

University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 January 2010

Members present: Professor Littlewood (in the Chair), Professor Howe, Mr Matheson, Mr Norman, Professor Oliver, Mr. Du Quesnay, Mr Richardson, Dr Robertson, Ms Tyson, Dr Walker, Sir David Wallace, Dr Wallach and Mr. Warbrick, with: Professor Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Planning and Resources), the Registry, University Librarian, Director of the Computing Service, Director of Finance, Director of MISD and Mr Wilson (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Carpenter.

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

The Syndicate welcomed the re-election of Mr Richardson and Mr Warbrick for two years from 1 January 2010.

148. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 19 November 2009 were approved.

149. Matters arising and review of action points

Action points arising from the last meeting were circulated, including a note of the annual cycle of business (ISSS 177). There would be a further report on Identity Management (M143) at the next meeting.

The Syndicate noted that the Business Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Syndicate.

150. Review of Information Strategy

The Chairman informed the Syndicate that he was arranging meetings with the Pro-Vice-Chancellors to discuss the Information Strategy and the themes agreed at the last meeting (M141); Syndics would be invited when the dates were settled.

151. Report to PRC: Allocations for 2010-11

The Syndicate reviewed the draft report (ISSS 178) to the PRC incorporating changes made by the ISWG at their meeting on 17 December 2009 (see also M 156 below); they noted that the additional expenditure outside the Allocation envelope for each Service and the priorities for TDF funding had been discussed extensively.

Syndics approved the report and recommendations for forwarding to the PRC, subject to a final circulation to members after a few minor amendments had been made.

The Services planned to operate within budget, but there were a number of infrastructure developments that could not be deferred indefinitely. The Syndicate hoped next to review developments that were funded from within service budgets and agreed the Business Committees should begin by meeting with each Director. The Network represented a major strategic asset; its maintenance and extension to keep pace with the estate were very high priorities.

Action: Secretary

152. TDF Funding Allocation for Research Grants Management

On the recommendation of the Information Strategy Working Group set out in ISSS 179, the Syndicate approved Allocations from the TDF for (1) £50,000 for a feasibility study for the replacement of the Pre Award Financial Costing Tool, and (2) £50,000 for a feasibility study of improved financial management for Research Grants (Post Award).

153. Video Conferencing

The Syndicate was informed that the Planning and Resources Committee, during a discussion on a carbon reduction strategy at their meeting on 25 November 2009, had noted that there could be many instances where video was a perfectly adequate alternative to travel for face-to-face discussions. The Information Strategy and Services Syndicate was asked to inform the Committee of the location of video-conferencing suites around the University and of arrangements for access [M 1186],

The Syndicate received a report by the UCS on these questions and on the available technologies [ISSS 180].

The Syndicate agreed to forward the report to the PRC with their observations that a range of different needs were likely to be served best by a range of solutions from audio conferencing through desktop services, to one or two supported high-end suites, but the pattern of demand was not clear, nor if there were problems of culture, convenience and cost to be solved.

The Syndicate agreed that Professor Howe, Mr Lewis, Mr Matheson and Dr Wallach should meet to consider the issues raised by the PRC's questions, and report back in due course.

Action: Mr Matheson

154. 24 hour cover

The Syndicate received an extract (ISSS 181) from the 14th report of the Board of Scrutiny (*Reporter* 2008-09 p 976) containing the Board of Scrutiny's recommendation that the University provide 24-hour staff cover for the computer and telephone network and multiple routes to report faults; the recommendation had been referred by the Council to the Syndicate.

The Syndicate had discussed 24 hour operational support in detail in assessing priorities for funding. It remained on the list but as a low priority because the low risk to be managed did not in the Syndicate's view justify recommending an annual Allocation of £200k. No other Russell Group institution found 24 hour support to be necessary, but the risk and lower cost methods of providing cover would be kept under review.

A greater risk to network resilience was the single connection to JANET.

The Council would be informed of these views through the minutes.

155. Alumni on-line community project

The Syndicate received a paper (ISSS 182) outlining the Alumni on-line community project and noted that the estimated £100k cost would be funded from within the Allocation to the Cambridge Alumni Relations Office.

Although a project of this sort was within the remit of the Syndicate, there were questions about ownership of data in shared databases which fell in the area of data protection, not information strategy and Colleges must be consulted.

Better knowledge of alumni occupations could be helpful in assessing one aspect of the University's impact.

156. Information Strategy Working Group

Draft minutes of the meeting of the ISWG held on 17 December 2009 were received as ISSS 183; the Syndicate were informed that a final version was available through the Syndicate's website.

157. Joint Network Management Committee

The minutes of the JNMC meeting held on 7 January 2010 were received (ISSS 184).

158. Project/Service reports

Received: reports (ISSS 185-186) on

- (1) UCS activities during the Michaelmas Term
- (2) MISD and major projects
- (3) CamSIS

159. Disaster Recovery Guide

The Syndicate received for information:

- (1) Results of the Business Continuity review for Tier One systems (ISSS 188)
- (2) The Disaster Recovery Guide produced for Physics and the Issac Newton Institute on recommendations for Departments Heads on IT Business Continuity (ISSS 189)

The Syndicate agreed the Disaster Recovery Guide should be sent to Schools for circulation to Heads of Department.

Action: Secretary

160. Meeting dates

Noted: the schedule of remaining meetings in 2010.

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

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February 2010