

**myUWE Management Group**  
**Notes of the meeting of 24 November 2008**  
**Room 2A27, Frenchay Campus**

**Present:** Barry Cawthorne (Chair), Kevin Foreman, Katy Phillips, Terry Davies, Karen West, Jon Hallett, Nadine Fry, Chris Griffiths, Simon Ramsden, Sarah Hudson, Rich Egan, Margaret Needles, Sid Baldwin, Polly Smith, Emma Taylor (Notes).

**1. Apologies**

Kath Holden.

**2. Minutes of last meeting 6 October 2008.**

Approved.

**3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

**3.1. Fees structure**

Barry confirmed that he had taken this issue to ISCG. Chris advised that the Fees Group, chaired by John Rushforth, had agreed that the fee issues affecting online registration should be investigated. Barry asked Chris to keep the MMG informed of progress. Margaret advised that, if changes to online registration were to be made in an academic year, the necessary information on fee structures would be needed by January of that year.

**ACTION: Barry to advise ISCG on the timescales required.**

**3.2. Announcements structure**

Sid demonstrated the announcements structure in myUWE. The announcements tree is created via a feed from ISIS. Within the announcement tree, announcers and photoset viewers are visible. Portal administrators can announce to all UWE users, all staff or all students. Sid noted that the rules for viewer attachment are being developed in the ISIS infrastructure and a manual method is currently being used. Barry thanked Sid. Rich advised that the new photosets portlet was currently in development and the intention was to launch this by Christmas 2008.

**ACTION: Margaret to produce a diagram of the announcements tree structure.**

**4. Existing programme of work**

**4.1. Online coursework submission**

Margaret reported that this had been made live on 6 November and was being monitored closely. Rich confirmed that the new production environment was being used actively and thanked Simon Ramsden and the Business Systems team.

**4.2. Requirements elicitation channel**

Rich confirmed that this channel was now live, but the requirements were not yet being collated into a single report. Barry asked Rich to monitor the volume of requirements received.

**4.3. Photograph collection**

Sid confirmed that this channel had gone live on Thursday 20 November. Margaret advised that photographs could now be collected in electronic format through myUWE and an announcement would be made to all students today. The photographs collected will go through an approvals process in Facilities. If rejected, students will be informed via myUWE and in an alert e-mail. Approved photographs are stored in the university's photograph database and used for ISIS student records, ID cards and accommodation. In response to a query by Kevin,

Margaret advised that this system was not an application for an ID card and this development was in the hands of the Academic Registrar. Sid confirmed that a paper application would still have to be completed.

#### **4.4. Examination timetables**

Sid confirmed that this channel was due to go live on Thursday 27 November and will be visible to users from 2 December.

#### **4.5. Student council tax certificate letters**

Margaret advised that the pilot tab had gone live for BBS students in September in the first week of term, and she would be meeting Maddie Sandall to get feedback on the pilot and pick up any issues. Margaret reported that there had been very positive feedback from local councils and in the first week the tab was available, there had been 350 downloads. Barry noted that it had been hoped to provide letters for banks, but Margaret's investigation had indicated that banks would not accept these.

#### **4.6. Coursework submission forms**

Rich reported that development was in the early stages. There are some technical issues involved in determining whether to generate forms in one batch or individually on request and Margaret and Nick Coates have done a large amount of work on the content of the forms. Margaret noted that core information could be fixed and school-specific information added, but it would not be possible to include information on the forms at any level lower than school.

In response to a query by Barry about future developments, Rich advised that the next H1 high priority development would be single sign-on into the Student Allocator with a target date of February 2009. Once this has been completed, the next scheduled development is the Calendaring aggregator. After Christmas 2008, two H2 developments are scheduled: Academic Record Phase 3 and car parking. Margaret confirmed that she had spoken to Patrick Nolan in the Academic Registry about the Academic Record Phase 3 and would be starting to document this. In response to a query by Barry about deferred work, Rich advised that the Finance channel had been deferred but would be the next single-sign-on project when the student allocator had been completed.

### **5. Centre for Sport Membership**

#### **5.1. ISCG decision**

In the current academic year, the facility has been available for students to register for gym membership while registering for accommodation, leading to an increase in membership. Barry reported that, in order to increase membership further, Finance had raised a request through ISCG for Centre for Sport Membership also to be made available through online registration. ISCG have supported this request and have asked for the task to be scoped. Barry advised that the Portal Team had identified a solution which wouldn't compromise the registration process, in which students must make a positive choice to opt in to membership.

