INFORMATION, STRATEGY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

UEA
University of East Anglia

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2010

Present: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor T.D. Davies) (in the Chair), Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French) (ISD), Dean of Faculty or nominated representative (Professor J. Collier) (FOH), Director of Finance (Mr S. Donaldson), Chair of the Library and Learning Resources Forum (Professor R. Kaye), Director of Faculty Administration (Ms H Lewis), Dean of Faculty or nominated representative (Dr B. Milner) (SCI), Convenor of ICT Forum (Professor D. Stevens), Director of Faculty Administration (Mr J. Tully) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor T.B. Ward)

With: Mr D. Westlake.

Apologies: Director of Taught Programmes (Professor G. Moore), One Director of Central Division (Mr R. Evans), Director of Faculty Administration (Dr A. Blanchflower), Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms R. Handforth)

1.   MINUTES

Confirmed
    the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2010.

2.   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted
    (1)   The action on the Director of Information Services noted in minute 30 (4) to write to Heads of Schools about the need to defer work on outsourcing of student email and filestore had not been completed.

    (2)   It was confirmed that the words "public" and "research" had been added to the final bullet point in the first section of the High Level Records management Policy. (Minute 31 (5))

    (3)   It was noted that the Director of Faculty Administration (Arts and Humanities) had held discussions with the School of Film and Television Studies regarding the refurbishment of the TV Studio, and the Director of Information Services would be talking to the Head of the School on the subject. (Minute 33 (2))

    (4)   It was confirmed that the change to the Conditions of Computer use suggested to the Chair by the Convenor of the ICT Forum had been incorporated into the document. (Minute 35 (1))

    (5)   It was confirmed that a carefully worded section on obligations for staff had been added to the Conditions of Computer Use. (Minute 35 (7))

    (6)   It was confirmed that the Director of Information Services had replied to the Director of Taught Programmes relating to specialist equipment. (Minute 45 (6))

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3.   STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

A discussion was held on the subject of the problems relating to timetabling at the Start of the Academic Year. The following comments were noted:

(1)   The timetabling module had been resourced by one developer, mainly working alone, but with some additional support towards the required date.

(2)   It was discovered in the June/July period that in order to properly use the timetabling module it was necessary to upgrade SITS from version 8.3.0 to 8.3.1. However, it was considered that it was too late to upgrade so close to the Start of Year, so it was decided to patch the system, with the effect that work was delayed by a week in teaching offices.

(3)   The teaching offices could have used the system earlier, in tandem with the room bookings service, but without certainty over room availability they chose not to.

(4)   New functionality was being introduced, particularly seminar information and the online publication of timetables. Some teaching offices were not used to maintaining seminar information in a student records system.

(5)   Since the problems had been encountered, the SITS support team had been re-training the teaching offices. They had also been testing the upgrade to version 8.3.1, and the live system would be upgraded over the weekend of 13/14 November.

(6)   The upgraded version in the test system had been used against semester 1 data, and improvements had been seen.

(7)   A new slotting system had been agreed 18 months previously, but teaching out of slot was presenting difficulties, particularly if a 2-hour session straddles two slots. Teaching offices have been made aware of the need to make checks in these circumstances, and there are also automated checks and reports.

(8)   It was reiterated that the big problems evident in semester 1 may have masked smaller problems that will assume greater significance as the major issues are resolved.

(9)   The Director of Information Services had compiled a list of required developments, amounting to an estimated 101 weeks of work, but there are insufficient resources available to undertake them all. It was suggested that before further developments are made, all areas of the University should be brought up to a minimum standard: this particularly applies to the professional Schools. The issue will be discussed in the Student Information System Board meeting in December.

(10)   Following the forthcoming upgrade, the teaching offices would need to have completed their work to create events for semester 2 by lunchtime on Monday 15th November. Checks on data would follow, and then the room booking service would add their data over the next two days. After this, students would be allocated to the events, with the intention of having everything completed before Christmas.

