



For the future you want

## **EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF 27 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**Meeting held in the Boardroom, Granton Campus**

**Start time: 14:00**

**Present:** Bruce Cassidy; Audrey Cumberland; Stewart Darling; Fiona Doring; Lesley Drummond; Becky Duff; David Elder; Janyce Holmes; Alex Killick; Ross Laird; Ann Landels; Skye Marriner; Kerry McCormack; Ian McLaughlan; Gwen Raez; Nora Senior (Chair); Jeanette Stevenson

**In attendance:** Jon Buglass; Michael Jeffrey; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson

**Observers:** Kevin Dixon; Don Gluckstein

## **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

### **1.1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

- 1.1.1 The Board NOTED that no apologies had been received.
- 1.1.2 The Board NOTED that Kevin Dixon, Don Gluckstein, Janyce Holmes, and Jeanette Stevenson joined the meeting remotely, via Microsoft Teams.
- 1.1.3 The Chair welcomed David Elder and Skye Marriner, the ECSA Student President and ECSA Vice President Welfare - respectively, to their first meeting of the Board of Management as members.
- 1.1.4 The Chair welcomed Fiona Doring, Becky Duff, and Ian McLaughlan to the meeting following their appointment to the Board of Management as Non-Executive Members on 30 June 2022.
- 1.1.5 The Chair welcomed Unison and EIS-FELA representatives Kevin Dixon and Don 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.
- 1.1.6 The Board NOTED that the Health & Safety Manager, Andy Bamberry, would join the meeting for *Item 7; Health & Safety Annual Report 2021/22*.

1.1.7 The Board NOTED its thanks to Richard Swan, the former Lecturing Staff Board Member, who left the College on 31 July 2022. The Chair advised the Board that the appointment of a new Lecturing Staff Board Member would be communicated on 7 October 2022, following a ballot of lecturing staff.

## 1.2 CHAIR'S UPDATE

1.2.1 The Board NOTED that the Chair of the Edinburgh College Board of Management had been appointed by Scottish Ministers on 4 July 2022, for an initial four-year term of office. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Vice Chair (Ann Landels) for her significant contribution to the College as Interim Chair of the Board from November 2019 to July 2022.

1.2.2 The Board NOTED that, over the summer period, Colleges Scotland had developed several documents to help position the college sector, in alignment with the Scottish Government and SFC, and to advocate for colleges. The Chair advised the Board that, although the college sector faced significant financial challenges, it must continue to highlight its numerous and wide-ranging successes to stakeholders.

## 1.3 COLLEGE AWARDS

1.3.1 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:

- (i) The College received five nominations in four categories at the 2022 CDN College Awards. The College was shortlisted in the Digital Learning, Inclusive College, Skills Development and Sustainability Action categories in recognition of outstanding work from staff and students throughout academic session 2021/22.
- (ii) ECSA were shortlisted in the Student Engagement category at the 2022 Green Gown Award UK and Ireland following the success of its Green Gown project which involved the setting up of Go Green Hubs on each campus.
- (iii) Lead for the College's Creative Industries Degree Courses, Annette Chapman, was awarded the Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) through Kingston University's Academic Practice Standards Framework.
- (iv) The College received a third commendation of the academic year (2021/22) from the awarding body, Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), for excellent performance during the April 2022 assessment session in recognition of the excellent standard of exam results for the Applied Marketing unit, a module on the College's Certificate in Professional Digital Marketing.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 The Board NOTED that Ross Laird and Gwen Raez, in relation to *Item 9, ECDD Memorandum of Understanding*, were members of the ECDD.
- 2.2 The Board NOTED that both observers would be asked to leave the meeting for *Item 13, Closed Items of Business*.

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

- 3.1 The Board APPROVED the minutes from 14 June 2022 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.

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

- 5.1 The Board NOTED an update on activities undertaken by the College since its last meeting on 14 June 2022, and progress against its strategic key performance indicators.
- 5.2 The Board NOTED that in response to the cost-of-living crisis, the College was working in partnership with ECSA to deliver a free breakfast provision for all students across each campus. The Principal highlighted that the provision would be available every weekday from the end of September 2022, initially until Christmas, with a commitment to continue in the new year.
- 5.3 The Board DISCUSSED the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the flexibility available to utilise existing discretionary funding and corporate sponsorship to support students. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, commended the proactive work of the College, and ECSA, to offer a degree of protection in order to stop vulnerable students from going hungry and cold this winter.
- 5.4 The Board NOTED an update on the resolution of national pay negotiations for 2021/22, with all staff receiving their uplift and backpay on 15 July 2022. The Principal advised the Board that the EIS-FELA National Pay Claim for 2022/23 had now been submitted to the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC), with meetings between employers and EIS-FELA representatives due to commence shortly.
- 5.5 The Board NOTED that in past years the SFC had ensured that guidance and funding allocations for the Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) and the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) were published ahead of the start of the academic year. However, this had not been possible in 2022/23 due to continuing budget and policy discussions between the SFC and Scottish Government. The Principal highlighted that failure to confirm annual funding allocations led to the risk of colleges facing further in-year funding reductions.

