

LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING OF 17 NOVEMBER 2023

Meeting held in the Boardroom, Sighthill Campus, 14:00hrs

Present: Hunia Arshad; Annette Chapman; Jon Craig; Becky Duff; Ross Laird (Chair);
Skye Marriner; Luna Morrison; Eleanor Sim*

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

Observer: Vonnie Sandlan*

*[*Joined via Microsoft Teams]*

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were NOTED from Audrey Cumberford; Lorraine Farquharson; Daniel Holland, Liz McIntyre, Carole Paterson, and Ryan Quinn.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Anna Vogt, the newly appointed Assistant Principal Student Experience, to her first meeting of the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience (LTSE) Committee.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Vonnie Sandlan (Associate Reviewer, Advance HE) to the meeting as an observer. The Chair advised the Committee that Advance HE were undertaking committee observations as part of an Effectiveness Review of Edinburgh College Board of Management, conducted in line with the requirements of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's College.

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 8 September 2023 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 **Education Scotland 'You said, we did' Communications [Ref. 8.5/19.05.23]**

The Committee NOTED a verbal update from the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance on the communication to students of improvements in response to the Education Scotland Action Plan, ECSA Class Rep Reports and student satisfaction survey results. The Vice Principal informed the Committee that a 'You Said, We Did' approach was being developed by the College with the support of ECSA, and a further update would be provided to the LTSE Committee at its next meeting.

5. **WORKSHOP SESSION: HEALTH & WELLEBEING STRATEGY**

5.1 The Committee NOTED an initial draft of a new Health & Wellbeing Strategy, which outlined the commitment of Edinburgh College to giving students the best possible experience and having a positive impact on whole-person outcomes. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that through the Strategy, the College sought to create an environment and support system that prioritises the health and wellbeing of the whole College community.

5.2 The Committee NOTED recommendations from recent publications including the Mental Health Foundation's *Thriving Learners Research*, *Think Positive Research*, and the learning from the NUS Scotland's *Fighting for Students - the Cost of Student Survival Report*. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance informed the Committee that based on best practice guidance and Edinburgh College student feedback, the College's goal was to create a framework that supported an evidence-based approach to support students' health and wellbeing.

5.3 The Committee NOTED that the aims of the 'workshop session' was to engage Members and draw upon their expertise and lived experience – to co-create a new Health & Wellbeing Strategy for the College. The Assistant Principal Student Experience outlined the workshop exercise to the Committee and Members were split into three groups.

5.4 The Committee NOTED feedback from the three groups, and DISCUSSED the following points:

Co-Design

- i. The need for the new Strategy to be co-designed with staff, students, and stakeholders, rather than a top-down approach.
- ii. The importance of simplified and straightforward language, to ensure that everyone can read and engage with the Strategy.
- iii. Engagement with Community Planning Partners, local charities and community groups to ensure the Strategy's success.

Preventative Approach

- iv. Adopting a preventative approach to health and wellbeing, to develop students own personal resilience.
- v. Greater College-wide visibility and the importance of early interventions to ensure the effective implementation of initiatives.
- vi. The need for the Strategy to be more than a crisis response document.

Student Poverty / Cost of Living

- vii. The changing demographics of the student body due to the cost-of-living crisis, and the proportion of students at risk of homelessness.
- viii. The negative impacts of student poverty on individuals' ability to learn (and succeed), as well as their overall health and wellbeing.
- ix. The continuation of the Breakfast Clubs across campuses and the potential to help students sustain themselves at lunchtime.

College Environment

- x. The potential to create a health and wellbeing culture by providing appropriate spaces on campus, and appropriate breaks within class timetabling.
- xi. The current club and activity networks in place at the College and the potential to harness these further.
- xii. The role of the Students' Association and their continued engagement in the development of the Strategy.

Staff Support / Training / Access

- xiii. Mental health first aid training for all staff and the financial investment required to support such initiatives.
- xiv. In-person and online access to health and wellbeing services and the best modes by which to reach students.

