UNIVERSITY OF KENT
INFORMATION SERVICES COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2009

Present: Professor J Baldock (Chairman), Professor D Chadwick, Ms KM Doyle, Professor MD Fischer., Mr NSR Jackson, Dr J Mills, Mrs C Pickaver, Mr J Pink, Mr PV Slater, Mr J Sotillo, Mr S Thornton, Ms G Woodhams, Mrs JC Hornsby (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr AH Ward, Mr D Curran (Kent Union)

01/09-10 MINUTES
The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2009 were approved.

02/09-10 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Chair of Computer User Panel (Minute 24/08-09)

No appointment had been made to this position; but there are a number of potential candidates. These will be considered by the Chairman who will make an appointment which can be reported to the next meeting of the ISC.

(ii) Management of SPAM (Minute 29/08-09(i))

All accounts affected by this issue have been updated.

(iii) IS Budget Bids 2009-2010 (Minute 29/08-09 (ii))

Covered under the Director’s Report (minute 11/09-10 below).

(iv) Identities for Life (Minute 29/08-09 (vi))

Paper ISC 40/08-09 was recirculated with commentary from Professor D Chadwick. The DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES reported that since the summer meeting of the Committee, all the issues raised had been addressed, and an application for JISC funding for the project had been made.

03/09-10 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP 2009-2010

The Committee noted the current Terms of Reference and membership of the Committee as detailed in Paper ISC 01/09-10.

04/09-10 REPORT TO SENATE 2008-2009

The Committee noted the report, due to be made to Senate on 20th November 2009, relating to the Committee’s business during the academic year 2008-2009 Paper ISC 02/09-10.

05/09-10 COMPUTER USER PANEL
The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2009 were received and noted (paper ISC 03/09-10). The Committee expressed thanks to Gill Woodhams who had chaired the meeting while the post of Chairman was vacant, and also for the continued work of this well attended committee.

06/09-10   LIBRARY USER PANEL

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2009 were received and noted (paper ISC 04/09-10). The Head of Library Services reported that the Panel was hoping to have a student course representative from each of the faculties on the Panel by the academic year 2010-11.

07/09-10   WEB STRATEGY AND STEERING GROUP

There was no meeting of the Web Steering and Strategy Group this term; instead, the Committee received a short report from the group (paper ISC 05/09-10). There was a discussion about the issue of Open Access Publishing (under 6a in the report), during which the following points were made:

- OAP is broadly A Good Thing and is to be supported;
- A number of other HEIs are already starting down this path;
- If Kent also does OAP, then there are two stipulations:
  - The mechanics must be right (i.e. the sites must be supported and reliable, which will involve the provision of funding and some resource from IS)
  - Journals must be of high quality
- Costs of support could be offset by withdrawing subscriptions to online journals (though there is the issue of bundled subscriptions, which may make this difficult).

It was agreed that an outline proposal should be drawn up by WSSG for the next meeting of the ISC, for a pilot OAP project. This should not be a fully worked out proposal, but should provide estimates of time/costs.

ACTION: WSSG

08/09-10   DRILL HALL LIBRARY USERS GROUP

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2009 were received and noted (paper ISC 06/09-10).

09/09-10   EUROPEAN DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT LABEL

The Committee received paper ISC 07/09-10, a copy of the award made by the European Commission to the University of the prestigious Diploma Supplement Label.

10/09-10   REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT

The Director of Communications and Development spoke to her Autumn Report ISC 08/09-10, highlighting in particular changes to the look and feel of the KENT website which are due to be published in September 2010 and will tie in with the launch of the PG Prospectus for 2011 entry.
During discussion of the paper, the Committee expressed concern that there were underlying problems with the site which needed to be addressed, including improved search facilities. The DCD confirmed that the utility of the site would be addressed at the same time as the look and feel.

It was agreed that the DCD would submit a paper to the next meeting of the ISC, which would outline the project and all areas of improvement expected as an outcome of the redesign, and a gantt chart for the project.

