UNIVERSITY OF KENT
INFORMATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2010

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

Apologies: Mr D Curran, Professor D Chadwick, Ms KM Doyle.

21/09-10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2010 were approved.

22/09-10 MATTERS ARISING

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

Professor Toni Williams had been approached to assume the role of Chair of the Computer Users’ Panel in the longer term; should she agree to the role, she would not be able to start until 2011/12 academic year, so the Committee asked Mr Ellis to stay on as interim Chair in the meantime.

23/09-10 COMPUTER USER PANEL

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2010 were received and noted (paper ISC 29/09-10). The Committee thanked Mark Ellis who had stayed on as acting Chair for the meeting (see 22/09-10 above).

The CUP had had a robust discussion about software packages that are currently centrally funded, and which had contributed to an overspend of approximately £13k this year; the Committee agreed with the representatives of the CUP that a more formal set of Terms of Reference should be drawn up for this fund, which currently is administered more on unspoken principles than formal guidelines – a now unsustainable position in the current financial climate. The new guidelines should be drawn up for the next meeting of the CUP.

ACTION: CUP

24/09-10 LIBRARY USER PANEL

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2010 were received and noted (paper ISC 30/09-10).

25/09-10 REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT

The Committee noted ISC 38/09-10, which was tabled at the meeting.

26/09-10 WEB STRATEGY AND STEERING GROUP
The Committee received draft minutes and papers from the meeting held on 19 May 2010 (ISC 31/09-10). In relation to the Open Access Publishing project, it was agreed that a more formal proposal/remit would be brought to the next meeting. The Committee acknowledged that although this had been under discussion for some time, there was a great deal of behind-the-scenes configuration and setting up to do, and that once the pilot is complete, that resources would need to be identified to allow it to carry on.

The Committee discussed at some length the question posed by WSSG about its own future. The WSG and latterly, the WSSG had been formed when the web and web technology was in its infancy and there was a need for a group to oversee its development. Nowadays, the web is part of everyday life for all manner of activity within and without the University, and this group as it is presently configured is perhaps no longer appropriate, particularly as it adds to the number of reporting lines about web activity.

Notwithstanding the above, there was a view that the group had performed a very useful function and continued to provide a convenient meeting point for central service departments – CDO/UELT/IS, and that to disband entirely would be unhelpful.

WSSG proposed that a small group be formed to suggest new terms of reference for the group and the Committee endorsed this proposal and looked forward to seeing the new Terms at their next meeting. There was also discussion about whether a future version of WSSG might be an additional arm of the CUP, and the Committee felt that this should be considered by the Working Group.

ACTION: WSSG

27/09-10 REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES

(i) Director’s Report March 2010 – May 2010

The Director of Information Services spoke to his report (paper ISC 32/09-10), and drew the attention of the Committee to the following points in particular:

B2 Student Email
Migration of student email to live@edu is scheduled for 21 June 2010.

C2 Templeman Library Level 1 Centre
Approval for the rebuild of the Templeman Library is still outstanding, but funding has been secured for the refurbishment of the front desk area, which will improve flow on entry to the Library. There may be knock on effects to the opening times extension pilot owing to building work taking place over the summer (see A.3 of the Director’s Report).

C6 Copyright Licensing Agency
It was noted that while Kent runs this centrally, other Universities manage compliance on a devolved basis. There is scope for reviewing the management of the scheme at Kent, but there was some concern about how this would affect the quality of the record keeping.

The Committee noted also that a factor for consideration was the very high (too high?) expectations of students that all material required for their course would be available for them via the VLE and that this has serious implications for compliance with the CLA.

(ii) Student Satisfaction Survey 2009-2010
This survey took place in Autumn Term 2009, but the report to the Committee was held back until an Action Plan had been drawn up. The Committee received the report and analysis of the survey (ISC 33/09-10) and an action plan (ISC 34/09-10).

The Committee endorsed the Action Plan, of which many actions were complete already. Some concern was expressed that the surveying of students in this way, though necessary and in many ways positive, did have a tendency to raise expectations. It is the role of the staff/student liaison committees to try to manage such expectations.

(iii) Draft Stock Relegation and Disposal Management Policy

The Committee received ISC 35/09-10, a draft report for note. An updated version of this paper will be sent to schools for consultation, and a final, formal proposal for the policy will come to ISC in the autumn.

(iv) SDS Start of Term Performance Issues: September 2009

The Committee received a report from the Director of IS (ISC 36/09-10) outlining the events of September 2009 when there was a significant period of outage on SDS, and the steps taken to resolve performance issues at the time and for the future.

The Committee commended the work of all those involved in the disaster recovery implementation.

(v) Email Services for Alumni and Ex-Staff

Following on from the discussion at the previous meeting, the Committee received an updated report on the implementation of the scheme for the provision of lifelong email for students and staff of the University (ISC 37/09-10). Much of the planned work has already been implemented, since 2009 graduates have already retained their email addresses. All those affected by the changes will receive an email to explain what will happen to their IT accounts when they leave the University.

(vi) Reading Lists

The Committee received and endorsed the recommendations contained in a paper tabled by the Head of Library Services (ISC 39/09-10), an amended version of which will go out to Schools (circulated with the minutes as ISC 39/09-10 revised). Reading List completion rates will be reported subsequently to LUP and then to ISC.

28/09-10 MR PV SLATER, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SYSTEMS

The Committee noted that this was Mr Slater’s last meeting before he retires from the University in July. They expressed their thanks for his significant contribution to the University and to the design and development of the critical SDS in particular, and also their warm wishes for his retirement, complete with lifelong email!

29/09-10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10 November 2010.