

University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 November 2009

Members present: Professor Littlewood (in the Chair), Dr Carpenter, Mr. Du Quesnay, Professor Howe, Dr Lewis, Mr Matheson, Professor Nolan, Mr Norman, Dr Robertson, Dr Walker, Dr Wallach, and Mr. Warbrick.

In attendance: the Director of MISD, the University Librarian, Mr. Wilson.

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms Tyson and Sir David Wallace,

There were no declarations of interest relating to matters on the agenda.

138. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 22 October 2009 were approved after minor corrections.

139. Matters arising and review of action points

Action points arising from the last meeting of the Syndicate and the annual cycle of business were circulated as ISSS 169.

It was agreed that the Annual Report be circulated to Syndics for final opportunity to comment before it was forwarded in accordance with the terms of reference to the Council, General Board and the Bursars and Senior Tutors Committees.

Action: Secretary

140. Business Committee minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Business Committee held on 9 November 2009 were received (ISSS 170).

141. Review of Information Strategy

The Chairman reminded the Syndicate that the Information Strategy had recently been published, but it was a high level document which now needed to be developed further into an operational plan. Syndics agreed with the proposed four broad themes:

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Users</i>
Teaching and learning	Students and teaching staff, departments and colleges
Management systems	administration, schools, departments, and staff
Research.	researchers, funders, and research administration
Campus experience and outreach	staff, students, alumni

The first stage of development would be a series of meetings in the New Year between the Chairman and the PVC with responsibility for each of these areas, and attended by any Syndic who wished to be present.

The second stage would seek the views of users mainly through representative bodies, and during which the Syndicate would welcome comments from intercollegiate bodies.

The outcome should be a small number of actions under each heading for development into implementation plans.

The process would ensure consistency with existing plans in these areas, in the absence of a unified University strategic plan.

The ISWG at their next meeting would discuss this approach, and there would be a further report to the next meeting of the Syndicate.

Action: Chairman, Secretary and others

142. **Priorities and projects**

The Syndicate reviewed the ISWG's approach to project priorities set out in papers ISSS 171-2 and the updated schedule of proposed projects and their estimated cost, including those funded from the TDF.

The purpose of the TDF was to fund medium sized projects where funding was not otherwise available, but it was not the source of funds for recurring running costs, including licence purchase. £50k was an approximate lower limit. It was not essential for the entire fund to be spent annually but a consistent underspend might lead to a reduced Allocation.

Larger projects should be supported by an ear-marked project fund, although the TDF could fund feasibility studies before a commitment to longer term funding was needed. Service budgets included sufficient for minor service developments, but it would be important in a time of severe financial stringency to establish that spending of those funds was on priorities at least as important as those to be funded by the TDF or for which additional funding was sought.

Proposals for TDF and project funding should be supported by a business case; very large projects with a total cost of £2m and above were subject to the Capital Projects Process.

Although the focus was on spending in 2010-11, the implications of approval to spend should be clear especially if there were running costs to be met. Would these be met from savings and efficiencies, or would a budget increase be needed?

Syndics noted that although not constituted with that role in mind, the ISWG had attempted to rank all proposals but had insufficient information to do so comprehensively.

The Syndicate's views were as follows:

Within the remit of the MISD:

Research Grant Management. The volume and value of research grants, the risk of disruption to their administration and the opportunity for improvement made this the highest MISD priority project. The partnership with Oxford needed further investigation but the approach of other institutions would not be so informative as few institutions had similar throughput. The TDF could fund the feasibility study;

The second MISD priority was the feasibility study of software platform rationalisation. The CUFS upgrade project was deferred.

The status of the REF project was not clear, but the Syndicate agreed that licence costs should not be a charge to the TDF.

A lower priority was accorded to the Alumni system project and the UAS document management project; proposals for the latter were not yet fully developed.

Of the UCS projects:

The first UCS priority was the improvement of GBN resiliency and GBN upgrades but the cost of cabling new developments should be met by infrastructure levies. [See also M144 below.]

The second UCS priority was 24/7 operational support. The Syndicate noted that MISD could make a similar case and that multiple centres should be avoided. A risk management approach should be taken to considering the proposal further. Resolution of overnight issues by the start of the working day was an attractive proposition, but what was the nature and frequency of problems that could not wait and the cost and benefit of instant response?

There was funding for Dspace in 2009-10 and 2010-11, but allocations would be needed in 2011-12 onwards.

The timing of the second machine room and the JANET redundant link were flexible.

Of the Library projects:

Funding for CamTools should be regularised and TDF funding should cease. It would be appropriate to increase the 2010-11 Allocation to the Library to meet the cost, in view of the proposed incorporation of CARET within the UL.

2010-11 funding was required for the Digital Asset Management System and institutional repository development.

There were no other proposals requiring funding for 2010-11, provided the normal level of annual equipment grant and CIF were available.

The ISWG was asked to prepare a draft report to the PRC for consideration at the next meeting, at which the Syndicate would identify the key projects.

Action: ISWG

143. **Identity Management**

The Syndicate considered a further report through the ISWG, circulated as ISSS 173, noting that this now addressed the auditors' comments.

The Syndicate agreed that the UCS should now develop the necessary protocols and an implementation plan. £100k TDF funding was currently earmarked; funding should now be released to UCS which could budget up to that amount.

Action: Director, UCS

144. **Computing Service Charges 2010-11**

The ISSS agreed the proposal set out in ISSS 174 that the UCS recover capital replacement costs as part of the annual PoP maintenance charges from 2010-11 onwards and approved the schedule of charges on that basis.

The Syndicate noted that this would release a small amount of CIF which could be available as an additional contribution to equipment costs.

Syndics expressed interest in exploring the further development of charging especially where the charge or part of it could be volume dependent and introduce an incentive to economise.

Action: Director, UCS

145. **Information Strategy Working Group**

Received: the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2009 (ISSS 175)

146. **Project/Service reports**

Received: reports on CamSIS, CHRIS and CUFS (ISSS 176).

147. **Meeting dates**

Noted: the schedule of remaining meetings in 2009-10.

BC	30 November 2009	2.00pm	Syndicate Room
BC	11 January 2010	11.00am	Treasurer's Office
ISSS	21 January 2010	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	1 February 2010	2.00pm	Syndicate Room
BC	8 March 2010	11.00am	Treasurer's Office
ISSS	18 March 2010	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	29 March 2010	2.00pm	Syndicate Room
BC	10 May 2010	2.15pm	Finance Meeting Room, Old Schools
ISSS	20 May 2010	10.15am	Syndicate Room
BC	27 May 2010	2.00pm	Treasurer's Office
BC	28 June 2010	11.00am	Treasurer's Office
ISSS	8 July 2010	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	19 July 2010	2.00pm	Treasurer's Office

Changes since the dates were first agreed are in **bold**.

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