**ACTION: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT**

**11/09-10 REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

(i) Director's Report June 2009 – October 2009

An extra page of this report containing items E4 to E9 was laid on table. The Director of Information Services spoke to his report (paper ISC 09/09-10), and drew the attention of the Committee to the following points in particular:

**A1 Services**

There were three significant service interruptions during the reporting period. In relation to the malicious exploitation of the webcode vulnerability in local software, there was some discussion about the possibility of the University prohibiting the use of such external programmes. However, it became clear during discussion that attacks of this nature were extremely common, and only rarely were they able to penetrate the University's security measures and cause any disruption. The IS policy is to maximise security, but to balance that with the need to provide a flexible service for all users.

The disruption in the summer following the migration of 60+ servers was a result of human error on the part of an external contractor.

Problems with the Student Data System which occurred at the start of the academic year have been identified and interim measures put in place to alleviate the system locking. An upgrade to the version of Ingres in use (which is expected to fix the underlying issue) is due to take place in December.

**B3 Library Catalogue**

Improvements to this are being released incrementally – as per the Google approach.

**B5 Student Email**

The Committee welcomed the news that PGR students will get the long form of email addresses following this migration.

**C2 admissions/CRM System**

Tenders have been received and a decision on the way forward is expected to be made by Christmas. Any new system will need to be in place by September 2010, in time for entry in 2011.

A note of caution was struck in relation to CRM, in relation to the rise of VRM (Vendor Relationship Management); the University must be flexible in adapting to new technology and not being unnecessarily restrictive in its specifications.

**C3 Reading List System**
The availability of reading lists for modules remains problematic, though a new system is about to be launched which it is hoped, will provide a more usable interface for academic staff.

The Committee again expressed concern at the low number of reading lists available to students (currently running at about 40%), as this does have a real impact in the responses to the National Student Survey and consequently in League Tables. It was agreed that the Committee would monitor the progress of this new system and the publication rates achieved by departments across the University.

E4 Service Review

The Vice-Chancellor has asked all professional service departments to undertake a review of their operation and examine their fitness for purpose. Information Services is already undertaking a review and is planning to restructure in the new year. Better, more focused customer services and an improved structure for IS staff are expected to result. Proposals are currently being discussed within Information Services and firm proposals will be circulated to ISC once they emerge.

ACTION: DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES

(ii) Revised Pricing Proposals for IT Related Services 2010/11

The Committee received and approved proposals for revising pricing structures for IS services (paper ISC 10/09-10).

(iii) IT Disaster Recovery Plan – reports from June 2009

Papers ISC 11A/09-10, ISC 11B/09-10, ISC 11C/09-10 were received, which detailed the scenarios during the recent actual and test situations. Comments were invited and should be sent to the Secretary.

ACTION: ALL

(iv) IS Survey of University Staff 2009

Paper ISC 12/09-10 was received, together with an Action Plan ISC 13/09-10. The Committee were impressed with the report and expressed their thanks to its author Ann Maruma for a very thorough job. They approved the proposed action plan, noting that the problem of long login times for PCs in seminar and lecture rooms was now fixed.

12/09-10 CHANGES IN BUSINESS SYSTEMS

The Committee received paper ISC 14/09-10 (a copy of an email exchange) in which the Head of Business Systems had given notice to the chair of the SDS Implementation Group and Academic Division of planned allocations of development staff to different activities. The note signals the intention to allocate staff to significant projects including the implementation of a new Admissions System and the pilot development of the Student Data System within the Oracle environment, necessary if SDS performance and sustainability is to be assured. The Chair of the CMSDS Implementation Group expressed concern that this would mean a return to agreed resourcing levels for SDS (3FTEs) from the current elevated levels and it was noted that if such a reduction were to take place, careful prioritisation of SDS development work would need to take place in order to ensure that necessary developments were appropriately prioritised and resourced.
It was agreed that the Chairman and the DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES would discuss the requirements with the Academic Registrar.

**ACTION: CHAIRMAN AND DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

**13/09-10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on 11 March 2010.