

# INFORMATION, STRATEGY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE



## Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2011

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), Convenor of ICT Forum (Professor D. Stevens), Chair of the Library and Learning Resources Forum (Professor R. Kaye), and Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms R. Handforth) .

With: Mr D. Westlake.

Apologies: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor T.B. Ward), Director of Finance (Mr S. Donaldson), Dean of Faculty or nominated representative (Dr B. Milner) (SCI), Director of Central Division (Mr R. Evans), Director of Taught Programmes (Professor G. Moore), Directors of Faculty Administration (Dr A. Blanchflower and Mr J. Tully), Dean of Faculty or nominated representative (Professor Neil Ward) (SSF)

### 23. MINUTES

Confirmed  
the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2010.

### 24. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted

- (1) The Director of Information Services had asked the SITS team to contact the Principal of City College Norwich regarding an offer of help with timetabling. (Minute 3 (17))
- (2) The ISD budget was very tight and contingencies had been committed. Contractors were being used in the helpdesk and SITS teams. As part of the administrative review, where posts might provide redeployment opportunities they were not being permanently filled. The Director of Information Services reported that it was therefore unlikely that there would be any funds remaining to improve the student experience. (Minute 5 (4))
- (3) Timetabling and SITS had been added to the ISD risk register. (Minute 7 (3))
- (4) Stakeholders would be added to the ISD risk register at its next update. (Minute 7 (4))
- (5) The Library Director was following up the suggestion that international students might be provided with the textbooks they need as part of their fees package with NBS. (Minute 8 (4))

- (6) Discussion on the Managed PC Procurement project had been held: the Chair will circulate the outcomes. (Minute 9 (3))

**Action: Chair**

- (7) The Director of Information Services reported that the contract for managed PC procurement had been awarded to Viglen, and discussions were ongoing regarding delivery issues. (Minute 9 (4))

25. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

None

26. TIMETABLING

Considered

a report on timetabling. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D018).

(The following comments were noted:

- (1) No major complaints had been received in connection with semester 2 timetabling. This would indicate that the issues arising from semester 1 had been mitigated, although more work was needed from the SITS development team to fully resolve them. The SIS Board would be considering a long list of development requests, and would be asked to re-prioritise the Programme of Work.
- (2) There had been a problem with programmes running across semesters, which had required a major manual re-allocation. It was noted that this should not recur as the plan for future years is to schedule the whole year as a single exercise.
- (3) Staff members delivering repeat seminars had found that they were having to move to different rooms, often in dispersed locations. This had attracted some negative comments, and some associate tutors may withdraw as a result. It was noted that the timetabling module takes into account the walk distance for students moving from lecture to lecture, but does not do the same for academics. 78% of all requests for rooms had been satisfied within the home location or the next adjacent location. Changing to a less popular slot may resolve the issue. It was suggested that it would be worth discussing the matter with Nigel Shed.
- (4) There had been an unforeseen circumstance related to capping, which had led to ill feeling from some students. It was noted that the system already automatically makes an allowance above the numbers expected for an event.
- (5) With respect to point 3.2 in the paper, on faculty resourcing, it was noted that there would be an impact on this from the administrative integration project, and there was a risk of the staff involved being demoralised.

- (6) With respect to point 3.3 in the paper, on ISD resourcing, it was noted that “additional resource” means a need for both people and money. It was noted that a version of the report had been considered by the SIS Board, and the Executive Team had agreed to add two more developers to the SITS team.
- (7) With respect to point 3.5 in the paper, on planning, it was noted that the teaching office support staff who would be required to be working over the summer period on developing and checking timetables for early release would at that time all be in the process of moving to the two main teaching offices on campus. It was noted that in the recent policy half-day there had been discussion of changes to the business process so that timetables could be released to students in August.
- (8) The report had been presented to the SIS Board and the Executive Team. The latter had been very interested in the asymmetry of demand, and it was noted that if slots were used more evenly, more use could be made of the higher quality facilities, with the opportunity to remove some of the less desirable spaces from service.
- (9) There would be a need to consult widely with students on any proposals to be able to use more of the day. It was noted that the Learning and Teaching Committee had also seen the report. Changes to the teaching day would be that committee’s responsibility.
- (10) Students are generally not aware when their timetables are changed.)

## 27. UNIVERSITY DATA NETWORK

### Considered

a report on the failure of the University network in December 2010 (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D019)

(The following comments were noted:

- (1) The suppliers of the old networking core now believed that they had identified the cause of the problem on the University’s network before Christmas, and had sent a replacement part.
- (2) Since there were 2.5 years of life left in the old cores and they would be retained for use as hot standbys, some low risk services may be connected to them.
- (3) The topology of the network is considered appropriate, but external quality assurance on this matter will be obtained.
- (4) With the old cores now available as standby devices, to switch over to them in the event of another failure should take about two hours. It was noted however that these devices have considerable resilience, and should not fail.
- (5) A second connection to JANET, from the second computer suite, is needed for further resilience.

- (6) It is highly unlikely that anything could be done to ensure telephony could continue should the entire network fail, but it will be investigated. It was noted that an extra server, acting as a “voice of authority”, would probably have reduced the telephony problems.
- (7) The risks, and level of investment required to mitigate them, need to be fully understood.
- (8) It was regrettable that the main outward-facing telephone number was unobtainable.
- (9) If a copy of the university website were hosted externally, communication would have been improved. It was noted that multiple communications methods are vital: mobile telephones could have been contacted, but the system holding students’ telephone number was inaccessible too. The feasibility of maintaining a database of mobile telephone numbers will be investigated, and proposals for an SMS messaging service will be brought to the committee.  
**Action: Director of Information Services**
- (10) Students would welcome SMS messages for information such as cancellation of lectures. It was noted that there is a cost associated with each message sent.
- (11) Local operations had been impossible too, without help from IT technicians.
- (12) The committee noted that the breakdown was clearly unfortunate, and it was regrettable that students were affected. The committee wished to record its gratitude to the ISD staff who had worked extremely hard to return the network to service in time for the start of term.)