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(11)   The view was expressed that there had been a lack of taking responsibility and a suitable apology. It was suggested that ISD could have more fully assessed the scale of the work, and there was insufficient alerting that problems were being encountered. However, it was noted that until three weeks before the start of year, reports from all quarters had been very positive.

(12)   Reassurance that similar problems would not happen again was sought. It was noted that many approaches are possible, including running two systems in parallel, but would be very expensive.

(13)   It was also noted that a very complicated set of events had been involved, making it very difficult to apportion blame.

(14)   Limits on physical space were also causing problems, and it was suggested that using teaching space for first year undergraduates earlier and later in the day than currently would help reduce the pressure on space. Some Schools were also using Wednesday afternoons for teaching. There was a need to address the underlying issues and constraints so that the system can be designed accordingly. It was noted that to start teaching earlier than at present would require consultation with the trade unions.

(15)   The real bottlenecks are not yet fully understood. For example, it had become clearer how many first year modules were common to many courses. The greater demand on resources due to the increasing amount of contact time was also noted.

(16)   The Director of Information Services had written to the Registrar seeking more resources for the SITS development team. Permission was being sought to employ an additional person for 24 months, using ISD's contingency fund and seeking other funding too. There will be a strong statement from the Committee to the Executive Team on the need for resource.
Action: Chair

(17)   It was noted that the Principal of City College Norwich had offered to help if that were possible. The Director of Information Services will follow this up.   **Action: Director of information Services**

(18)   A way of building academics' confidence in ITCS is required. It was noted that successful IT solutions tend to be discounted, and colleagues need to be reminded of major systems that do work very well. Academics need to engage in working groups so that problems can be raised as quickly as possible.

(19)   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) had expressed contrition about the problems, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) as Chair also expressed regret for the problems caused. It was noted that ISSC's authority comes from the Executive Team, and the SIS Board from ISSC, and the Chair commented that through this structure the Executive team will be keeping in closer touch with mission-critical work.

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4.   INFORMATION STRATEGY PROGRAMME OF WORK

Considered
Proposed ISD Programme of Work 2010-11. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D001)

(The following comments were noted:

(1)   It projects identified as having 'A' priority were examined, and an estimate of the amount of time required for each was given.

(2)   It was questioned whether the whole of the Virtual Research Environment project was priority A work, lasting for 12 months. It was noted however that anything that makes the administration around the REF easier was to be welcomed. Although the VRE would be similar to that in use at Nottingham University, it would not be possible to simply use their system, as its purpose is to integrate the various systems supporting research at UEA, which are not the same as those at Nottingham.

(3)   Surprise was expressed that there was no sign in the Programme of Work of outsourcing or sharing services. The strategy with corporate applications is to buy "best of breed" systems, which Corporate Information Systems staff then configure and join together as necessary.

(4)   It was noted that the capital investment element of this project was to fund an in-house developer.

(5)   ATR research plans were being piloted with the Faculty of Health, and were expected to be fully available in March 2011. It was noted that early work on this topic was abortive, as the format had been changed but not drawn to the notice of ISD.

(6)   The review of the impact of technology on teaching was not expected to be a large amount of work. The need to improve user confidence was noted; for example Blackboard is not generally heavily used and not promoted enough. It was also noted that students often find that support for learning technologies at university is less than they were used to at school.

(7)   It was noted that the ISD Education Board had asked for thinking to be progressed in the e-learning area, and a discussion paper would be provided in February. There is also a need to join up with work being done by the Learning and Teaching Committee.

(8)   It was noted that there is a need to address what can be done with the technology, rather than merely training people how to use it. Educational technologists need to be involved in this, rather than expecting academics to do it all. It was noted that two years previously a CUBS request on this topic failed to receive support from the Committee, but it was noted that were such a request to be made again it may fare better. It was also noted that at least two of the faculties were employing their own learning technologists.

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(9)   SITS project. It was noted that the current programme of work requires 6 person years of development time. There are seven full-time equivalent posts in the SITS team, although it was currently two people below strength. There are just sufficient resources for the developments assigned priority A by the SIS Board, and it was estimated that there was enough work to keep a team double the size busy for two years.

