University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 March 2014 in the Syndicate Room, the Old Schools.

Present: Professor Young (in the Chair), Dr Alexander, Dr Blackwell, Dr Carpenter, Mr Carter, Mr King, Mr du Quesnay, Mr Norman, Dr Walker, Sir David Wallace and Mr Weldon.

In attendance: Mr Bellamy (incoming Director of University Information Services), Director MISD, Director UCS, Director of Finance, University Librarian, Mr Wilson.

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Dörrzapf, Mr Matheson and Dr Smith.

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Bellamy who was taking up his appointment on 31 March.

486. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 16 January 2014 were approved.

487. Matters arising and review of action points

The Syndicate received paper ISSS 443 containing a note of action points and the annual cycle of business.

M478: Cloud services: The Syndicate noted the Audit Committee's interest and that the ISC would be taking this forward under Mr Bellamy's guidance. A report was also expected in the near future on social media.

488. Business Committee minutes

Business Committee minutes of the meetings held on 7 January and 25 February were received as papers ISSS 444 (a) & (b).

489. Transition Advisory Group

The report of the TAG was received as ISSS 445. Members noted that the proposals for membership of the ISC were consistent with the report received at the last meeting and made the following points:

- The JNMC would continue as before, but there was no provision for the chair to be a member of the ISC: the ISC might consider how cross representation could be achieved.

- School representation on ISC was one more step removed from IT committees than the current representation on ISSS, but communication via Heads of School was likely to be at an oversight level only, and would need to be supplemented by more detailed engagement from school-level IT committees.

- The RPC had initiated a review of HPC which would report to the RPC and ISC. TAG had recommended that HPC should join UIS on 1 August 2014. This was later than the creation of UIS but informal engagement before then with HPC staff was encouraged. The move was welcomed.

- The "user forum" title did not ensure participation of the right people; ISC should review carefully the name, role and composition of the proposed group.

490.   TDF: request for funding – Big Data Storage

A request from the UCS for an Allocation of £300k from the TDF to support an initial petabyte of storage for research groups across the University was described in paper ISSS 446 and had been commended by the ISWG (ISWG MM 5.1-5.4 (in ISSS 454) referred.

Although informed that the request had now been withdrawn the Syndicate agreed to look at the issues. It was not clear to members that a project of this sort would be eligible for funding from the TDF. The project was to fulfil a need which had not yet been properly articulated and whose relationship with HPC and other data storage initiatives, including solutions introduced *ad hoc* was not clear.

The Syndicate agreed that the first step should be to bring all the issues together into a single strategy for approval by the ISC and then to decide how the strategy should be implemented. There might be an opportunity to mount a service that supported research as an SRF or MRF.

Action: Mr Bellamy

491.   TDF: Request for funding - ICE course booking and payment system (phase 2)

The Syndicate considered paper ISSS 447 proposing an Allocation of £70k from the TDF to support phase 2 of the course booking and staged payment system at ICE. The ISWG had agreed that a further award from the TDF could be provided on condition that the funding would finish the project and was not to support initial running costs. ISWG MM 6.1- 6.2 (in ISSS 454) referred.

The Syndicate were reminded of the necessity for the project caused by the withdrawal of support by the supplier for the purchased system. They agreed with the ISWG about the importance of making the benefits of the project widely and easily available within the University and approved the funding as proposed.

The ISWG had noted that Mr Dampier had agreed to work with colleagues in the Finance Division to prepare a paper for the ISC summarising the payment systems currently in use by the University and their possible further development in the wake of the ICE project.

Action: Secretary; Director, MISD

492.   CAM domain name: proposed restrictions

A memorandum from the University's Brand Advisory Panel was circulated as ISSS 448 with an extract from the UCS guidelines on domain names[1]. The Panel had asked the ISSS to restrict the cam.ac.uk domain to "members of Collegiate Cambridge only."

The Director of UCS said that most requests for domain names were entirely routine and there was no need to introduce a new arrangement for every request. UCS had enough experience to know when a proposal could be confusing or conflicting and to deal with occasional problems when existing domains were misused.

The issue was a facet of risk management. A general exclusion of the sort proposed would be difficult to interpret for institutions around the edge of the University. He agreed that the advice of the Brand Advisory Panel, and perhaps the Academic Secretary, should be sought in future when proposals seemed not straightforward.

The *Cam* domain had been granted in the past to a number of extra-University institutions. It would be appropriate to review these and for the UCS and the Panel together to discuss if any posed a particular risk.

Meanwhile, the UCS would consider if the guidelines could be made clearer and tighter.

