Edinburgh College

LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 20 SEPTEMBER 2024

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams, 14:00hrs

Present: Lorraine Farquharson; Alan Holligan; Ross Laird (Chair); Sukinder Landa; Adam Lowe; Liz McIntyre; Ryan Quinn; Eleanor Sim; Charlie Whitson

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Gail Graham; Jonny Pearson; Anna Vogt; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

1. **WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

   1.1   Apologies were NOTED from Hunia Arshad, Annette Chapman; Audrey Cumberford; Becky Duff; Daniel Holland and Carole Paterson.

   1.2   The Chair welcomed Adam Lowe (Student President), Sukinder Landa (Vice President Welfare) and Charlie Whitson (Vice President Activities) to their first meeting of the LTSE Committee. The Committee NOTED that both Adam Lowe and Charlie Whiston had joined the Board of Management on 1 July 2024, as 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 on 17 May 2024 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.

   4.2   ***Student Experience Case Studies [Ref. 5.2.5/22.03.24]***

   The Committee NOTED an update by the Assistant Principal Student Experience on the development of student case studies to connect both stakeholder and partners with the range of academic and support work undertaken by the College. The Committee DISCUSSED a chart visualising '*who*

are our students right now?' and AGREED that the Assistant Principal – in the form of individual case studies – should aim to show how students are supported through various College systems.

5. **SFC GUIDANCE ON QUALITY FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES 2024/25 TO 2030/31**

5.1   The Committee NOTED a presentation from the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance and the Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement on the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF). a new approach to quality assurance and enhancement for colleges and universities. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement informed the Committee that the TQEF comprised a shared set of principles, delivery mechanisms and outputs that could be applied to the different contexts within colleges and universities to give assurance on academic standards, the quality of the student experience and ensure accountability for public investment in learning and teaching.

5.2   The Committee NOTED that, in response to the TQEF, the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) would be replaced by retrospective outcomes reporting. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that the College would be required to close off its 2023/24 ROA with a self-evaluation, which would be presented to the next meeting of the LTSE Committee.

5.3   The Committee NOTED that a Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) would, from academic year 2024/25, be the only annual reporting on quality submitted by the College to the SFC. The Assistant Principal highlight to the Committee that the SEAP would replace the Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan, which formed part of the How Good is our College Framework. The Committee NOTED that the SEAP would also supersede the learning and quality aspects of the SFC's Outcome Agreement process for both colleges and universities.

5.4   The Committee welcomed the alignment of quality arrangements across the Scottish college and university sectors and DISCUSSED both the TQEF and the future reporting required by the College. The Assistant Principal informed the Committee that under the new Framework the College would engage directly with QAA, rather than Education Scotland, with regards to quality matters.

6. **ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25: SEMESTER ONE UPDATE**

6.1   The Committee NOTED an update from the Vice Principal Education & Skills on the first month of the academic year 2024/25. The Vice Principal, on behalf of the Executive Team, thanked all staff for their efforts to get the College ready to welcome new and returning students.

6.2   The Committee NOTED 2024/25 enrolment activity for both full-time FE and full-time HE courses. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that the academic year was currently in Week 4, and, at present, full-time FE enrolments were up 4% against 2023/24 figures, whilst full-time HE enrolments had decreased 6%. The Committee NOTED that the impact of any decrease in enrolments on the College's credits target would continue to

be monitored by the Board of Management and its Planning & Resources Committee.

6.3   The Committee NOTED that a four year pay offer, to August 2026, had been accepted by EIS-FELA Members on 30 August 2024. The Vice Principal informed the Committee that, as stated by the Principal & Chief Executive in recent correspondence, the result of the ballot and the end to both the strike action and the programme of Action Short of Strike (ASOS) were widely welcomed.

6.4   The Committee DISCUSSED the opening weeks of the academic year and welcomed positive feedback from both the Students' Association and co-opted lecturing staff members. The Chair advised the Committee that there would be an opportunity to triangulate anecdotal feedback on the student experience, with class reps reporting and student satisfaction survey results at a future meeting.

7.   STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

7.1   ECSA IMPACT REPORT (EDUCATION) 2023/24 & 2024/25 PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

7.1.1   The Committee NOTED an overview of activities conducted by ECSA in the 2023/24 academic year, including the key 'Education' related achievements of the Students' Association over the past year.

7.1.2   The Committee NOTED the performance of ECSA against its 'Pillars of Action' and DISCUSSED the following:

(i)   The success of the Reverse Shadowing Scheme introduced by ECSA for Board Members, and its extension to include Senior Managers and other staff.
(ii)   The signing of a Student Mental Health Agreement between ECSA and the College.
(iii)   The outputs arising from the 2024 Student Life Survey.

