

University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 January 2014 in the Syndicate Room, the Old Schools.

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

In attendance: Director of Finance, University Librarian and Professor Leslie (for M476).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Matheson, Dr Carpenter, Dr Dörrzapf, Dr Smith, the Director of MISD and the Director of UCS.

Mr Norman acted as Secretary in Mr Wilson's absence.

There were no declarations of interest.

473. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 14 November 2013 were approved.

474. Matters arising and review of action points

Action points were circulated. The note (ISSS 435) included the annual cycle of business and the outline programme of work.

M463 recorded the approval of the TDF funding requested in ISSS 426 (for a consultant to gather requirements for a system to support University-wide fundraising) and noted the need to appoint a project board. A subsequent e-mail from Kate Wilson (Chief Operating Officer, CUDAR) was tabled by the Chair (with a copy of ISSS 426) requesting confirmation of a proposed project board membership and release of funding of £250K to allow a project manager to be appointed for 2 years. A full report was anticipated by the March meeting of ISSS but there was a concern that momentum might be lost without the appointment of a project manager as soon as possible.

Clarification was sought concerning consistency with the College Memorandum. It was noted that the intention was that Colleges should be able to use the system if they wished. The core costs of the system would be borne by the University and the Colleges would only be liable for marginal costs, if any. The proposals were thought to be consistent with the Memorandum.

It was agreed that it would be undesirable to lose momentum and the Chair (as PVC (Planning and Resources)) undertook to find interim funding so that a project manager could be appointed. However, the project should not be initiated until the report and recommendations could be considered at the March meeting of ISSS.

There was discussion of the proposed membership; it was agreed that MISD representation should be understood as UIS representation and that concerns relating to account management should be covered by this representation. It was suggested that an additional School representative might be considered. Subject to these suggestions, the establishment of the proposed project board was approved.

475. Business Committee minutes

Received: the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 6 November 2013 (ISSS 436). Minutes of the meeting on 7 January 2014 would follow.

476. Transition Advisory Group

A note of the second meeting of the Transition Advisory Group (TAG) was attached as ISSS 437(a) with a summary of some implementation issues (ISSS 437(b)) on which the TAG sought the Syndicate's views. Professor Leslie attended for this item.

It was noted that the new Director of University Information Services was Martin Bellamy.

It was also noted that TAG had recommended that High Performance Computing be included in UIS and it was confirmed that the HPC Service Oversight Committee would no longer be needed.

Reassurance was sought that there would be sufficient PRC representation on the Information Services Committee (ISC). PRC representation was to be achieved through overlap of membership and was expected to be substantial.

Comments were also made about the frequency of ISC meetings and support. Meeting frequency would be a matter for the ISC .

The issue of support for the committee was raised and it was noted that the ISC differed from the ISSS in that the Director of UIS was the executive officer of the ISC would be able to deploy resource to provide support from his own organisation.

There was discussion concerning the mechanisms by which Schools might seek to operate IT strategies independently from ISC/UIS and how such strategies might be funded. Independent strategies would need to be funded from existing resources and questions about distributed purchasing inefficiency would need to be addressed by the UIS in its software purchasing support service. Also in the context of School representation, the role of School IT coordinators as sources of advice and the use of technical sub-committees was noted.

In general the design of the ISC was welcomed and it was thought offered appropriate support for the incoming Director of UIS.

477. Voyager replacement

The Syndicate considered the Concept Paper for the project circulated as ISSS 438. Provision had been made in the 2012 Planning Round for £500k expenditure in 2013-14.

The Syndicate noted that Dr Rachael Padman had agreed to Chair the Project Board.

The Syndicate approved the proposal in the Concept Paper that an ISSS (to be ISC) supervised project be established using the published ISSS IT project governance guidelines, and that an initial funding authorisation of £500K be made to enable phase 1 work to be completed.

The Syndicate also considered whether it was appropriate to manage the project against both the CPP [Capital Project Process] and the ISSS project governance noting that "the CPP was designed mainly for building projects and was not well suited to IT projects with high levels of uncertainty that needed to be continually managed."

The ISSS Project and the CPP guidelines were published respectively at:

<http://www.ucs.cam.ac.uk/iss/rules/governance2009.pdf/view>

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/planning/cpp/index.html>

While it was acknowledged that CPP was not designed for IT projects and that the execution of projects should be under ISSS/ISC governance, it was also felt to be appropriate that a project of value £2 million or more should be presented to PRC for approval. It was also pointed out that the operation of the CPP was quite flexible. It was agreed that ISSS governance should control the project and funding could be approved to enable steps leading to the preparation of a full case for the CPP, but that the full case should be required before the University was committed to the bulk of expenditure. Mr. Norman agreed to report on any difficulties that arose in the current project, which would be the first to follow both processes.