- 5.6 The Board NOTED that Edinburgh College had been confirmed as one of six venues across the UK, and the only Scottish college, to host the WorldSkills UK 2022 National Competition Finals in November. The Principal advised the Board that WorldSkills UK would see the country's top students and apprentices compete in a wide range of competitions for medals and a potential place at a global WorldSkills finals event in 2024.
- 5.7 The Board NOTED that the WorldSkills UK event provided an excellent opportunity for the College to showcase its facilities. The Board DISCUSSED the attendance of key Scottish Ministers, politicians and industry stakeholders and AGREED that invitations to attend would be circulated to the Board of Management.

***Janyce Holmes joined the meeting***

**6. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-27**

- 6.1 The Board NOTED an initial draft of the Edinburgh College Strategic Plan 2022-27 which built upon the strategic themes of 'People, Place and Performance' as previously endorsed by the Board of Management. The Principal provided an overview of the Strategic Plan document and outlined the broad strategic ambition, values, and purpose of Edinburgh College for the next five years.
- 6.2 The Board NOTED an accompanying presentation from the Vice Principal Education & Skills on Curriculum Development, a central pillar around which the ambition outlined within the Strategic Plan would be achieved. The Vice Principal highlighted to the Board current and projected data on enrolments, future employer demands for skills, emerging opportunities, and curriculum growth areas.
- 6.3 The Board welcomed both presentations and DISCUSSED the following points:
- (i) Board engagement with the Strategic Plan, to date, and the consultation process undertaken with staff, students, and other stakeholders.
  - (ii) The emphasis within the Strategic Plan placed on both partnership and collaboration, which was considered essential to the future success of the College.
  - (iii) The need to be more detailed within the Strategic Plan, or any accompanying blueprint, around the specifics related to growth.
  - (iv) The agility of the College as an organisation and the required flexes within strategic risk profiles to achieve its growth ambitions.
  - (v) The ability of employers to fully articulate their skills requirements and the data currently available to the College to assess regional skills needs.
  - (vi) The cost-of-living crisis and its impacts on both enrolments, retention, and mode of study.
  - (vii) The need to strengthen the narrative, within the document, around what Edinburgh College is working towards.
  - (viii) The format and presentation of the final Strategic Plan and its potential distillation to include a 'strategic plan on a page'..
  - (ix) The need to ensure that the final version of the Strategic Plan is presented in an accessible (and easily readable) format.

- 6.4 The Board AGREED that the direction of travel outlined within the draft Strategic Plan 2022-27 aligned with both its ambitions and previous Board-level discussions. The Chair advised the Board that the draft Strategic Plan would be circulated following the meeting, to provide members with an opportunity to consider the document in detail and provide further feedback directly to the Principal.
- 6.5 The Board AGREED that a refined draft of the Strategic Plan 2022-27 would be considered again at the next scheduled Board Strategy Session on 31 October 2022, prior to a final version being presented to the Board of Management for approval.

## **7. HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

### ***The Health & Safety Manager joined the meeting***

- 7.1 The Board NOTED an Annual Health & Safety Report 2021/22, 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 to staff and students had both increased slightly this reporting year, however, this was anticipated due to the increase in on-campus activity - following the easing of restrictions related to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 7.3 The Board DISCUSSED the mandatory Health & Safety training completed by staff every two years, and the need to ensure that members of the Board were satisfied that appropriate training was being undertaken by all College staff. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that data on mandatory training completion rates was reported on a quarterly basis to the Policy & Resources Committee, to ensure appropriate levels of compliance were maintained.
- 7.4 The Board DISCUSSED the individual and collective legal responsibilities of the Board of Management in relation to Health & Safety matters at Edinburgh College. The Board AGREED that further information on public liability insurance should be circulated to Board members and, further to this, explicitly referenced in the Board Induction Pack.
- 7.5 The Board DISCUSSED current best practice relating to Board member representation on the College's Health & Safety Group, which was chaired by the Chief Operating Officer. The Board AGREED that the Policy & Resources Committee should consider relevant governance arrangements further to ensure that the Board remained cognisant of key Health & Safety developments.
- 7.6 The Board NOTED that there were no material changes within the 2022/23 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 new full-time Sabbatical Officer were appointed on 01 July 2022.
- 8.2 The Board NOTED the ECSA Priority Objectives for 2022/23, as formulated and agreed by the new ECSA Sabbatical Team. The Board DISCUSSED the 10 key priorities outlined and wished ECSA well in achieving their targets over the course of the year.
- 8.3 The Board DISCUSSED the initial feedback received by ECSA at the start of the academic year following the return of most students to in-person learning. The ECSA Student President advised the Board that students had highlighted concerns relating to current on campus catering provisions, specifically the lack of hot food options available.
- 8.4 The Board NOTED the current position of the College outsourced catering contract and the concerns raised by both students and staff regarding the hot food options available across all four campuses. The Board DISCUSSED potential options to resolve the issues raised and AGREED that the Principal should provide a further update to the Board, via email, on the proposed response following a scheduled meeting of the Executive Team on 28 September 2022.

