Portal Management Group
Notes of the meeting of 12th March 2007, Room 5D6

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

1. Apologies
Karen West, Debra Campbell.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 22nd January
Approved with the following updates, clarifications and corrections:
- Item 5.4. Simon reported that the server upgrade had been delayed due to late delivery and that he would be meeting the suppliers to discuss a new date for delivery.
- Item 5.5. Margaret queried the reference to her report of problems with the Syllabus Plus feed, as she was not present at the meeting. The minute should read "Margaret had reported to Karen that…"
- Item 5.7.1. Sid advised that the OCS channel would be presented to all staff and that the portal team was looking at ways to withhold the channel from staff not marked as collectors.

3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

3.1. Recommendation regarding Hartpury
Rich advised that a meeting with Pauline Williams had not yet taken place. Barry has mentioned this to Sheila Newby, who will be meeting Dr Liz Smith, Dean of Hartpury. Barry would then arrange a meeting with Liz and her colleagues.

3.2. Reconstitution of PMG
Barry reported that the new Terms of Reference and suggested membership had been accepted by the Project Board and that he would allow one month before approaching the newly-appointed Executive Deans to request nominations for PMG representatives.

4. Portal roll-out report
Rich reported that the actions described in items 3.3 and 3.4 of the notes of 22nd January had been completed.

4.1. Issues log
Rich circulated a log of rollout issues. All but one of the twelve issues have now been resolved and none resulted in a loss of service. The outstanding item is a Blackboard performance issue, and a solution has been identified. Rich reported that the rollout had been relatively smooth as the extended pilot had allowed system issues to be identified prior to the launch. Barry noted that issues 6 and 12 related to business processes rather than system issues and should be removed if the log was to be circulated outside the group. Rich confirmed that the log was used as a reference tool by the Portal Team, and was not intended for wider circulation.

4.2. Single sign-on
Rich reported that a security issue relating to single sign-on had been identified prior to the launch, and had been addressed. In order to address further security concerns relating to single sign-on, Rich noted formally that he would like to bring in consultancy from Blackboard and Sun (Webmail provider), and requested the group's support for this request. Barry advised that, while the group could give

general support to Rich's request, it was not possible to make a statement on the current security situation and that, as this was a technical judgement and consultancy would be funded through the ITS budget, Steve Grive should be approached.

4.3. Access statistics
Sid circulated portal access statistics from 1st January 2007 to the present. Due to DNS propagation, a number of users were still being directed to the pilot portal system on 1st February, but by 2nd February all users were being directed to the live portal. Sid reported the following:
- During February, there were 9,823 distinct users. Despite the rollout, there was no drastic increase in user numbers during February and March.
- At its busiest, the portal has had approximately 160 simultaneous users.
- The highest levels of access have been occurring on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at around 1pm.

In answer to a query by Barry, Sid advised that the graph of usage was manually produced, but that the table of statistics was available via a URL on the myUWE support pages. Barry thanked Sid.

Barry requested advice on an appropriate timescale for switching off alternative means of access to the portal's component systems. Rich suggested that this be done in one year as the Student Handbook contains advice on separate access to Webmail and UWEonline. Barry advised that the presence of information in the student handbook would not necessarily be a constraint. Rich suggested that, given this view, September 2007 may be a suitable date, but raised the need to consider how these services would be presented to users as the names 'UWEonline' and 'myUWE' give little indication of the systems' functions. Barry stressed the need to promote a culture in which the portal is the recognised route into various UWE systems. Rich noted that removal of the link to UWEonline from the UWE home page could confuse users. Sid advised that the removal of other means of access also raised issues of accessibility and that this was also a faculty education issue.
ACTION: Sid to provide the myUWE statistics URL.