(10)   The University IT support integration project mainly involves the Director of Information Services. It was noted that this is a large piece of work that will have a significant impact.

(11)   The Voice over IP project could conceivably be reduced in priority, but the skills freed up would not be readily transferable to other work. It was noted that the project will realise financial savings once it is completed.

(12)   It was strongly agreed that the ICT Security project must have high priority. It was noted that it was difficult to assess the amount of person-time involved.

(13)   It was noted that the Managed Print Service was expected to deliver significant financial savings. It had been intended to pilot it in the Arts building, where £70-90,000 savings were anticipated. However, a Health and Safety issue relating to the locating of devices in corridors had been raised, and The project was currently on hold pending the identification of a new pilot area. It was noted that some Schools were already sharing printers, but not running a managed print service as such.

(14)   It was *agreed* that the Records management policy Development project must be high priority. It was noted that one person was working on this, and suites of policies would be brought before the Committee during the coming year.

(15)   The Journals review was not a large piece of work, but it was noted that it had to be completed within the given timescale.

(16)   It was noted that the UEA London IT infrastructure did not appear in the Programme of Work since the project to implement the infrastructure had been completed. Support for the infrastructure was part of the ongoing work of several ISD teams.

(17)   It was *agreed* that the priority for the development of a 5-year network strategy should be raised from B to A.

(18)   With that single modification, the Programme was **approved**.)

5.   PROPOSED ISD EXPENDITURE

Considered
        Information Strategy Programme of Work – proposed ISD expenditure 2010/11
        (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D002)

        (The following comments were noted:

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(1) The overall expenditure on library resource provision was 3% higher than the previous year. The Director of Information Services stated his intention to show variations in expenditure in particular areas in future reports.

(2) The £40,000 for the HR system shown in the table of planned capital expenditure might be drawn back. If so, it would be used on the ICT security project, as might also be the case with enhancements to Customer Relationship Management.

(3) The Dean of Arts and Humanities was considering the requirement for refurbishing the TV Studio.

(4) It was noted that any surpluses in the budget is used to improve the student experience. The Director of Information Services will look at the level of surplus generated through the year, although it was noted that these usually arise in the staffing budget due to gaps created by the timescale for recruiting staff to replace resignations. It was noted that ET-R will be considering the question of surpluses.

Action: Director of Information Services)

6.   ISD REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Considered
Information Strategy Programme of Work – CUBS requests (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D003)

(The following comments were noted:

(1) Journals. Considerable uncertainty persists over currency exchange rates, Value Added Tax will rise in January 2011, and inflation for journals is considerably higher than the underlying rate. It was noted that the Library Director was working with JISC to attempt to manage the costs down.

(2) Elluminate. This software was proving very popular. It was noted that at least two new course proposals requiring the software have been signed off by the Director of Information Services, but noting that it has only been licensed for 12 months. The Committee noted that the ISD Education Board was supportive of the request, that there was a user base, and assumed that more remote teaching would take place.

(3) Publications management. It was noted that this request was to fund a post to support the deposit of full text items to the Institutional Repository, and had been recommended by the ISD Research Board.

(4) Website monitoring. It was noted that the proposed software produces a report which would then need to be worked on by the web managers as appropriate.

(5) The Committee endorsed the content of the requests, but declined to endorse additions to the ISD baseline budget as ISD typically reported a surplus at year end and this should be used for these strategic areas.)

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7.   <u>RISK REGISTERS</u>

Considered

Risk Registers (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D004).

(The following comments were noted:

(1) The one critical risk was in the communication category. It was noted that there could also be a cultural risk, as changes in the way people work at the University would be emerging.

(2) It was noted that the Director of Information Services would be invited to attend Executive Team meetings regularly, and ET buy-in when appropriate would be ensured.