## **9. EDINBURGH COLLEGE AND EDINBURGH COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT TRUST MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING 2022/23**

- 9.2.1 The Board NOTED a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Edinburgh College Development Trust (ECDT) and the Board, for the academic year 2022/23.
- 9.2.2 The Board NOTED that the MOU defined the key principles on which the relationship between the College and the ECDT 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 ECDT would continue to benefit both students and staff at Edinburgh College.
- 9.2.3 The Board DISCUSSED current governance arrangements between the College and the ECDT, including the need to ensure appropriate accountability in relation to fundraising activities and suitability of potential donors. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Committee that whilst robust governance structures were in place, the College was cognisant of the need to develop its capacity so appropriate governance arrangements could be maintained as the Development Trust continued to grow.
- 9.2.4 The Board welcomed the MOU and its joint development between the College and the ECDT and APPROVED its implementation for 2022/23.

## **10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **10.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

#### **10.1.1 RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & CREDITS DASHBOARD**

The Board NOTED an overview of the performance of the College against its 2021/22 activity targets. The Vice Principal Education & Skills reminded the Board that the SFC had set the College a total activity target of 187,741 for the academic year.

The Board NOTED that, subject to the completion of the annual FES audit, the College had accumulated 189,452 credits. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Board that even though the 2021/22 core activity target had been achieved for the sixth year running, performance against additional funding targets, including ESF and Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) credits, had proved challenging.

The Board NOTED the 2022/23 activity target for the College was 183,714 credits, which included a minimal FA target and an increased credit value. The Vice Principal Education & Skills highlighted that the simplified activity target included no ESF, Early Years, or Deferred Student credits.

The Board NOTED that Full-Time (FT) enrolments for 2022/23 were down by almost 6% compared to the same time last year. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Board that fewer FT students could have financial implications as course fees, as well as credits, would be lower than projected.

The Board DISCUSSED the current SFC funding model and the changing nature of the regional job market, as evidenced by current data. The Chair highlighted the need for the Senior Management Team to use innovative approaches to tackle recruitment and retention challenges, which were likely to be exacerbated by the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

#### **10.1.2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS SUMMARY TO JULY 2022**

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College as outlined in the Management Accounts to July 2022.

The Board NOTED that the College had received confirmation from the SFC that they did not have funds to support colleges' voluntary severance schemes. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that the SFC had offered colleges liquidity support (- if needed) to ensure that suppliers received payments and staff received their salaries.

### **10.2 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

#### **10.2.1 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

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 Chair of the Committee highlighted the following points raised within the report:

- (i) The development of both a new Commercial Strategy and Engagement Strategy in early 2022/23, with a view to the two strategies being presented to the Board of Management before the end of the current academic year.
- (ii) The commercial performance of the College, which exceeded its revised budget in 2021/22, and the continued diversification of both the commercial and international portfolios under the guidance of the new Director of Innovation & Knowledge Exchange.
- (iii) The establishment of a new project in Edinburgh to help people and communities most affected by the cost-of-living crisis and the initial work undertaken by the College to raise awareness of support services and benefits available to students and staff.
- (iv) The continued high-level engagement between the College and its community planning partners across the region, to advance the shared agenda to reduce poverty related inequalities and improve positive outcomes for young people.

The Board welcomed the update provided and NOTED the important role of the Committee in overseeing matters related to commercial and international income, stakeholder engagement, marketing, economic research and intelligence, business support, collaborations, and international development.

### 10.3 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

- 10.3.1 The Board NOTED a verbal update on recent developments within the remit of the Nominations Committee and several proposals unanimously endorsed by Committee members, via email, on 26 October 2022.
- 10.3.2 The Board NOTED that Janyce Holmes, a Non-Executive Board Member and Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, had informed the Chair of her intention to step down from the Board of Management on 30 September 2022. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Ms Holmes for her contribution to the Board of Management over the past 18 months.
- 10.3.3 The Board DISCUSSED and AGREED the following two changes to committee membership, as endorsed by the Nominations Committee:
  - (i) Lesley Drummond would step down as Chair (and as a member) of the Corporate Development Committee and become Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee from 1 October 2022.
  - (ii) Gwen Raez would assume the role of Chair of the Corporate Development Committee from 1 October 2022.