478. Cloud Services

Members were asked if there was anything further to report following the discussion at the last meeting; reference was made to the ISWG discussion in the minutes circulated as ISSS 442.

The Chair informed the Syndicate that the Audit Committee had requested reports on cyber-security and social media. Ian du Quesnay, as Chair of the ISWG, commented that the difficulties around legal issues were tending to tilt thinking towards a University-owned system. The observation in ISWG minutes that the incoming Director of UIS had recent exposure to the issues was confirmed and that it would be reasonable to wait until the University could exploit his expertise. Para 5.2 of the draft ISWG minutes might be corrected to say that Legal Services were of a clear opinion that the JISC - Google Apps agreement was too complex to be presented to academics, but whether that should prevent the University from seeking an alternative way of taking advantage of the work of JISC in negotiating a national agreement remained an open issue.

479. Moodle

The Syndicate had approved £263k funding from the TDF for first year development costs of Moodle, including £68k equipment and £20k for developments in ICE.

Some concern was expressed regarding the 'sales' orientation of some of the language in the funding request that was felt to undermine credibility of other claims and it was noted that Ivy League universities were not running Moodle as a rule. In general, while it was acknowledged that TLSSG should play a critical role in determining which system should be procured, it was not thought that they had authority to declare themselves the Project Board.. Given that the outcome of the feasibility study was still unknown, the suggested support from the Faculty of English was seen to be premature. A lot of reliance was placed on the support of the Education Section for the new platform.

It was suggested that funding should be extended for an additional year to allow the pilots to be completed and reported upon before committing to long-term funding. Should the reports be unsatisfactory, it might be appropriate to consider other options.

The use of CamTools for non-teaching applications was raised. The understanding of the Syndicate was that CamTools would continue in operation to support collaboration and administrative use until a suitable alternative could be found. It was noted that some experience was being gained with SharePoint for administrative use.

The business case for recurrent funding, circulated as ISSS 439, would be considered as a "New Need" by the Resource Management Committee. Provision had meanwhile been included within the Administered Fund for ISSS priorities to ensure that £228k would be available in 2014/15 and 2015/16 and £185k in 2016/17 (see also M 482 below and ISSS 440).

480. Workstreams

The Director of Finance reported that the CUFS replacement project had returned to 'Green' status.

481. Any other business

The lack of a date associated with the standing action point of Data Centre Governance was raised and the Chair indicated that this was in hand by the PVC for Institutional Affairs, Professor Sanders.

482. Planning Round 2013

The Syndicate had considered the draft bid at their last meeting and referred it to the ISWG to be finalised. The final bid, circulated as ISSS 440, had been submitted to the Administered Funds Scrutiny Group.

483. Operational Reports

The operational report from MISD was received as ISSS 441.

484. Committee minutes

The ISWG website was:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/iss/subcommittees/iswg/> Minutes for the meeting on 19 December were circulated as ISSS 442.

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Network Management Committee held on 31 October were published on the JNMC website:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/jnmc/minutes/>

The Financial Systems Committee website was: <http://ufs.admin.cam.ac.uk/keycont/FSC/>
The last minutes are for 11 April 2013.

The HR Systems Committee website was:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/hr/system/> . The last set of minutes is for 13 May 2013.

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 meetings of its Business Committee on 9 August and of the Committee itself on 8 November had been published.

The next meeting of the Teaching and Learning Steering Group was on Monday 10 February.

485. Meeting dates

Remaining dates for meetings in 2013-14 were noted and that the Information Services Committee was due to replace the ISSS with effect from 31 March 2013 and would use the ISSS dates for meetings in May and June.

BC	Tuesday 25 February 2014	12.00pm 3.00pm	Treasurer's Room-Professor Young's Office
ISSS	Thursday 6 March 2014	2.15pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 29 April 28 April 2014	12.00pm	Treasurer's Room-Professor Young's Office
ISSS	Thursday 8 May 2014	2.15pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 17 June 2014	12.00pm 10.00 am	Treasurer's Room-Professor Young's Office
ISSS	Thursday 26 June 2014	2.15pm	Council Room

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