Edinburgh College

For the future you want

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 14 JUNE 2022

Meeting held in the Boardroom, Milton Road Campus

Start time: 14:00

Present: Bruce Cassidy; Audrey Cumberford; Stewart Darling; Rose Dodgson; Lesley Drummond; Ross Laird; Ann Landels (Chair); Kerry McCormack; Fiona Riddoch; Jeanette Stevenson; Richard Swan; Jordan Wyllie

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

Observers: Kevin Dixon; Don Gluckstein

1.   **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

   1.1   The Board NOTED apologies from Alex Killick and Gwen Raez

   1.2   The Board NOTED that Don Gluckstein, Jeanette Stevenson, and Marcus Walker joined the meeting remotely, via Microsoft Teams.

   1.3   The Chair welcomed David Elder, the incoming ECSA Student President, to the Board as an observer.

   1.4   The Chair welcomed Unison and EIS-FELA representatives Kevin Dixon and Donny 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.

   1.5   The Board NOTED that the ECSA Director, Al Wilson, would join the meeting for *Item 7; ECSA Report.*

   1.6   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 won the Innovative Use of Technology Award at the 2022 Herald HE Awards in recognition of a partnership between College staff and technology company Cadpeople to create Virtual Reality software programme

to teach a key SQA Module in Dementia Care. The programme delivers an immersive experience which prepares students for working with those living with dementia in our communities.

(ii) The College also had five more finalists across four categories at the 2022 Herald HE Awards.

(iii) The College received a commendation from the awarding body, Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), for excellent performance during the December 2021 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.

1.6   The Board NOTED its thanks to staff and students in Creative Industries for hosting a successful 2022 Glow Festival. The Chair also commended FE students' achievements at the Prizegiving Event held on 9 June 2022 and highlighted to members the upcoming date of the EC Graduation Ceremony on 30 September 2022.

2.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1   The Board NOTED that the Interim Chair of the Board would leave the meeting for *Item 10.3, Evaluation of the Chair of the Board 2021/22*, if required. The Chair advised members that the Interim Vice Chair would act as Chair for this item of business.

2.2   The Board NOTED that all observers and the Executive Team would be asked to leave the meeting for *Item 12, Closed Items of Business.*

3.   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SCHEDULED MEETING

3.1   The Board APPROVED the minutes from 22 March 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, with the exception of the following:

4.1.2 *AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE – INDEPENDENT MEMBER CO-OPTION* (*Minute 8.3.1/14.12.21*)

The Board NOTED that an advert to recruit a new Independent Member to the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee had been published on 16 March 2022. The Chair advised the Board that following an advertising period of almost 8 weeks, no suitable candidates had been identified through the process.

The Board NOTED that to attract suitable candidates it would now adopt a more targeted approach to recruitment. The Board AGREED that the Clerk

would re-circulate the role specification to all members of the Board for dissemination across their networks.

5. **PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

5.1 The Board NOTED an update on activities undertaken by the College since its last meeting on 22 March 2022, and progress against its strategic key performance indicators.

5.2 The Board NOTED that, following a ballot of EIS-FELA members, the pay offer made on 31 May 2022 by the Management Side of the Colleges Scotland Employers Association had been accepted. The Principal advised the Board that the National Pay Dispute lodged formally by EIS-FELA on 27 January 2022 was therefore resolved and all associated industrial action cancelled.

5.3 The Board NOTED that, on 22 March 2022, it had discussed the financial sustainability of the College and recognised the use of voluntary severance, in line with the requirements of the curriculum, as a mechanism to ease the financial challenges it faced. The Principal highlighted to the Board that a Voluntary Severance Scheme Business Case was subsequently considered and approved by the Remuneration Committee on 5 May 2022, via correspondence, prior to its submission to the SFC.

5.4 The Board NOTED that the Business Case was approved by the SFC on 19 May 2022, although it was confirmed that no additional funding would be made available to support the implementation of the Voluntary Severance Scheme. The Principal informed the Board that the 2022 Voluntary Severance Scheme had been launched to all staff on 22 May 2022, with a deadline for applications of 17 June 2022.

5.5 The Board DISCUSSED the levels of interest shown by staff to the 2022 Voluntary Severance Scheme and the current number of applications. The Principal advised the Board that a further update on the outcome of the Scheme would be communicated to members in due course.

5.6 The Board NOTED the continued delays to the Support Staff Job Evaluation process which had been in-progress for over four years. The Principal highlighted to the Board that she was disappointed with the rate of progress and recommended that support staff communicate concerns relating to the delay to their local trade union branch.

