University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 November 2012 in the Syndicate Room, the Old Schools.

Present: Professor Oliver (in the Chair), Dr Alexander, Dr Blackwell, Dr Carpenter, Mr King, Mr du Quesnay, Professor Howe, Mr Matheson, Mr Norman, Dr Smith, Sir David Wallace, Mr Weldon and by standing invitation Professor Young (Pro-Vice Chancellor for Planning and Resources).

In attendance: The Registrary; Director, UCS; Director, MISD; University Librarian; Professor Leslie (for M377) and Mr Wilson.

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Dörrzapf, Dr Hand and Dr Walker.

There were no specific declarations of interest; the differing position of members in relation to the IT review was noted.

370. Membership

The constitution, membership at 1 October 2012 and terms of reference of the Syndicate were circulated as ISSS 355.

There were two student vacancies and the Presidents of CUSU and the Graduate Union had been invited to nominate student members for co-option.

The Syndicate co-opted Mr Dom Weldon for the period to 31 December 2013. The remaining vacancy was therefore for a Graduate student.

371. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 5 July 2012 were circulated and approved subject to a minor amendment to M364. The meeting scheduled on 11 October 2012 had been cancelled.

372. Matters arising and review of action points

Action points were circulated as ISSS 356 which included a note of the annual cycle of business and the outline programme of work.

M 360: Eduroam. The Syndicate noted that the RMC, in approving the funding, had asked for further information on coverage. College representatives were disappointed by the exclusion of Colleges and pointed out that this would not assist the implementation of the Syndicate's strategic aim of seamless coverage. The Senior PVC agreed to review in what way the policy agreed at the previous meeting could be extended to the Colleges.

Action: Director, UCS and Senior PVC

373. Business Committee minutes

The minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 1 October 2012 were received as ISSS 357.

374.   Information Technology – Strategic Aims

The Syndicate approved the *Information Strategy – Strategic Aims* (ISSS 358) for publication on the Syndicate's website, subject to the replacement of the circulated annex dealing with research by the tabled version. The document would be kept under review.

Action: Secretary

375.   Annual Report

The Syndicate approved their Annual Report for 2012 circulated as ISSS 359, but noted that the implementation plan, to which there was a link, was out of date.

Action: Secretary

376.   IT Review

The report of the IT Review Group (ISSS 360) had been circulated to the Syndicate shortly after release; the Notice of 24 October 2012[1] set out the background and announced the arrangements for consultation. Comments were invited by 30 November 2012.

The Syndicate agreed to the Chairman's proposal that the response should be drafted by Syndics who were not members of either the Review Group or the two services[2].

Professor Young, introducing the Report, emphasised that it was a strategic review and not a technical review of delivery, which was generally of a good standard. But there were gaps in provision and because there was room for improvement the review had concentrated on the environment that could best deliver it.   Computing support was scattered; some staff were isolated. The ISSS was not as effective as the senior committee should be and as it was sometimes unclear who had responsibility for new developments there was a risk of them not proceeding. The Group had concluded there should be one manager of a single organisation overseen by a new committee (the Information Services & Systems Committee; ISSC). The Group had not made proposals concerning the sub-committees and user groups that should support the ISSC and would welcome suggestions concerning this tier of governance.

Comments by Dr Lewis had been circulated in advance covering a number of general and specific issues. He added that the Review had been thorough but the text did not support the conclusions. Co-location would deliver benefits, but there was no necessity for the change in reporting and it was not desirable that the reporting line for academic computing should be through the administration; the proposal for merger failed to recognise the distinct cultures of MISD and UCS.

Mr Dampier said that he supported the conclusions. He welcomed the recognition of IT support as a profession in its own right and of the need for career opportunity. Reorganisation would not be a merger but the creation of a new more user-focused entity. He agreed that good service was delivered but there was room for improvement.

A number of other points were made in the discussion which followed:

- The ISSS was not ineffective but was not as effective as it could be. The new committee would need more authority and should have control of budgets; it must be able to manage non-compliance. It would also benefit from clearer referral of business to it than the ISSS had had.
- There was concern that there would continue to be pockets of IT/IS outside the scope of the new committee.

[1]   http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2012-13/weekly/6282/section1.shtml#heading2-4
[2]   A meeting of this group was held immediately after the Syndicate.

- Members were uncertain about the proposed membership of the new committee but agreed that inclusion of the Heads of Schools would ensure the strongest form of governance and make it less likely that departments would opt out, but user and technical input was also required and, since many services were available through Colleges, their representation should be reconsidered.
- A widely drawn second level committee was needed and the membership of the two committees needed to be considered as a whole.
- The outcome should be a new organisation, not a merger. A great deal of energy and commitment would be needed to manage the change. It would not be quick.
- There may be little current overlap between the services, but this complementarity leads to gaps in coverage.   The proposed model of delivery was through a mixture of central and local provision with more co-ordination between these and better strategic decision-making on the role each had to play.
- IT/IS was a commodity and there should be a service-level charter for staff and students; it should be explicitly stated that the role of IT/IS was to support the University mission.
- Colleges could be included in these arrangements and there should be a dialogue about the services and support that could be provided.
- The director's dual role suggested joint appraisal by the Registrary and the Chair of the new committee.