5. **Project plan**

5.1. High Level Plan 2006/07
Rich re-circulated an updated version of the high level plan. Following the roll out of the portal to all remaining users on 20th February, Items 1 to 28 are complete and stabilisation had begun as described in Part 3 of the plan. Rich reported the following:
- Item 29. The ISIS service architecture review is in progress.
- Item 30, Stabilisation. The issues log has been circulated and the portal team are responding daily to issues.
- Item 31, Specification of new development. To note that online registration had been requested and that plans beyond April 2007 were under review.
- Item 32, Reconstituted PMG. As noted in Item 3.2, the newly-appointed Executive Deans will be approached in one month to request nominations for PMG membership.
- Item 33, Upgrade. The intention is to upgrade uPortal at Easter. Sid confirmed that a process was being established.
- Item 34, Subtabs. These are a key area of development. Sid noted that the introduction of subtabs would allow the impact on ISIS to be limited.

- Items 35 and 36. The Marks Checker and Academic Record will be consolidated into subtabs under a single tab. Address and Personal Details will be separated into two subtabs.

5.2. Schedule of work post stabilisation up to July 2007

Barry reported that a request had been raised by the Deputy Vice Chancellor through ISCG to make data available to new students through the portal. Barry noted that, while it would not be particularly beneficial to new students to maintain data, the ability to register online would be a significant benefit. Barry confirmed that he, Margaret and Rich had started to develop a plan and would be meeting on Wednesday 14th March. Barry stressed that, while portal development could allow registration by new students, there was a sequential dependency on new students being given access to their accounts earlier than has been the case. This involved work for faculty administrations and the Academic Registry which would need to be managed by the Academic Registry. Pre-registration access to university systems has also raised licensing issues.

Barry noted that, while the suggestion to allow registration was positive, there was still a need to manage expectations. The changes to the schedule of work imply that the developments outlined in section 4 of the plan were being deferred, but not abandoned. This raises the question of the role of the requirements elicitation groups. Barry has advised the Deputy Vice Chancellor that requirements would become difficult to manage if they were raised outside the systems already in place and was keen not to have elicitation groups working if requests were going to come from elsewhere.

6. Online re-enrolment

6.1. Update

Margaret clarified that 'online re-enrolment' referred to online registration on a primary award. Margaret confirmed that the pilot would be extended, but that online re-enrolment would still be offered only to students who had passed all modules. As soon as a student with no referrals is tipped, the re-registration channel will appear to them in the portal. Margaret confirmed that the channel would remain open for 30 days beyond the RASP start date, so late registrants would still have to go through their faculty.
ACTION: Online registration to be a substantive item on the PMG agenda of 30th April.

6.2. Organisation and management

Barry stressed that it would only be possible for the PMG to manage part of the registration process and that there was a sequential dependency on the Academic Registry to manage the remainder of the process.

7. Online Coursework Submission: continuation of pilot

7.1. Pilot plan: to receive an update

Margaret advised that the originally planned pilot with MA Translation had been pared down to a total of five submission dates across three modules. A pilot will also take place with BBS. The first submission date is Monday 19th March. Barry enquired whether this pilot would provide a sufficient volume of submissions to ensure that the system was fully tested. Rich advised that this would depend on whether any late submissions were received.

7.2. Mechanism for approving requests for inclusion in the pilot
It was agreed that, if requests for inclusion in the OCS pilot appear to have been thought through, Margaret should pass these directly to Barry and Rich for consideration.

8. **The feed**

8.1. Feed Report
Nick requested that this be a standing item on future agenda and reported that Bryan Mitchell was setting up an automated process whereby a daily e-mail was sent to Nick with the number of students and groups going into the portal. This will allow any unexpected variations to be identified and investigated.

8.2. Data clean-up exercise
Margaret advised that approximately 7,000 students were registered with HSC who have had no RASP in the past six years. These are possibly CPD students, but need to be cleared out. Margaret confirmed that the ISIS Data Group had been re-convened and would undertake the same identification exercise in other faculties.

9. **Dates of next meetings**
30th April 2007 (5D6); 11th June 2007 (4D24) both from 11:00-12:15.

10. **Any other business**
None.