5.7 The Board NOTED that 50 Dnipro children and young people and nine accompanying staff had arrived at Edinburgh College Milton Road Halls on 14 April 2022, after spending three weeks at a charitable facility in Callander. The Board DISCUSSED the current arrangement in place until 31 July 2022 and the ongoing work with all partners to ensure suitable long-term arrangements were implemented.

6. **STRATEGIC UPDATE: EQUALITY OUTCOMES & MAINSTREAMING PROGRESS REPORT 2022**

6.1 The Board NOTED that it had approved an Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021-25, in April 2021, and agreed to annually monitor progress against

actions outlined within the Report. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance presented a report to the Board which provided an update on relevant activities that had taken place across the College over the past year.

6.2 The Board NOTED that, as an employer and a public body, the College played a leading role in the wider promotion of equality and diversity. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance highlighted the aim of the College to help remove barriers, and advance equality for groups who experienced disadvantage in our society.

6.3 The Board NOTED the seven published Equality Outcomes for the period 2021-25, and details of the rationale, measurable success metrics, and actions taken by the College for each Outcome. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Board that the College's Widening Access and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (WAX-ED) was responsible for advising, overseeing and regularly monitoring progress towards achieving the Equality Outcomes and other related work.

6.4 The Board welcomed the update provided and DISCUSSED the following points:

(i) The significant level of engagement between the College, through its Equalities Officer, and the Students' Association on Equality Outcomes.
(ii) The work of the College with Autism Scotland and the incoming ECSA Student President's wish to engage further in this area.
(iii) The negative impacts of the Cost-of-Living crisis and student financial hardship on widening access.
(iv) The wider engagement across the College, beyond EDI champions, and the work of WAX-ED sub-groups.
(v) The membership of the College in the national Black Leadership Group.

6.5 The Board NOTED that a full interim Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report would be published at the mid-point of the reporting cycle in April 2023.

Al Wilson joined the meeting

7. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT

7.1 ECSA END OF YEAR 2021/22 REPORT

7.1.1 The Board NOTED an overview of activities conducted by ECSA in the 2021/22 academic year. The ECSA Student President introduced a short video outlining key achievements of the Students' Association over the past year.

7.1.2 The Board NOTED that ECSA had continued to use the lessons learnt from online working to continue to deliver its services both online and on campus. The ECSA Student President informed the Board that she was particularly proud of the Students' Associations representation work in 2021/22, which saw a significant increase in the number of Class Reps compared to previous years.

7.1.3 The Board NOTED that, following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, ECSA was able to deliver its Go Green services on campus, including such initiatives as the Swap Shop and community fridges. The ECSA Student President advised the Board that ECSA, with the support of the College, was excited to win the first ever Net Zero Award from the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce in recognition of its Go Green Team and their achievements over the year.

7.1.4 The Board welcomed the detailed End of Year Report, and the accompanying video, provided by ECSA, and DISCUSSED the following points:

(i) The excellent work done by the ECSA Team over the year during a challenging period, with students returned to on campus learning.
(ii) The levels of trust between students and staff at the College and how exclusively remote learning had impacted upon the student experience.
(iii) The issues experienced by a small minority of students who felt they could not directly seek help from College staff.
(iv) The important role of Learning Development Tutors in supporting students.
(v) The College's complaints handling procedures and the initial stages of dealing with a complaint.

7.1.5 The Board NOTED that enhancements to the student support model were currently being considered as part of the action plan created by the College in response its Education Scotland Progress Visit Report. The Chair informed the Board that progress against the action plan was monitored directly through the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee.

7.1.6 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, commended the ECSA Team for their End of Year Report and wished the incumbent Sabbatical Officers well in their future endeavours.

7.2   ECSA STRATEGIC PLANNING & FUNDING 2022/23 REPORT

7.2.1 The Board NOTED a 2022/23 ECSA Funding Bid, which included an overview of the Students' Association's broad strategic aims for the coming academic year.

7.2.2 The Board DISCUSSED impact of grant funding through the Climate Change Funding ending in the current academic year. The ECSA Director informed the Board that the Students' Association, with the support of the College and the Edinburgh College Development Trust, was now seeking external granting funding to support student led initiatives.

7.2.3 The Board welcomed the ECSA Funding Bid and NOTED that the approval of funding would be confirmed as part of consideration around the Indicative College Budget 2022/23.

Al Wilson left the meeting

8.   COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1   POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

8.1.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Board NOTED an annual report from the Policy & Resources 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 current financial forecasting undertaken by the College and reported to both the Committee and the Board, which indicated the cumulative total savings required from 2022/23 equated to £3.6m, increasing to almost £5.7m by 2024/25. The Committee welcomed the approval of a Voluntary Severance Scheme by the SFC as a tool to deliver significant savings over the next three years.