(3) It was *agreed* that timetabling and SITS should be visible on the risk register for the next few years, with a high likelihood and impact.
                                                  Action: Director of Information Services

(4) It was noted that stakeholders were not identified in the risk register: in the communication risk under review these would be all staff at UEA. The Director of Information Services will make this clearer in the description of the risk.   **Action: Director of Information Services)**

8.   <u>ISD SURVEY AND THE NSS</u>

Considered

ISD Survey and the NSS (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D005).

(The following comments were noted:

(1) There was a pronounced convergence of messages from both surveys.

(2) The pleasing improvements in areas which had been targeted were noted.

(3) The top five issues were identified, with recommendations for moving forward. Towards the end of each year ISD publishes a "You said, we did" statement.

(4) The surveys do not indicate if respondents are home or international students. It was noted that comments on the availability of books and PCs made by NBS students would most likely have been from international students, who tend to expect all the books they need to be in the library rather than having to buy their own copies. NBS tries to provide these students with the textbooks they need as part of their fees package. It was *agreed* that this should be given some thought, and raised with the International Office.
                                                  Action: Director of Information Services)

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9.	MANAGED PC PROCUREMENT

Considered

Managed PC Procurement (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D006).

(The following comments were noted:

(1)	The paper presented to the Committee demonstrated the complexity of the issue, and was commended by the Chair.

(2)	It was *agreed* that the case for a managed PC procurement service was compelling, and the proposal represented a good deal.

(3)	The Chair would ensure the document was circulated more widely.
Action: Chair

(4)	The proposal would now be put to the Managed PC Service Project Board.		**Action: Director of Information Services)**

10.	RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS FULL TEXT DEPOSIT POLICY

Considered

Research publications full text deposit policy (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D007).

(The following comments were noted:

(1)	There were two options for how the policy would be implemented and supported. The general policy was **approved.**

(2)	It was noted that in this context "metadata" is a descriptor of the content of the text. The Metadata Policy was **approved.**

(3)	The Content Policy for the types of document was **approved.**

(4)	The Committee noted that the ISD Research Board recommended a centralised model for support of deposit, and **agreed.)**

11.	STRATEGIC KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Considered

Strategic Key Performance Indicators (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D08)

(The following comments were noted:

(1)	The Director of Information Services had found it useful to discuss the subject with the Chair of the Library and Learning resources Forum.

(2)	Some use could be made of colour, arrows or faces to indicate movement in reporting on KPIs.

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(3) The difficulties of providing accurate data on the utilisation of journals were noted.

(4) The Indicators set out in the document were **approved.)**

12. <u>VIDEO AND AUDIO STREAMING SERVICE</u>

Received and **approved** without debate:
Video and audio streaming service – put up and take down policy (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D009)

13. <u>TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE</u>

Received and **approved**
ISSC Terms of Reference. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D010)
ISSC membership 2010-11 (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D011)

14. <u>PROGRAMME OF WORK</u>

Received
Report on the ISD Programme of Work – Academic Year 2009/10 (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D012)

15. <u>FREEDOM OF INOFRMATION POLICY</u>

Received
The revised University Freedom of Information policy, available from:
http://www.uea.ac.uk/is/foi

16. <u>RISK REGISTERS</u>

Received
The Faulty Risk Registers. (Copies are filed in the Minute Book, refs ISC10D013 to ISC10D017)

17. <u>ITC FORUM</u>

Papers and draft minutes from the ITCF 11th October 2010 were available from:
https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#ITCF

18. <u>LLR FORUM</u>

Papers and draft minutes from the LLRF 15th October 2010 were available from:
https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#LLRF

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19.　RESEARCH BOARD

Papers and draft minutes from the Research Board 13th October 2010 were available from: https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#researchboard

20.　EDUCATION BOARD

Papers and draft minutes from the Education Board 29th September 2010 were available from: https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#educationboard

21.　WEB STEERING GROUP

Papers and draft minutes from the Web Steering Group 2nd November 2010 were to be available from: https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#websteeringboard

22.　DATES OF MEETINGS

Noted
　　that the remaining meetings of the Committee 2010-11 had been scheduled for 2pm on the following dates:

　　Friday, 4 February, 2011
　　Tuesday, 14 June, 2011