#### **5.2. Project Plan**

Barry advised that the Centre for Sport Membership opt-in development work would be done alongside other work on the registration channel and ISCG had been advised that existing developments would be deferred to allow this. Barry stressed that H1 and H2 developments would be deferred rather than dropped. Katy noted that Hall Representatives in the Student Village had received requests for information to be made available to students on the cost of opting in to Sport

Centre membership, cancelling membership and joining at a later date. Sid noted that the Portal Team had no input into the information provided to students via the accommodation application, but advised that the portal application would be an opt-in rather than a bundled system and the cost would be made very clear to students. Karen agreed to take the student comments back to Facilities. Margaret noted that it would be helpful for students to have a view of their debt account in Agresso and raised the need for Finance to allow this development to begin. Chris supported Margaret's comments.

**ACTIONS:**

- **Karen to take back to Facilities student comments on the process of bundling gym membership with accommodation through the accommodation system.**
- **Rich to consider when and how the Agresso development should be resurrected.**

## **6. SMS announcements**

### **6.1. ISCG steer**

Rich noted that requests for SMS messaging had arisen from the requirements elicitation process and he had been asked by ISCG to write a paper on this. There is now a sophisticated announcements structure in the portal and it would be useful to combine announcements with an SMS facility to announce class cancellations. An existing project within IT Services has identified an SMS provider and work is underway to bring the two projects together. Barry noted that ISCG had given a strong steer, rather than a decision, but this work was something which we had wanted to do, although it has many issues attached such as how the system would be regulated and paid for.

### **6.2. Initial budget**

Barry advised that Steve Grive had agreed an initial budget of £10K from IT Services.

### **6.3. Project Plan**

Barry enquired whether the group supported this development. Margaret noted that, in addition to the procedure and costing decisions being made, a policy was also required to manage potential reputational risks if the system was used as a marketing tool, rather than an alerts service. Terry reported that SMS announcements had been used to good effect in BIT and BBS and, in response to a request by Sid, agreed to find out what proportion of students had opted in. Margaret noted that BBS had asked students' permission to use their mobile numbers for this service and suggested that students may be allowed to subscribe and unsubscribe to text alerts. The group supported this development as high priority.

**ACTIONS:**

- **Terry to find out the proportion of BIT and BBS students who have opted in to text alerts.**
- **Rich to add SMS announcements to portal developments list.**

## **7. System and performance report**

Sid circulated access statistics and reported that, other than a brief outage in the early hours of Friday 21 November caused by a portal configuration problem, there had been consistent up-time since the October shutdown weekend. The shutdown weekend was used to implement a new switch for the DMZ, which has addressed the issue of slow portal and Blackboard login times during weekend backups and load times are now fairly consistent.

## **8. Dates of remaining meetings for 2008-2009**

12 January 2009; 2 March 2009; 27 April 2009; 8 June 2009. All scheduled from 11:00-12:30 in 4D24.

## **9. Any other business**

### **9.1. Review of online registration**

Margaret advised that in the feedback from administrators and academics following Field and Award Boards, she had received reports from Patrick Nolan of staff having difficulties dealing with queries as they were unable to see student views of myUWE. Margaret stressed that myUWE was a personal and secure facility, and it would not be possible or desirable to share an individual's view. Chris noted that Patrick had visited the Open University in Bristol, where staff could login to students' accounts but the congruence between the OU and UWE systems is unclear. Margaret cautioned that the development of Finance functionality was causing myUWE to become even more personally sensitive and suggested that, if a need has been identified, we should look at the aspects of myUWE which are causing difficulties. Polly suggested that queries would relate to information already visible to administrative staff in ISIS. Margaret enquired whether this might be a training and awareness issue, as many staff have never logged into myUWE and don't know where to find the relevant guidance, and suggested that there may be a case for addressing this in a constructive way and enlarging the guidance. Margaret noted that she was visiting faculties to discover the types of queries being received. Rich advised that he would like to explore Margaret's suggestion of training and awareness for staff and students. Barry noted that this came back to his concern that there was not enough in the portal for staff, and non-teaching staff in particular. Polly volunteered faculty student advisors to pilot Margaret's training. Margaret thanked Polly, but noted that she would first like to go through Faculty Academic Registrars. Katy offered to raise this issue at student councils to get more information on the queries students have. Sid noted that students could change their password to allow administrators to log in to investigate their problem, and then change their password back. Margaret advised that students were guided to send screenshots via e-mail when submitting queries to myUWE Support, and could also allow the Helpdesk to shadow them. Barry stressed that privacy was key but agreed that there were still serious awareness-raising issues, especially among staff.

**ACTION: Margaret to approach Faculty Academic Registrars to offer additional awareness-raising and get a sense of the issues arising.**

### **9.2. Logins and programme of work**

Sid advised that there had been over 500,000 logins in October 2008, and the existing programme of work was now available on the myUWE Support site.