

## **Portal Management Group**

### **Notes of the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> December 2004, 4D24, Bolland Library**

**Present:** Barry Cawthorne (Chair), Kevin Foreman, Rich Egan, Helen Cole, Sid Baldwin, Katie Huthnance, Emma Taylor (notes).

**1. Apologies:** Margaret Needles, Leon Smith.

**2. To note formal co-option of Sid Baldwin to the PMG**

Barry welcomed Sid to the group.

**3. Minutes of the meeting of 4 November 2004**

Approved with two corrections:

Item 4.2. Hardware. Windows hardware has been delivered. Unix hardware has not yet been delivered.

Item 8. AOB. The application described by Leon is proposed, but not yet available.

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

None.

**5. Draft Project Initiation Document**

Rich circulated the Project Initiation Document (PID), which will be taken to the Portal Project Board meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> December. Rich thanked Sid, Katie, Margaret and Rory Galvin for their input. The following were noted:

- Subsequent to publication of the document, Katie has held a meeting with BBS.
- The risk register is lengthy, but reflects the main issues of concern. Rich has also attempted to outline contingency plans.
- Costs have been funded in full.

**6. Progress with requirements elicitation**

The Portal will be piloted within HSC and benchmarked within BBS. Katie reported that she had not had any further contact with HSC, but had held a meeting with administrative and academic staff in BBS on 9<sup>th</sup> December. It was suggested that the Project Board should consider the degree of interest from HSC in relation to the degree of interest and engagement from BBS. It was recognised that HSC's self-contained modules represented an advantage when conducting a pilot, as discrete groups of students could be identified.

The meeting with BBS had resulted in the production of a priority list of requirements:

- i) Access to student contact and personal information (e-mail, mobile number and emergency contacts) in addition to address changes;
- ii) Review of module choices.
- iii) Academic history and provisional marks.
- iv) Links to existing content (advice and handbooks).
- v) Library account administration.

It was agreed that the benchmarking of requirements with BBS had been valuable, and that the review of module choices should be added to the portal requirements. Sid noted that this function would not be proved in the live pilot as HSC students do not make module choices.

Barry noted that accommodating the portal requirements will raise significant working practice issues, and enquired how the change of student contact details would be

mediated and validated. Helen confirmed that a postcode checker would be used, and that students attempting to enter an un-validated address would be referred to faculty administrative staff. Rich suggested that the address change function be demonstrated at the next meeting of the group.

Katie is holding a workshop with student ambassadors in January 2005. Barry enquired whether any student information had been received from Shelley Patel of UWESU.

**ACTION: Barry to contact Shelley for student information.**

## **7. Progress report of development to date**

Sid referred to the Development Plan (section 12.2 of the PID) and reported the following progress:

- 1000 Both Java programmers are now in post (one programmer for five weeks, and one for three weeks), and development practices have been established.
- 1100 Hardware commissioning is almost all complete. Development environment is in place.
- 1200 Web server communication is in place with Ingres, communication with Portal is not yet in place.
- 1300 CAS development, LDAP integration and SSL are all in place and operational.
- 1400 Sid has facilitated progress by giving Programmers access to Blackboard developer tools.
- 1500 Timetable has been proxied successfully into the development Portal.
- 1700 ISIS channel in use as proof of concept. A re-design is currently being implemented.

Barry thanked Sid and his team for the positive progress made.

It was noted that Karen Kersley could provide much of the information needed for Syllabus Plus integration, but that grouping and data integration may require collaboration with Leon. It was agreed that it would be useful to forewarn Karen of any input which may be required, to allow her to schedule this. Rich noted that consultancy may be sought from Scientia, and confirmed that he could consult Steve Grive about a budget if necessary.

**ACTION: Barry to meet Karen Kersley after the PMG meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> January to discuss and determine her position.**

## **8. Potential benefits of SMS text messaging to the portal project**

Rich reported that he and Helen had discussed the potential of using SMS, and were both aware that, subject to a sense of demand, this may fit well with the announcements channel of the Portal. Barry observed that any use of SMS would link with the need to allow students to amend their contact details in ISIS. Kevin noted that, in the future, HSC may be using software which includes SMS to manage placements.

It was agreed that SMS should not be the only means of communication, and noted that ownership of mobile phones by all students could not be assumed.

**ACTION: Rich and Helen to raise SMS text messaging with ITS Senior Management.**

#### **9. Progress of the pilot staff facing portal to allow access to lists of students and their photographs**

Rich reported that he had consulted John Elliot on the privacy and data protection issues arising from placing student photographs on the Portal. John had confirmed that this would be acceptable providing the photographs were only visible to UWE staff within UWE, and providing the information was destroyed when the students left the university. Sid noted that privacy issues may be raised as some areas of the portal will be visible from outside UWE.

It was noted that Leon's expertise would probably be needed to allow the movement of data on student grouping from Syllabus Plus to MIIS although Karen Kerlsey might be able to help. Helen suggested that expertise may be available within ITS to allow work to continue on this. It was agreed to return to this issue at the next meeting, when more is known about Leon's availability.

**ACTION: Progress of pilot staff facing portal to be substantive item on PMG agenda of 17<sup>th</sup> January.**

#### **10. Update on the on-line enrolment project**

Margaret has reported to Barry that the first project meeting will take place between herself and Julie Lydon in the week beginning 20<sup>th</sup> December. The first Project Board meeting will take place in January 2005, chaired by Julie Lydon and attended by Margaret, Barry, Steve Grive and Bill Marshall. Julie was keen for the online enrolment project to be run separately to ensure that it was not affected by any delay to the Portal project. Margaret reported to Barry that she considered the launch date of September 2005 to be unrealistic.

#### **11. Dates of next meetings**

17 January 2005 (KF's apologies noted for this meeting)

7 February 2005

7 March 2005

All from 12:00 – 13:00 in room 4D24.

#### **12. Any other business**

Kevin noted that he had not received a copy of the notes of the previous meeting.

**ACTION: Emma to check PMG circulation list.**