5.5 The Committee NOTED that the implementation of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, and such initiatives as staff mental first aid training, would require financial investment. The Committee DISCUSSED the limited national funding available to colleges to support health and wellbeing initiatives and AGREED that these concerns should be highlighted to the Board of Management.

5.6 The Committee NOTED that Becky Duff, a Non-Executive Board Member and Director of Scotland at the Carers Trust, had offered to participate in a Health & Wellbeing Strategy Working Group – as appropriate. The Chair welcomed the involvement of an LTSE Committee Member, to support the Student Experience Team in the development of the Strategy.

5.7 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to consider the initial draft Health & Wellbeing Strategy and NOTED that Members were broadly content with the direction outlined. The Chair advised the Committee that it was expected that an update on the development of the Strategy would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

6. STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

6.1 STUDENT EXPERIENCE UPDATE

- 6.1.1 The Committee NOTED an update from the Student Experience Team, as provided by the new Assistant Principal Student Experience. The Assistant Principal welcomed feedback on the Student Experience Report from Members to ensure that the information provided supported effective governance.
- 6.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the Schools College Partnership (SCP) Team had begun planning for the academic session 2024/25 and were working with partners to ensure that the current offer remained appropriate for both the College, its partners, and young people. The Committee DISCUSSED the potential for the Edinburgh College Development Trust (ECDT) to support SCP activities and AGREED that this point should be considered by the Board of Management on 12 December 2023, as part of its ECDT Annual Report Item.
- 6.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the potential inclusion of a 'dashboard' in future Student Experience Reports. The Committee NOTED that it would be conducting a Student Experience Deep Dive at its next meeting on 8 March 2023, and AGREED that the level of information and KPI data it received should be considered further at this juncture.

6.2 EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION CLASS REP MEETING REPORT

- 6.2.1 The Committee NOTED an update on 2023/24 Class Reps activities, including online registration, training, and in-person / online meetings. The Committee DISCUSSED Class Rep training and AGREED that details of the training module should be circulated to Members - for information.
- 6.2.2 The Committee NOTED that at its first meetings of the year, which took place on the week commencing 6 November 2023, students were asked to reflect on their experience of the College induction. The ECSA Student President advised the Committee that although the Induction experienced had mainly been positive, a significant number of Class Reps had been negatively impacted by industrial action during the first weeks of Semester 1.
- 6.2.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the impact of the local and national industrial action taken by EIS-FELA, and the lessons learnt around student communications. The Committee AGREED that the Class Rep Meeting Report should be reviewed by the Senior Management Team and the points of concern responded to in a timely manner. Further to this, the Committee AGREED that the Assistant Principal Student Experience should seek to address such matters through the Committee's future Student Experience Reports.

7. STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY UPADATE

7.1 LEARNING & TEACHING SURVEY 2022/23 REPORT

- 7.1.1 The Committee NOTED a report on the results of the 2022/23 Learning & Teaching Survey, which was designed by the Quality Enhancement Team to assess levels of student satisfaction.
- 7.1.2 The Committee NOTED the scope of the survey, which was made available to 16,641 students, via Microsoft Forms, during a six-week period 6 March 2023. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement acknowledged that although the response rate of 19% remained low, it was in fact the highest response rate recorded for a Student Satisfaction Survey published by the College.
- 7.1.3 The Committee NOTED that all 13 surveyed questions had recorded satisfaction ratings of 85% or above. Further to this, the Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised the Committee that nine 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 DISCUSSED the 2022/23 Learning & Teaching Survey results and the disparity between overall satisfaction scores across departments, particularly in relation to '*Spaces and Places for Learning*'. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that whilst excellent models were in place across some campuses, it was accepted that greater parity was required across the College.
- 7.1.5 The Committee NOTED that the overall satisfaction rates outlined by students were positive and the breadth and depth of data provided through the Learning & Teaching Survey Report was valuable. The Committee DISCUSSED the sharing of the Report and AGREED that the 2022/23 Learning & Teaching Survey results should be circulated to Board Members – for information.