(ii)   The need to ensure that both the College and College Employers Scotland continue to engage meaningfully with recognised trade unions, to ensure that staffs concerns are heard, and industrial action is avoided.

(iii) The response of the HR Teams to support staff returning to campuses following a period of significant uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

(iv)   The Committee continues to monitor progress against the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-25, the central ambition of which aims for the College to become carbon neutral by 2030, with a 75% reduction in emission by 2025. The Committee welcomed the significant progress made over the past two years, but notes that it would be difficult to achieve the long-term net zero target without additional financial investment from the Scottish Government.

The Board welcomed the update provided and NOTED the important role of the Committee in overseeing matters related to Finance, Human Resources, and Infrastructure & Estates.

8.1.2 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION 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 192,349 for the academic year.

The Board NOTED that, as of 1 June 2022, the College had accumulated 189,912 core 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 credits, remained challenging.

The Board NOTED that recruitment for the academic year 2022/23 had witnessed a significant decrease in FT HE and FT FE applications when compare against the previous academic years. The Vice Principal Education

& Skills highlighted that, on a more positive note, the number of offers made to FT provision was up 27% and offers accepted had increased by 17% when compared with the same time last year.

The Board DISCUSSED the current marketing strategy utilised by the College to attract new students and NOTED that evidence indicated that targeted 'course specific' campaigns were not effective. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Board that the most important recruitment tool was making sure that potential students were aware that the College, and its campuses, were open for business.

The Board DISCUSSED the fractured learning experience that many young people had faced through the Covid-19 Pandemic and the need to ensure that people across Edinburgh and the Lothians understood the purpose of the College, its curriculum offer, and the long-term benefits associated with further education.

8.1.3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS SUMMARY TO APRIL 2022

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

8.1.4 INDICATIVE COLLEGE BUDGET 2022/23

The Board NOTED an Indicative College Budget 2022/23 as put forward by the Executive, which outlined the budgeting process, budgeting pressures, additional costs, budget reductions, savings, impact on cash-flow, risks and mitigations, and sensitivity analysis.

The Board NOTED the year-on-year financial pressures placed upon the College, including:

(i) the flat cash settlement outlined within the Scottish Budget.
(ii) the National Pay Award, which was above public sector pay policy levels.
(iii) National Insurance contribution increases.
(iv) Hyper inflationary energy prices.
(v) the adverse variance in HN SAAS fees.

The Board DISCUSSED progress related to the SFC review of the college sector funding model and the current expectations placed on the Funding Council within the latest Ministerial Guidance. The Vice Principal Corporate Development outlined the ongoing work of the College to analyse its current revenue streams and assess alternative avenues of funding.

The Board endorsed the Indicative College Budget 2022/23 and AGREED that - once underlying assumptions had been confirmed - a final Draft College Budget would be circulated (via email) to the Board for approval.

8.2 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE 13.06.22

8.2.1 The Board NOTED a verbal update from the Chair of the Nominations Committee following a meeting on 13 June 2022. The Chair advised the Board that the draft minutes of the meeting would be presented to its next meeting of noting.

8.2.2 The Board NOTED that a successful non-executive recruitment round had concluded on 6 June 2022, with three individuals being put forward to Scottish Government for approval. The Chair informed the Board that all three candidates had significant experience within the areas of community engagement, working with young people, and the voluntary sector.

8.2.3 The Board NOTED that the Nomination Committee would meet again in early 2022/23 to considered Board and committee succession planning further.

9. NATIONAL REPORT

9.1 The Board NOTED that the appointment of the new Chair of the Edinburgh College Board of Management would be announced on 4 July 2022. The Chair advised the Board that following the appointment of the new Chair she would return to her role as Vice Chair.

9.2 The Chair thanked the Principal, the Executive Team and Board colleagues for the support they had provided during the period of her interim tenure. The Board NOTED the challenges the College had faced over the two- and half-year tenure of the Interim Chair of the Board, and its robust response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

10. GOVERNANCE REPORT

10.1 GOVERNANCE UPDATE

10.1.1 The Board NOTED a Governance Report highlighting developments related to internal and external governance matters, and progress against the 2021/22 Board Improvement Plan.

10.1.2 The Board NOTED the 2022/23 Board Planner, which had been agreed with members outwith the meeting cycle in May 2022. The Chair advised members that the first meeting of the Board in the new academic year would take place on 27 September 2022.

10.1.3 The Board NOTED a Summary Top-Level Risk Register to May 2022. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that, as requested by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee in March 2022, *'National Bargaining Impact on College Operations'* had been RAG rated 'Red' by the Risk Management & Assurance Group on 21 April 2022.