- 10.3.4 The Board NOTED that the search for a new Independent Member for co-option to the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee continued, and a further update would be provided to the Board of Management at its next meeting. The Board DISCUSSED the need to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements remained in place on the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, during a period a of significant change, and AGREED that Ian Doig (an experienced Independent Member) should remain a co-opted member of the Committee until 31 August 2023.
- 10.3.5 The Board NOTED that the Nominations Committee would meet before the next scheduled meeting of Board of Management to discuss the recruitment of at least one non-executive member with chartered accountancy and/or audit committee experience.

## **11. GOVERNANCE REPORT**

- 11.1 The Board NOTED a Governance Report highlighting developments related to internal and external governance matters, and progress against the 2021/22 Board Improvement Plan.
- 11.2 The Board NOTED a Summary Top-Level Risk Register to August 2022. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that 'Risk 3' relating to a Shortfall in Commercial Income had, based on its residual risk score, moved from a RAG rated 'Red' score to 'Amber'. This followed the success of the Commercial Team in achieving its revised budget for the academic year 2021/22.
- 11.3 The Board NOTED that 11 actions within its 2021/22 Board Improvement Plan had been achieved, whilst a further 11 actions relating to the implementation of the Edinburgh College Strategic Plan remained ongoing. The Board Secretary advised the Board that it was expected that all the remaining actions would be completed within the academic year 2022/23.
- 11.4 The Board DISCUSSED the 2021/22 Board Improvement Plan and AGREED that the remaining actions would be carried over into 2022/23 and progressed to completion. The Board Secretary informed the Board that, since it had been three years since the 2019 Board Effectiveness Review, it was proposed that the Chair of the Board would bring forward a draft outline for an externally led review of the Board of Management by the end of the academic year.
- 11.5 The Board NOTED that a refreshed version of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges would be published imminently, following its approval by the Good Governance Steering Group. The Board Secretary advised the Board that the updated Code would be circulated to members in due course and noted at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Management.

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

### **12.1 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 12.1.1 The Board NOTED that the Corporate Development Committee, the Policy & Resources Committee and the Learning, Teaching & Student

Experience (LTSE) Committee had all reviewed their terms of reference in August/September 2022.

12.1.2 The Board DISCUSSED amendments to the Policy & Resources Committee Terms of Reference, relating to clarifications around its financial management responsibilities, and APPROVED the proposed changes.

12.1.3 The Board DISCUSSED amendments to the LTSE Committee Terms of Reference, relating to its co-opted staff membership, and APPROVED the proposed changes.

## 12.2 BOARD REFLECTION / FEEDBACK

12.2.1 The Board NOTED the inclusion of a new agenda item to allow all members to reflect on the practice of the Board of Management and the meeting which had taken place.

12.2.2 The Board DISCUSSED and NOTED the following points raised by members:

- (i) The opportunity to put forward questions in advance of the meeting.
- (ii) The time allocated to a 'strategic discussion' within the Board meeting format.
- (iii) The re-introduction of pre-Board presentations from staff / students, to allow members to fully engage with key initiatives and example of sector leading best practice.
- (iv) The potential to hold meetings of the Board of Management across the various College campuses.
- (v) The circulation of a quarterly list of College-related events to the Board, to further encourage and support Board member engagement.

12.2.3 The Board NOTED that the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Principal and the Board Secretary would consider the feedback provided under Minute 12.2.2 further, to ensure appropriate enhancements were made to the planning and operation of future Board of Management activities.

***Kevin Dixon and Don Gluckstein left the meeting***

## 13. CLOSED ITEMS OF BUSINESS

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 13/27.09.22 refers).

## 14. FOR INFORMATION

### 14.1 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES 31.08.22

14.1.1 The Board NOTED the Corporate Development Committee minutes from the meeting held on 31 August 2022.

14.2 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES 01.09.22

14.1.1 The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 1 September 2022.

14.3 LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 21.09.22

14.3.1 The Board NOTED the LTSE Committee minutes from the meeting held on 21 September 2022.

14.4 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

14.4.1 The Board NOTED a Freedom of Information (FOI) Annual Report 2021/22, which outlined FOI activity over the academic year.

**15. FOR CIRCULATION**

15.1 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

15.1.1 The Board NOTED a Risk Management Report, which included a Top-Level Risk Register to August 2022.

15.2 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AGENDA PLANNER 2022/23

15.2.1 The Board NOTED an agenda planner for the 2022/23 academic year, which aimed to provide members with an opportunity to review upcoming items of business.

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

16.1 The next meeting of the Board of Management is scheduled to take place on 13 December 2022.

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