Portal Management Group
Notes of the meeting of 24th July 2007, Room 4D24

Present: Barry Cawthorne (Chair), Karen West, Rich Egan, Margaret Needles, Simon Ramsden, Nick Coates, Kevin Foreman, Sid Baldwin, Debra Campbell, Emma Taylor (Notes).

1. Apologies
None.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 11th June 2007
Approved.

3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda
Barry thanked Rich for drawing up and circulating the agenda in his absence. Barry requested an additional item to be taken as item 3.3 below.

3.1. Reconstitution of the PMG
Barry reported that the final meeting of the Portal Project Board had taken place on 4th July and the new Management Group would now be formed. Responses have been received from all Heads of Services and most faculties. Barry confirmed that he would circulate meeting dates to those who had responded and would copy this information to Executive Deans of the faculties who had not yet responded. Barry outlined the membership of the three consultative groups and proposed the following chairs (to be reviewed in 12 months time):

- The Student Forum will be chaired by the President or Vice President of the Student Representative Council. Barry has met with Dom Passfield and Becca Danes.
- The Business Group. Barry's proposal that Margaret Needles chair this group was approved.
- The Academic Group. Kevin confirmed that he would be happy for Barry to chair this group. The remainder of the PMG membership also agreed.

Barry advised that MMG would meet from 11am to 12.30pm, and would be preceded by MGU meetings from 9.45am to 10.45am. To avoid a clash with the Programme Approvals Committee the following Monday meeting dates have been selected for MMG and MGU: 8th October 2007; 26th November 2007; 14th January 2008; 3rd March 2008; 14th April 2008; and 2nd June 2008.

The following date ranges will be suggested to the consultative groups to allow them to schedule their meetings and bring recommendations to the MMG in a timely fashion: weeks beginning 29th October, 5th or 12th November 2007; weeks beginning 4th, 11th or 18th February 2008; and weeks beginning 5th, 12th or 19th May 2008.
ACTION: Barry ask the chairs to form the three consultative groups and advise MMG membership and consultative group chairs of meeting dates.

3.2. PMG and PPB notes on the myUWE project web pages
Rich confirmed that this had now been done and past notes were available (intranet only) at: http://info.uwe.ac.uk/myuwe/project/manage.asp

3.3. High Level Plan

Rich confirmed that Item 38, the single sign-on review, was still in progress and would be discussed under substantive item 7.3. Sections 5 and 6 of the plan would be discussed under substantive item 9. All other items have been completed. In response to a query by Kevin, Simon confirmed that item 29, ISIS Service Architecture, had been completed.

4. Online re-registration

4.1. Progress Report

Margaret reported that students had found the registration tab before receiving official notification and that registrations had begun almost immediately when the system went live on the evening of 17th July. The two students brought in on 17th July to test the system prior to the launch had been very positive and had allowed some guidance issues to be picked up. Initially, only BBS had tipped their students to allow the live feed to be tested with a discrete group of students. By the afternoon of Friday 20th July, 200 students had registered. From 12:20 today, a total of 441 students had registered, 22 had paid and almost £30K had been received in fees. Margaret advised that two groups of students had not yet been tested: Contract students will be unable to access the Registration tab until HSC has tipped; and it won't be possible to test students in receipt of support until the large SRC downloads begin from 1st August onwards. The next significant tranche of registrations would come from new students. Margaret noted that the WPM payment system had been a significant area of difficulty as the expectation had been that the system used in last year's pilot could be re-used, but in fact the live system had to be re-built from scratch. Margaret raised the need to purchase a permanent test installation as WPM had removed the test system when registration went live. Rich suggested that, as the resources requested last year hadn't been spent, Finance may be asked for the necessary funding. If this is not provided, the request could be taken to Steve Grive. Margaret agreed to approach Richard Dewfall on his return from leave on 30th July.

Barry confirmed that there had been positive feedback from the University's management and that this was well deserved. He offered particular thanks to Sid and to Steve Tromans and asked Simon to convey his thanks to Steve.

ACTION: Margaret to request funding from Finance to purchase a test payment system from WPM.

4.2. Outstanding work

Margaret noted that, if the availability of online registration was to be extended beyond the current scope, it would be necessary to re-organise the fee structure to remove complex fee calculations requiring intervention. It was agreed that it would be desirable to extend the availability of online registration as far as possible and that this was an issue for UMG.

