UNIVERSITY OF KENT
Information Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2009

Present: Professor J Baldock (Chairman), Professor A Chadwick, Professor MD Fischer, Dr J Mills, Mrs C Pickaver, Mr J Pink, Mr J Sotillo, Mr S Thornton, Dr AH Ward, Ms G Woodhams, Mrs JC Hornsby (Secretary).

Apologies: Professor D Chadwick, Ms KM Doyle, Mr NSR Jackson, Miss H Palmer, Mr PV Slater

13/08-09 MINUTES
The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December were approved.

14/08-09 MATTERS ARISING

Faculty Student Newsletters (Minute 10/08-09(i))
It was reported that the Faculty student Newsletters had been set up.

Reading List (Minute 10/08-09(i))
The Committee's previously expressed concerns about the state of reading lists will be communicated to the Learning and Teaching Board in the summer term. Meanwhile, training of academic staff in the use of the reading list management software has commenced. Statistics on the current reading lists available had been presented to LTB but not discussed.

New Email and Calendaring System for Staff ((Minute 10/08-09(iii))

Out of Office messages to external addressees had not yet been enabled on Microsoft Exchange, the University’s new email server. There was general agreement that while this function was highly desirable, the Committee did not want to advocate its enablement until the risks of doing so were clearer. It was noted that some other HEIs had withdrawn the facility for their staff to offer out of office messages to external recipients. Others, which had not, had suffered consequences; one such example was CCCU which had been blacklisted by Google. In the short term, there were alternatives to using out of office messages, including mail forwarding and shared mailboxes.

It was agreed after discussion that IS should perform a risk assessment, and an analysis of how safe/unsafe it would actually be were this function to be enabled, and report this to the next meeting for consideration.

ACTION: INFORMATION SERVICES

15/08-09 COMPUTER USER PANEL
Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2009 were received (JSC 20/08-09).

16/08-09 LIBRARY USER PANEL
Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2009 were received *(ISC 21/08-09)*.

Under 11/09 *Reading List Project Update*, it was reported that there is still some confusion amongst academic staff about what a Reading List is actually for. The Library’s view, which is shared by the Committee is that if an item is named in the specification, handouts, assignments or other course material, then it should appear on the reading list, so that the Library has a chance of making it available when students require it.

The Committee agreed that they should send a very strong recommendation to the Learning and Teaching Board that the Reading List issue should be a priority; but that they also recognised that there are some inhibiting factors for academics which currently need to be addressed, namely, the requirement to provide reading Lists to multiple recipients for multiple purposes, for example, handbook/department/library/bookshop, all of which can be satisfied through direct feeds from the reading list system.

Not the least important reason for ensuring the availability of materials is the prominence the Library’s provision receives each year in the National Student Survey; but it was also the view of the Committee that regardless of the NSS, and the timing of the requirement, in the summer term/long vacation, the provision of a full reading list ought to be a normal expectation of academic behaviour.

The Committee will send a paper to the Learning and Teaching Board setting out the need for this facility, the risks of not doing it and the view that this should be a normal contractual requirement for academic staff.

**ACTION: INFORMATION SERVICES**

**17/08-09 DRILL HALL LIBRARY USER GROUP**

The Committee received minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2009 *(ISC 22/07-08)*, noting in particular under minute 4 the extended opening hours pilot.

**18/08-09 WEB STRATEGY AND STEERING GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meetings held on 27 February 2009 *(ISC 23/08-09)*, together with attached papers for discussion, relating to the development of the Kent website and an intranet for staff and students.

After noting that an update on the progress of the pilot blogging service would be presented to the next meeting, the Committee expressed thanks to the Web Strategy and Steering Group for their continuing work.

**19/08-09 REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

(i) *Director’s Report December 2008 – February 2009*

Paper *(ISC 24/08-09)*, the Director of Information Services’ Report for the period December 2008-February 2009 was received. The Director of Information Services spoke to the report and highlighted the following issues in particular:

_A1 Student Data System_

An upgrade of the technologies and infrastructure underpinning the Student Data System is required; the SDS cannot currently cope with the strain put upon it by the demands of the Student Portal.
A5 Student Laptop Loan
This service has been so successful that another batch of laptops will be ordered to meet demand, and cables will need to be supplied as battery life is fairly short; this will have consequences for the provision of electrical sockets in the library.

Stocktake
It was reported, though not mentioned in the report, that there would be a stocktake undertaken within the Library during the long vacation. There have been no stocktakes in recent years, so the catalogue is believed to be inaccurate; this has a negative impact on users. There will be no disruption to Library services during the stocktake will be minimised and closely managed.

C4: Admissions System
A decision is due to be made on 31 March on the options available. It is hoped that the new system will be in place for the admissions season 2010-2011. In the meantime, there is a need to update the current INGRES platform on which Admissions and SDS are based.

D3 Pier Road Residences, Medway
If a commercial supplier is used for the delivery of network and IT services, then the application of the IT regulations will be the same as when a student is living non-university accommodation.

(ii) IS Draft Operational Plan 2009-2010
The Committee received ISC 25/08-09 the IS Draft Operational Plan for 2009-2010. The table relates to project work outside the usual ongoing maintenance work undertaken by Information Services. There was some discussion relating to the delivery of Oracle as the new development platform for the University (under 3.4). Although a definite decision had not been made to adopt Oracle, and it was recognised that there are other products available, this looked the likeliest option.

(iii) Library Space and Services Review
Paper ISC 26/08-09 the Templeman Library Options Appraisal Summary was received, the Architects’ report was also circulated, and the original Vision document was laid on the table. It was noted that the Architects’ report had been available for some time, but was only now being made public. The report details the benefits and drawbacks of a number of options.

The Committee discussed the proposals at some length; in support of the preferred option of remodelling and extending the Library, the following points were made:

This is a major political and strategic opportunity for the University, which has traditionally shied away from large scale and very large budget developments, to redefine its centrepiece;

It should be promoted as a virtual learning centre, a multipurpose facility, which is flexible and concords entirely with the University’s strategic plan. A notable point was that the footfall in the Library has increased dramatically over the last few years, outpacing the growth in student numbers – this has coincided with the adaptation of the traditional library space, with the addition of IT workspaces, group study spaces and social areas.

With additional space, the building could incorporate other University services and operations periodically, such as

- Careers Service
- Kent Union
- Counselling
- Student Support
- Induction events
• Registration
• Student Learning Advisory Service
• Hospitality/card issue

It could also provide additional space for teaching, which is one of the other claims to large amounts of funding, in competition with the Library. Any negatives of the plan (such as the potential crowding of the centre of the campus) were considered by the committee to be far outweighed by the benefits, and in conclusion, the Committee agreed to give the preferred option their strong endorsement.

ACTION INFORMATION SERVICES/CHAIRMAN

20/08-09 REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

The Committee received and noted ISC 27/08-09 the report from the Director of Communications and Development for Spring 2009.

21/08-09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10 June 2009 at 10.00.