7.1.3   The Committee NOTED the ECSA Priority Objectives for the academic year 2024/25. The Committee DISCUSSED the range of priority objectives and welcomed ambitions to tackle student loneliness and develop the middle tier of the current Class Reps system, The Chair informed the Committee that the ECSA Priority Objectives would be considered by the Board of Management at its next meeting on 26 September 2024.

Alan Holligan joined the meeting

7.2   STUDENT EXPERIENCE UPDATE

7.2.1   The Committee NOTED an update from the Assistant Principal Student Experience on service improvements for the new academic session and the launch of a self-enrolment tool to new and returning students. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that enhancements to the timetabling process

appeared to have gone well, with students attending campus with their accurate timetabling information and knowing what to expect on their first day.

7.2.2   The Committee NOTED that a draft Health & Wellbeing Strategy, which the Members had previously engaged with at a workshop session on 17 November 2023, would be considered by the Senior Management Team on 31 October 2024 – for approval - prior to the Strategy coming forward to the LTSE Committee on 22 November 2024.

7.2.3   The Committee NOTED that the Access Centre had continued to receive high levels of referrals from across the region. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that this was reflective of both an increase in the number of disability disclosures received by educational institutions and increased staffing costs over recent years. The Committee DISCUSSED the work of the Access Centre and AGREED that it should receive a presentation on the topic at its next meeting.

7.2.4   The Committee NOTED that Positive Behaviour, Mental Health, and Attendance & Engagement Policies had all been refreshed by the Student Experience Team. The Assistant Principal informed the Committee that these new policies would support Learning Development Tutors and curriculum staff to deliver their services in a more empathetic and transparent manner, in line with a new Student Charter.

8.   STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

8.1   LEARNING & TEACHING SURVEY 2023/24 SUMMARY REPORT

8.1.1   The Committee NOTED a Learning & Teaching Survey Summary Report which outlined levels of satisfaction amongst students over the 2023/24 academic session. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement informed the Committee that both Summary Report and course-by-course data had been shared with Heads of School and Curriculum Team Managers to review with their course teams.

8.1.2   The Committee NOTED that key themes within the Summary Report had informed a set of Curriculum and Quality Priorities, which were shared with the Committee, for the coming academic year.

8.1.3   The Committee NOTED that the response rate to the survey was 25% overall, an increase on the previous year's survey, with overall participation increasing by 6%. The Assistant Principal highlighted that amongst full-time students the response rate was 44%.

8.1.4   The Committee NOTED that the average score across the Survey's four theme questions was 4.2 (out of 5) stars, including a 94% satisfaction rate for the key question *"overall, I am satisfied with my college experience"*. The Vice Principal Innovation, Performance & Planning advised the Committee that there had been a two per cent decrease in this overall satisfaction score since last year, which correlated with an increase in student feedback relating to the impact of strike action.

8.1.5 The Committee welcomed the high level of student satisfaction outlined in the Survey results and DISCUSSED the following:

(i) The sense of coherence coming through Committee reporting around the student experience.
(ii) The response to the Survey in the backdrop of lecturing staff strike action, and the work undertaken by the College to mitigate students' concerns.
(iii) The dissemination of the Survey results and the communication of any related enhancements to both students and staff.
(iv) The historically low participation and satisfaction scores for Media and Music students, in comparison to other curriculum areas.

8.1.6 The Committee AGREED that, with regards to low participation and satisfaction rates amongst Media and Music students, the Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement should consider this matter further and provide a verbal update to the next meeting of the Committee.

8.2 EARLY EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2024

8.2.1 The Committee NOTED the content and format of the draft Early Experience Survey 2024, which would be made available to new and returning students on 21 October 2024.

8.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the proposed questions within the Early Experience Survey and AGREED an amendment to Question 2, eliciting responses on the College website, whereby it would be split in to two separate questions.

8.2.3 The Committee APPROVED the content and format of the Early Experience Survey 2024 - subject to inclusion of the additions outlined under Minute 8.2.2.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

9.1 None.

10. FOR INFORMATION

10.1 LTSE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

10.1.1 The Committee NOTED its current terms of reference. The Chair advised the Committee that the Board would consider a proposal for a restructure of its committee on 26 September 2024, which would lead to the development of new and/or updated terms of references.

10.2 LTSE COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2024/25

10.2.1   The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the academic year 2024/25.

11.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

1.1   To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 15:45