ACTION: Barry to raise the issue of fee structures at the online registration wash-up meeting.

4.3. Risk Register

Margaret reported that there were no changes to the risk register from the previous meeting, but noted that risk 505 had occurred due to the issues with WPM outlined in item 4.1. Margaret also referred to risk 701 and noted that the availability of student support numbers for new students could not be confirmed until the Student Loan Company feeds had begun.

4.4. Next phase
Margaret reported that, as of today, 441 students were enrolled, representing 10% of those eligible. The next phase of the project would involve sweeping up those students currently outside the scope.

5. Subtabs
Sid confirmed that subtabs had been made live on Tuesday 10th July. Students now see five tabs:
- Home
- Courses (incorporating UWEonline Courses, Timetable and Online Coursework Submission subtabs)
- Marks (incorporating Academic Record and Marks Checker subtabs)
- My Details (incorporating Personal Details and Addresses subtabs)
- Email

Registration is visible as a sixth tab to eligible students.

6. Online Coursework Submission
Margaret confirmed that she had spoken to Beryl Furey-King and would pick this up after the assessment period when a schedule for MA Translation had been agreed. Rich advised that the concern he had raised previously about the disc space available to store submitted work had now been addressed by an increase in storage space. Barry noted that, as this system was still running in managed mode, it should continue to be overseen by MMG.
ACTION: OCS to be a substantive item on the first MMG agenda.

7. Other work in progress

7.1. Acceptable Use Policy
In response to a request by Derek Norris, Rich reported the intention to add a tick box to allow the acceptance of the policy on the portal login page. The portal team have identified a solution and the intention is to implement this by mid-August. Rich is awaiting confirmation by Derek whether a different policy will be required for staff and students.

7.2. Blackboard SSL
Rich reported that encrypting Blackboard had had an impact on the portal which required work to correct. The Blackboard test service will be SSL'd on Friday 27th July to allow testing with the portal test service.

7.3. Single Sign-On
Sid confirmed that an existing system was in place to allow single sign-on from the portal to Blackboard, e-mail, OCS and Announcements, but noted that work on single sign-on was ongoing and a stand-alone system was also being investigated to give scalability with third party systems. Barry raised a concern that papers from the ISCG meeting of 13th July had indicated that, in a demonstration of Windows Live, it had been noted that Windows Live would not allow single sign-on into e-mail in the portal. Barry stressed that, in his view, this would represent a backward step. Rich confirmed that he had also raised this concern with Steve Grive and the ITS Management Group and noted that the proposal to ISCG to allow students to op-in to use Windows Live for e-mail would raise serious concerns. Rich stressed that an opt-in system would cause significant difficulties and that it would be preferable to make a decision for all users to use either Webmail or Windows Live. Barry noted that, although Windows Live may bring benefits in the long term, introduction of the system at this point would be a retrograde step for the portal. Margaret noted that a move

of this kind would also be a retrograde step in our communication with students as the portal had helped to encourage students to use their UWE e-mail account. Rich confirmed that anecdotal evidence also indicated that usage of Webmail had increased following the launch of the portal. Rich has asked Steve Grive to raise these concerns at ISCG. Barry confirmed that he would also do so.

8. System report

8.1. Performance and access report

Sid reported that accesses to the portal had reached 4,500 on 5th July and had peaked on 21st June at over 6,000. The accesses in June had coincided with the release of results and Sid noted that for much of that week, the portal had been running on one server with no performance issues. Margaret confirmed that an announcement had been placed advising students where to obtain their results as there had been some misunderstanding by faculties. Rich noted that the figure of 13,628 distinct student users indicated that half of the entire student population had accessed the portal at some point in June.

8.2. Feed report

Nick confirmed that there were no issues to report. Margaret advised that Bryan Mitchell had been working on the data clear-out of old HSC students, but was proceeding carefully.

9. Next steps

Barry confirmed that he would finalise the membership of MMG and would ask chairs of the consultative groups to set up their groups. Barry requested that nothing outside the scope of work already planned should be started before new requests begin to come in from the consultative groups. It was agreed that in the interim period between now and when the new requirements elicitation process is up and running, and when online registration had been running successfully for a period of time, Rich, Barry, Margaret and Sid would look at the available resources and the outstanding deferred work and decide what could be done.

10. Any other business

None. Barry noted that this was the final meeting of the PMG and thanked the group for their work and their contribution to the building of the portal.