guidance on discretionary funding and DISCUSSED the barriers it placed on the distribution of funds. The Acting Assistant Principal of Student Experience advised the Committee that whilst the College continued to apply appropriate governance around discretionary funding, it had adopted a compassionate approach to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by their circumstances.

6.1.2 The Committee AGREED that the Acting Assistant Principal of Student Experience, members of ECSA Team, and relevant colleagues should convene a focus group to consider feedback on the barriers precluding students from accessing discretionary funding. The Chair advised the Committee that feedback and actionable recommendations from the focus group would be reported to the next meeting of the LTSE Committee.

6.1.3 The Committee NOTED that the SFC had confirmed that there would not be funds available for counselling services going forward into the academic year 2023/24. The Acting Assistant Principal of Student Experience advised the Committee that this was a major concern, as the repercussions of not having a Student Counselling Service would be felt across the College and would have a negative impact on both the student and staff experience.

6.1.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the funding available for counselling services and NOTED that the national Principals Group had engaged directly with Scottish Ministers on the issue. The Principal highlighted to the Committee that the Principals Group anticipated that funds would be identified to support counselling services, however, this could not be confirmed until the publication

of the Scottish Funding Council's Indicative Budget on 23 March 2023. The Committee AGREED that once further clarification on the funding situation had been received a further update should be circulated to the LTSE Committee.

6.2   ECSA CLASS REPS REPORT

6.2.1   The Committee NOTED an update on 2022/23 Class Reps activities, including the recent Class Reps Meeting held in February 2023 and the results of the End of Semester 1 Survey.

6.2.2   The Committee NOTED that, in total, 37 Class Reps had attended an online meeting in early February 2023 to consider matters such as the staff voluntary severance scheme consultation, gender-neutral toilets, and the upcoming ECSA Elections. The ECSA Student President highlighted that, as discussed under Minute 6.1.3, students were concerned about both their personal finances and their ability to access to means-tested grants.

6.2.3   The Committee NOTED a proposal from ECSA, based on feedback from both Class Reps and the End of Year Survey, to create a gender-neutral toilet facility at the Granton Campus. The Chair advised the Committee, that whilst such a proposal was not within the remit of the LTSE Committee, it was hoped the senior management would consider students' feedback and take appropriate action to support inclusivity and enhance the on-campus experience of all students.

7.   STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

7.1   INDUCTION SURVEY REPORT 2022/23

7.1.1   The Committee NOTED a report on the results of the 2022/23 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.

7.1.2   The Committee NOTED the scope of the survey, which was made available to 16,521 students, via Moodle, during a six-week period between October and November 2022. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement acknowledged that the response rate of 14% remained 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.

7.1.3   The Committee NOTED that all 19 surveyed questions had recorded satisfaction ratings of 80% or above. Further to this, the Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised the Committee that 11 questions had received satisfaction ratings of over 90%. This included 96% of respondents stating that they were satisfied, overall, with their College experience.

7.1.4   The Committee NOTED that three questions showed an increase in satisfaction level compared to 2021/22. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement highlighted a 4% increase in the level of satisfaction in response to the question;

"Any financial support I was entitled to was in place at the start of my course", which reinforced the significant efforts of the College to rectify past issues around student funding.

7.1.5   The Committee DISCUSSED the 2022/23 Induction Survey results and the potential reasons behind a 3% decrease in the response to questions regarding the timetabling of courses, changes to courses, and the organisation of courses. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that although work had been done to improve timetabling and both room allocation and numbering, further opportunities for improvement remained.

7.1.6   The Committee AGREED that the Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement and ECSA should consider how joint accesses to the timetabling system could improve the information provided directly to students who seek help from the Students' Association. Further to this, the Committee AGREED that the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance should report back to the next meeting of the Committee on proposed developments relating to the 'ownership' of rooms by curriculum areas, and improved social spaces for students.

7.2   STUDENT SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT SURVEY 2023

7.2.1   The Committee NOTED 13 multiple choice questions which comprised the 2023 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.

7.2.2   The Committee DISCUSSED the proposed survey questions and the resources in-place to implement the survey over a 6-week period from 6 March 2023.

7.2.3   The Committee APPROVED the 2023 Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey.

8.   'HOW GOOD IS OUR COLLEGE'

8.1   EDUCATION SCOTLAND PROGRESS VISIT: ACTON PLAN UPDATE

8.1.1   The Committee NOTED that the Education Scotland Progress Visit Report, presented to members on 4 March 2022, had outlined many areas of positive improvement - specifically within services to support learning and aspects of the delivery of curriculum, learning, teaching, and assessment. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance reminded the Committee that the College received an overall 'satisfactory', out of two possible outcomes.

8.1.2   The Committee NOTED a progress update against an Action Plan which had been developed for the College's own monitoring purposes but would provide a useful tool for engaging further with Education Scotland at the next planned progress visit. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance informed the Committee that once the new Edinburgh College Strategic Plan had been launched it would be linked to the Action Plan to further outline success goals and completion dates.

8.1.3 The Committee NOTED that, in response to a recommendation relating to self-evaluation reporting arrangements, the College had reviewed the alignment of its quality cycles. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that a new Quality Calendar, and accompanying checklist, had now been approved by the Senior Management Team, Heads of Schools and Curriculum Team Managers.

8.1.4 The Committee NOTED an update on a proposed Education Scotland Thematic Review which was scheduled to take place on the week commencing 27 March 2023. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance informed the Committee that it was expected that the review would focus on one specific area of academic activity, although exact details would not be confirmed until 6 March 2023.

8.2 LEARNING DEVELOPMENT TUTORS UPDATE

8.2.1 The Committee NOTED that the Education Scotland Progress Visit had highlighted that: "*The college has experienced increased demand for the services of LDTs and there are inconsistencies in the allocation of LDTs to class groups. As a result, a significant number of learners do not have access to, or benefit from LDT support services*". The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that, in response to the Progress Visit findings, two LDTs were recruited to offer out of class support to those on HE courses that did not have an LDT.

8.2.2 The Committee NOTED a presentation from LDTs, Alison Izatt and Julia Maria Vethamony, on the non-timetabled support for HE Students provided through the delivery of drop-ins, workshops and one-to-one appointment slots.

8.2.3 The Committee welcomed the presentation provided and DISCUSSED the following points:

(i)   The potential for collaboration between ECSA and LDTs to improve Class Rep engagement.
(ii)   The flexibility within the current approach to support individual needs.
(iii)   The benefits of online LDT support through a single point of contact.

8.2.4 The Committee AGREED that, to ensure this important area of work was appropriately monitored, an update from LDTs should be included in the LTSE Committee's annual schedule.

9. LTSE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD

9.1 The Committee NOTED that it had been asked by the Board to present an annual report to the Board on 28 March 2023. 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 advised Committee members that the deadline for feedback on the report was 10 March 2023.

10.   ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10.1 ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS CURRICULUM

10.1.1   The Committee AGREED that all four Assistant Principals Curriculum should be invited to the next meeting of the LTSE Committee, to participate in the Curriculum Strategy discussion (*Minute 5.2 refers*).

11.   FOR INFORMATION

11.1 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2023

11.1.1   The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the academic year 2023.

12.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12.1   The next meeting of the LTSE Committee shall be held on 19 May 2023.

The meeting closed at 16:00