Action: Director, UCS

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[1] http://www.ucs.cam.ac.uk/instinfo/domain-names/domainnames

493.   Student accounts: acceleration of registration

Paper ISSS 449 outlined a programme to provide students with accounts before arrival to enable early access to University resources. The paper had also been considered by the ISWG; M 4.1 and 4.2 of the ISWG minutes circulated as ISSS 454 referred. The ISWG had initially understood that the aim was to introduce this for 2014 entrants, but the post-meeting note explained that this was more likely in 2015.

The Syndicate noted that the project helped address some reputational issues. It was a very high priority for both undergraduates and postgraduates, but especially postgraduates embarking on taught courses. Pre-enrolment preparation was essential to help make best use of limited time.

MISD and UCS had a good joint view of the problem and the solution in outline; the two Directors would meet to agree the steps that needed to be taken for implementation for the 2014 entry.

Action: Directors MISD and UCS

494.   CUDAR System Project

The ISSS at their last meeting (M 427) at the request of the Chief Operating Officer of CUDAR had approved interim funding for the appointment of a project manager to begin work on a system to support University-wide fundraising for which a total of £2m had been earmarked for spending over 2014-15 and 2015-16.

The Syndicate had agreed the project could not be initiated until the more detailed proposal – circulated as ISSS 450 - could be considered at this meeting.

Syndics discussed the nature of the options that the appraisal would reveal, and agreed that negotiations with an eventual supplier should be informed by knowledge of the price other institutions had paid. Participation by Colleges would be enabled and encouraged; it was hoped that many would join. The University would invest in the system; the cost to a College would be any marginal cost of joining.

The Syndicate:

(a) Approved the project and released the first tranche of £250k to fund the initial system analysis phase.

(b) Confirmed that the appropriate Governance Arrangements were in place and approved the establishment of the Project Board.

Action: Secretary

495.   Workstreams: Room Booking

The Chairman reported on the two current strands of work to promote the efficient use of teaching space – room use monitoring, which was going well and beginning to produce useful data – and the identification of a room booking system.

The consultant's report on the options for room booking software had been circulated for information as ISSS 451.

Choices had narrowed but no recommendation had been made and no decision had been taken. It was essential the eventual solution was supported and widely used and not seen as an imposition; the next stage was to gain general support for finding a solution. Cultural issues, in particular local ownership of space were well understood but possessiveness which prevented sharing needed to change. The report and the message that would accompany it were a first step. The General Board would be asked to put weight behind the aim of making more efficient use of space.

The working group would be established more formally when the project was further advanced.

The following points were made in discussion:

- The system must be intuitive and useable without special training. Some were said to be used to a "calendar view" when making bookings.

- Bookable space should be equipped to a common minimum standard to ensure bookings could be made with confidence; there could be a cost in bringing some space up to the minimum.

- Could the system integrate with services such as *talks.cam*?

- Timetabling was different and not part of the review, but the system might be helpful to the Colleges in the specialist role of offering and and reserving examination space for students with special needs.

496. TDF

A statement on the TDF was circulated for information as ISSS 452; it was noted that some of the arithmetic seemed to need correction.

497. Operational Reports

The operational report from UCS was received as ISSS 453.

498. Committee minutes

The ISWG website was: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/isss/subcommittees/iswg/ Minutes for the meeting on 20 February 2014 were circulated: ISSS 454.

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Network Management Committee held on 9 January had been published on the JNMC website: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/jnmc/minutes/

The minutes for 6 December 2013 and the agenda for 24 January 2014 were published on the Financial Systems Committee website at: http://ufs.admin.cam.ac.uk/keycont/FSC/ . .

The most recent minutes for the HR Systems Committee were for the meeting held on 13 May 2013: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/hr/system/ .

Student Information Systems Committee papers were available at: http://www.camsis.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/boards_groups_and_sigs/sisc/. Papers and minutes for the meeting held on 4 November had been published.

Minutes of the meeting of the Teaching and Learning Steering Group held on Monday 10 February were circulated as ISSS 455.

499. Meeting dates

The ISSS was to be replaced by the Information Services Committee on 31 March 2013; the remaining dates for ISSS meetings had been pencilled in for the ISC, but it was noted that the June meeting clashed with general admission. [Post meeting note: the June date has been rearranged.]

ISC	*Thursday 8 May 2014*	*2.15pm*	*Syndicate Room*
ISC	*Thursday ~~26 June~~ 8 July 2014*	*~~2.15pm~~ 10.00am*	*~~Council~~ Syndicate Room*

The Chairman noted that the Syndicate had now met for the last time; he thanked current and past members for their service and contributions.

PRAO*, March 2014*