The Group drafting the response to the Review was asked to keep these points in mind.

Action (to convene group): Secretary

377. CUFS Upgrade: Approach and Consequences

Paper: ISSS 361

1. Informed the ISSS of the decision taken by the Financial Systems Committee (FSC, acting as Project Board for the CUFS Upgrade) to upgrade to Oracle Financials 12.1 rather than 12.2, and of the immediate consequences.

2. Requested the ISSS (possibly but not necessarily through the FSC) to **put a plan of action in place providing the University with an option of moving to a different Financial System by Easter of 2018.**

3. Informed the ISSS of general progress with the upgrade.

   Professor Leslie, attending for this item, explained that fewer changes took some of the risk out of the upgrade, but it required early action to describe the architecture of the new system and to reduce the footprint by identifying non-core functions that could be carried out by other, linked, systems.

   The Syndicate approved the proposed measures and agreed that an initial study could be funded by the TDF. Members noted the FSC acted as the Project Board and suggested the FSC review if all interests were adequately represented in the project's governance.

Action: Director of Finance

378. **Emergency funding to cover the redevelopment of a business application for taking course bookings and graduated payments**

The Syndicate approved the emergency development funding of £110k from the Technology Development Fund as proposed in ISSS 362. The Institute of Continuing Education had a particular need for functionality not provided by existing proprietary systems, but support for their current customised system had suddenly been withdrawn. The possible utility of the new application to other areas of the University's business should be investigated.

Action: Director, MISD.

379. **Estate Management Systems**

The Syndicate received a further note (ISSS 363) on the replacement of Space Planning/Room Booking and Asbestos applications used within Estate Management and dealing with the questions on interfaces and data security raised at the previous meeting (M 364).

The Syndicate noted the Business Committee had been concerned that the data should be held in-house. They questioned the cost quoted in ISSS 363 of this solution and why there would be access problems from outside the UAS.

The Registrary undertook to discuss this with the Director of MISD.

Action: Director, MISD

380. **X5 Update**

The Syndicate received an update on the X5 project (ISSS 364) noting that pFact would be upgraded to a slightly newer version pending X5 going live in April 2013.

381. **Planning Round 2012**

The Syndicate:

(1) Approved the annual bid to the PRC, as recommended by the ISWG, set out in ISSS 365, subject to a minor amendment to paragraph 21.

Action: Secretary

(2) Endorsed the proposed changes to the Computing Service's Planning Round submission for 2012 set out in ISSS 366.

Action: Director, UCS

382. **Computing Service Charges**

The Syndicate approved the Computing Service Network and Managed Cluster charges for 2013-14 set out in ISSS 367, noting that some charges were reduced as a result of the changed model for wireless access points.

383. **Workstreams**

Members had been appointed to the Software Co-ordination Committee but it had not yet met.

384. Disciplinary Procedure: appointment of Panel Chair

The Disciplinary Procedure* required that "the Syndicate shall appoint annually one of their members to be Panel Convenor." Dr Dörrzapf had been appointed in October 2011 and with his consent was reappointed.

* http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/isss/rules/discproc.html

385. Chair of ISWG

The ISWG Constitution provided that the Chair be a member of the ISSS. The current Chair, Dr Steve Hand, was on sabbatical and the Chairman of the ISSS had invited Mr Matheson to chair the ISWG until Dr Hand's return.

386. Committee minutes

There had been no further meetings of the Teaching and Learning Services Steering Group since the last meeting of the Syndicate.

The minutes of the meeting of the ISWG: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/isss/subcommittees/iswg/held on 23 October 2012 were circulated as ISSS 368. A summary of the TDF was attached to the minutes.

Other committee websites were as follows, with meeting papers published since the last meeting of the Syndicate indicated:

Joint Network Management Committee: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/jnmc/minutes/ (Minutes of 20 September and 11 October 2012)

Financial Systems Committee: http://ufs.admin.cam.ac.uk/keycont/FSC/ . (Papers for 27 June 2012; the date of the next meeting was unknown.

The HR Systems Committee: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/hr/system/ . (No papers since 15 February 2012).

Student Information Systems Committee: http://www.camsis.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/boards_groups_and_sigs/sisc/   Minutes for the meeting on 9 August 2012 and papers for the meeting on 8 November 2012.

387. Meeting dates

Noted: the remaining dates for meetings in 2012-13 (subject to change).

BC	Tuesday 8 January 2013	12.00 pm	Treasurer's Room
ISSS	Thursday 17 January 2013	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 26 February 2013	12.00 pm	Treasurer's Room
ISSS	Thursday 7 March 2013	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 30 April 2013	12.00 pm	Old Schools Meeting Room
ISSS	Thursday 16 May 2013	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 18 June 2013	12.00 pm	Treasurer's Room
ISSS	Thursday 27 June 2013	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room

388. Envoi

The Chairman noted this had been Professor Howe's last meeting and thanked her for her contribution to the Syndicate.

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PRAO,
December 2012