10.2 BOARD EVALUATION REPORT 2021/22

10.2.1 The Board NOTED feedback and actions arising from the 2021/22 Self-Evaluation Survey completed by members of the Board. The Chair advised the Board that the questionnaire results indicated the members were broadly content with governance arrangements at the College, with the Board agreeing with all 34 statements put forward in the Survey.

10.2.2   The Board NOTED that the Interim Chair had held one-to-one meetings with members of the Board during w/c 23 May 2022. Further to the results of the Survey, the Chair highlighted the following points:

         (i)   The need for the Board to evaluate both the benefits and drawbacks of holding exclusively online committee meetings.

         (ii)   The proposed use of College email account by Non-Executive Board Members from mid-August 2022 onwards, to ensure compliance with cyber-security measures adopted by the College.

10.2.3   The Board DISCUSSED the feedback from the Self-Evaluation Survey and the one-to-one Board evaluations and AGREED that actions arising should be included in the 2022/23 Board Improvement Plan.

Donny Gluckstein left the meeting.

     10.3   EVALUATION OF THE CHAIR REPORT 2021/2

The Interim Vice Chair, Fiona Riddoch, assumed the role of Chair

10.3.1   The Board NOTED that in accordance with good practice, and as part of the overall evaluation of the Board, an evaluation of the Interim Chair was conducted by the Interim Vice Chair. The Interim Vice Chair outlined to the Board the methodology used and a summary of the results.

10.3.2   The Board DISCUSSED the written report provided by the Interim Vice Chair and were content with its positive and constructive findings. The Board welcomed the formal process of evaluation conducted by the Interim Vice Chair, which was considered in line with best practice.

The Interim Chair reassumed the role of Chair

11.   ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

     11.1   REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT IMPACT FRAMEWORK

11.1.1   The Board NOTED that the SFC had asked the College to review its Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) Impact Framework and submit an updated document to the Funding Council by 17 June 2022. The Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance advised the Board that the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience had previously approved the 2022/23 ROA on 19 November 2022.

11.1.2   The Board DISCUSSED that the main changes to the ROA Impact Framework, including a reduced credit activity target of 183,174 (exactly 3000 credits less than the previous year), to begin to address the average credit price disparity.

11.1.3   The Board AGREED that the data within the ROA Impact Framework should be reviewed and approved by the Interim Chair of the Board and

the Chair of the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee prior to its submission to the SFC.

11.2 AMBASSADOR AWARD

11.2.1 The Board NOTED a proposal put forward by the Interim Chair and the Principal to nominate Nigel Paul, a former long serving Non-Executive Board Member, for the Edinburgh College Ambassador Award - which was to be presented at the Graduation Ceremony in September 2022.

11.2.2 The Board welcomed Mr. Paul's nomination for the Edinburgh College Ambassador Award and unanimously AGREED to endorse the proposal.

11.3 STUDENT MEMBERS DEPARTURE

11.3.1 The Board NOTED that the tenure of Student Board Members, Rose Dodgson and Jordan Wyllie, would end on 30 June 2022, following two years as sabbatical officers. The Interim Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked both Ms. Dodgson and Mr. Wyllie for their significant contribution to the development of key aspects of the student experience during their tenures, and the considerable work both they and the ECSA Team had done during a challenging period for the College and its students.

11.4 NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER DEPARTURE

11.4.1 The Board NOTED that the tenure of the Interim Vice Chair, Fiona Riddoch, as a Non-Executive Board Member would end on 30 June 2022. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Ms Riddoch for her significant contribution to the Board and a several of its sub-committees over a six-and-a-half-year tenure.

Kevin Dixon left the meeting

The Vice Principals left the meeting.

12. CLOSED ITEMS OF BUSINESS

12.1 Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session. Closed items were recorded under a separate minute (Closed Minutes 12/15.06.21 refers).

13. FOR INFORMATION

13.1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES 17.05.22

13.1.1 The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 17 May 2022.

13.2 LEARNING, TEACHING & STUDENT EXPEREINCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 20.05.22

    13.3.1   The Board NOTED the LTSE Committee minutes from the meeting held on 20 May 2022.

13.3 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES 24.05.22

    13.3.1   The Board NOTED the Corporate Development Committee minutes from the meeting held on 24 May 2022.

13.4 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 25.05.22

    13.4.1   The Board NOTED the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 25 May 2022.

14. FOR CIRCULATION

14.1 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

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

14.2 RIDDOR REPORT

    14.2.1   The Board NOTED a RIDDOR Report for the third Quarter of 2021/22.

14.3 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AGENDA PLANNER 2022/23

    14.3.1   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.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 The next meeting of the Board of Management is scheduled to take place on 27 September 2022.

Meeting closed at 17:00