28. SECURITY PROJECT

Considered

a Report on the security project (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D020)

(The following comments were noted:

- (1) Many aspects of the project will relate to policies, which would be brought to the committee for approval.
- (2) **Agreed** that the committee will act as the project board for the security project and will receive a progress report at each regularly scheduled meeting.
- (3) The project had only recently begun, and no tasks were seriously behind schedule.
- (4) Guidelines on best practice for managing email would be presented to the next meeting of the committee.

**Action: Director of Information Services**

- (5) Encrypted USB pens should not require a program to be installed in a computer in order to use them.
- (6) Not all of the funds requested for the project had yet been agreed.
- (7) There should be a risk in the 'resources' section of the risk log, recognising the impact the administrative integration project may have.
- (8) The Director of Information Services will discuss the risk log with the project manager.

**Action: Director of Information Services)**

29. PASSWORD DISCLOSURE INCIDENT PROCESS

Considered

proposals for handling incidents where passwords have been disclosed (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D021)

(The following comments were noted:

- (1) The University continues to be regularly blacklisted by Hotmail. The committee had previously agreed a policy for disclosure of passwords, and the paper under consideration would make the policy operational.
- (2) Noting that there will be delays in reinstating IT services to users who have disclosed their password, the committee **agreed** that the process is a reasonable approach.)

30. MOBILE SECURITY

Considered

UEA Exchange 2007 Mobile devices – security policy proposal (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D022)

(The following comments were noted:

- (1) The enforcing of security on mobile devices would be applied to those used to synchronise email with the UEA Exchange Service. As such, it would not apply to students.
- (2) Noting that an implication of the proposal was that every time the user needed to access their mobile device they would have to enter their password, the committee **approved** the proposal.)

31. EMAIL NAMES IN OUTLOOK

Considered

email names in Outlook (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D023)

(The following comments were noted:

- (1) The recommendation before the committee was to change the format for displaying email names to be first name, surname, department. The consequential impact was that as the sort order is by display names, the Global Address List would list people alphabetically by first name rather than the current surname sort.
- (2) Changing the display order would have reputational benefits, as the current display order causes confusion for people outside the University.
- (3) It was suggested that if the surname could be displayed in capitals the risk of confusion would be reduced.
- (4) Because it was planned to move student email to Exchange, it was noted that students would also be affected by the proposal.
- (5) The committee **agreed** to the recommendation.)

32. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VLE UPGRADE

Considered

recommendations from the ISD Education Board (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D024)

(The following comments were noted:

- (1) A technical review of the current Blackboard provision and options for migration to new systems had recommended upgrading to Blackboard version 9.1 over the 2011 summer. This would enhance online submission of coursework.
- (2) The open source Liferay Portal had been examined as a replacement portal product, and was already in use for research computing websites. It was hoped that Liferay would offer a single product to replace Blackboard and Polopoly, and in the long term move all web delivery to Liferay.
- (3) As an open source product, Liferay is free of charge, but resources would need to be available for developers to work on it. Development time had been found to be much quicker than in Blackboard, and using Liferay for the portal should save £30k p.a. through cancellation of the Blackboard Community System.
- (4) The upgraded Blackboard would look different to the current version, and academic staff would therefore require some re-training from the learning technologists.
- (5) The recommendation to upgrade the Blackboard Teaching System (VLE), but to defer moving the Portal to Liferay at this stage, was **approved**.)

33. SECURITY POLICIES

Received

- (1) Summary of security policy revisions (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D025)
- (2) Annual review of General Information Security Policy (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D026)
- (3) Security manual – SM5.1 Password assignment (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D027)
- (4) Security manual – SM5.3 System administrator passwords (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D028)
- (5) Security procedure SP1 – communicating passwords to users (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D029)

34. PC PROCUREMENT POLICIES

Approved without discussion

- PC Procurement policy (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D030)

35. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, DATA PROTECTION AND COPYRIGHT

Received

reports on requests under Freedom of Information, EIR, data protection and Copyright legislation (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D031)

36. GENERIC EMAIL AND WEB ADDRESS NAMING

Approved without discussion

- Generic email and web address naming policy (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D032)

37. PROGRAMME OF WORK

Received

report on ISD Programme of Work – Academic Year 2010/11 (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D033)

38. ITC FORUM

Papers and draft minutes from the ITCF 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were available from:

<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#ITCF>

## ISC10M002

ISC-M8  
04.02.2011  
Min.39

### 39. LLR FORUM

Papers and draft minutes from the LLRF 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were available from:  
<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#LLRF>

### 40 RESEARCH BOARD

Papers and draft minutes (to follow once approved by Chair) from the Research Board 26<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were available from:  
<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#researchboard>

### 41 EDUCATION BOARD

Papers and draft minutes (to follow once approved by Chair) from the Education Board 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were available from:  
<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#educationboard>

### 42 WEB STEERING GROUP

Papers and draft minutes (to follow once approved by Chair) from the Web Steering Group meeting 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were be available from:  
<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/committees#websteeringboard>

### 43 SECURITY BREACHES

Received

- Computer misuse statistics (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. ISC10D038)

### 44. DATES OF MEETINGS

Reported

that the remaining meeting of the Committee 2010-11 had been scheduled for 2pm on the following date:

Tuesday, 14 June, 2011