7.2 INDUCTION SURVEY 2023/24 UPDATE

- 7.2.1 The Committee NOTED a verbal update on the results of the Induction Survey 2023/24. The Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement advised the Committee that a written report outlining the findings and recommendations arising from the Induction Survey would be presented to the next meeting of the LTSE Committee.

8. 'HOW GOOD IS OUR COLLEGE'

8.1 EDUCATION SCOTLAND PROGRESS VISIT: IMPROVEMENT & ENHANCEMENT PLAN

- 8.1.1 The Committee NOTED that the Education Scotland Progress Visit Report, presented to members on 8 September 2023, had outlined many areas of positive improvement - specifically linked to student transitions and pathway planning for learners. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance reminded the Committee that the College received an overall 'satisfactory' outcome, out of two possible outcomes.
- 8.1.2 The Committee NOTED that in response to the Education Scotland Progress Visit, three areas for improvement had been identified within the Report. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that actions arising from the Progress Visit had subsequently been mapped to the College's wider Improvement & Enhancement Plan.
- 8.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the Improvement & Enhancement Plan and NOTED that Education Scotland were content with the proposed response. The Committee AGREED that it was broadly content with the Improvement & Enhancement Plan, although it was NOTED that the Senior Management Team might need to review the number of top tier 'priorities' - to ensure that resources were focused on key matters of business.
- 8.1.4 The Committee NOTED that progress against the Improvement & Enhancement Plan would be outlined at the next meeting of the LTSE Committee on 8 March 2023.

8.2 REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2023

- 8.2.1 The Committee NOTED a Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) Self-Evaluation Report 2023, which had been submitted to SFC on 31 October 2023. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Committee that the Report focussed on the following five high-level outcome agreement priorities: (i) Recruitment; (ii) Retention; (iii) Attainment; (iv) Progression, and (v) Student Satisfaction.
- 8.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the following points relating to the Self-Evaluation Report:
- (i) The shortfall against the 2022/23 credits target, whilst remaining inside the SFC's 2% tolerance level.
 - (ii) The impact of Action Short of Strike, and the subsequent resulting boycott, on the presented outcome data.
 - (iii) The decrease in early and further withdrawals across most modes of study.
 - (iv) With the exception of full-time HE provision, the positive direction of travel in relation to attainment.
 - (v) The downward trend in attainment, over a 3-year period, for Care Experienced full-time HE students.
 - (vi) Student success and satisfaction remaining the key focus of the new College Strategic Plan.

8.2.3 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to review the ROA Self-Evaluation Report and NOTED the progress made by the College towards positioning itself in the upper quartile across the outcome agreement priority measures.

8.3 REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2023/24

8.3.1 The Committee NOTED a draft ROA 2023/24 and an accompanying Outcome Agreement Data Table. The Vice Principal Performance, Planning & Innovation advised the Committee that the ROA covered five sections on Fair Access and Transition, Quality of Learning & Teaching, Coherent Learning Provision, Work Based Learning and Skills, and Net-Zero and Environmental Sustainability.

8.3.2 The Committee NOTED that, following changes to the SFC submission deadline for college outcome agreements, Edinburgh College was required to submit the ROA 2023/24 to the Funding Council by the end of October 2023. The Vice Principal Performance, Planning & Innovation informed the Committee that, in order to submit the ROA 2023/24 in a timely manner, it had been reviewed and approved by the Board of Management via correspondence on 26 October 2023.

8.3.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the ROA 2023/24 and NOTED its submission to the SFC on 31 October 2023.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

9.1 ECSA REVERSE MENTORING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

9.1.1. The Committee NOTED that six members of the Board of Management had signed up to ECSA's reverse mentoring initiative. The Chair welcomed the opportunity for Board Members to meet with and participate in the daily activities of the Students' Association.

9.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the initiative and AGREED that the opportunity and benefits should be highlighted to the Board of Management on 12 December 2023.

10. FOR INFORMATION

10.1 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2023/24

10.1.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the academic year 2023/24.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The next meeting of the LTSE Committee shall be held on 8 March 2024.

The meeting closed at 16:10