Higher Education Information Directors in Scotland (HEIDS)

Approved Minutes

Wednesday, 22 February 2012
University of Glasgow

Present:

Chair

Alun Hughes	The University of the Highlands and Islands	AH

Secretary

Fraser Muir	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	FM
David Beards	SFC	DB
Alan Doyle	APUC	AD
Brian Gilmore	University of Edinburgh	BG
Frazer Greig	University of Abertay	FG
Ellen Keir	University of Dundee	TM
Sandy MacDonald	University of Glasgow	SMD
John Maher	University of the Highlands and Islands	JM
Andy McCreath	Robert Gordon University	AM
Catherine McMillan	University of Strathclyde	CM
Raymonde Murphy	Glasgow Caledonian University	RM
Brian Mullins	University of the West of Scotland	BM
Frances Neilson	JANET UK	FN
Moriamo Oduyemi	University of Abertay	MO
Brian Robertson	University of Aberdeen	DP
Fraser Ross	RCS	FR
Jem Taylor	University of the Highlands and Islands	JT
David Telford	Edinburgh Napier University	DT
Mark Toole	University of Stirling	MT
Colin Watson	Glasgow School of Art	CW

In attendance

Sue Fells	UCISA	SF
Terry Sloan	EPCC	TS
Peter Tinson	UCISA	PT

1. **Apologies were received from the following:**

Stuart Brough	University of Strathclyde
Caroline Cochrane	RCS
Gerry Costello	SAC
Gerry Dougan	Scotland's Colleges
Simon Marsden	University of Edinburgh
Kathy McCabe	University of Stirling
Ronnie McIntyre	SAC

Tom Mortimer	University of Dundee
Chris Pinder	Edinburgh Napier University
Mike Roch	Heriot-Watt University
Steve Salvini	Heriot-Watt University
Darren Thompson	Universities Scotland
Michael Turpie	University of Abertay

2. Minutes of the previous meeting: **Action**

The minutes of the meeting held at University of Abertay on 22 November 2011 were approved.

3. Reports from Shared Services report progress groups:

The Chair asked each of the sub-group convenors to report on any progress with their relevant shared services work.

3a. IT Continuity and Storage

BM updated members on progress and discussions so far in relation to the IT continuity and storage group including the survey that he had undertaken. It was reported that members seem keen to progress with backup and unstructured data but not at other aspects of this area, including structured or database storage.

Members were also updated on discussions with Janet brokerage.

FN updated members on progress with agreed contracts for the brokerage, including early adopters from within HE, none of which were Scottish institutions.

BM agreed to circulate survey results in March.   BM

3b. Collaboration tools

AMC updated members on progress in this area highlighting particularly Microsoft family, especially Office 365 and the workshop later that week at Edinburgh's Telford College.

AMC also described discussions with VoIP and that requirements had proved more difficult to ascertain. Useful updates had been received from colleagues who had recently updated their systems and that sharing systems across HEIs presents some challenges. More likely is a sharing of expertise and documentation. However, handsets and licencing are areas that can be developed further with advice from APUC.

Members agreed that licencing costs are seen as a challenge to the adoption of this technology. Basic, SIP compliant handsets could be a good offering to the sector. The group discussed this further and AMC agreed to raise this for discussion with APUC.   AMC

3c&d. Blackboard; licensing and hosting

MT updated the group on the progress of this group. Authorisation for release of financial impact of this area was proving difficult to achieve however meeting were continuing with members of the steering group, BlackBoard representatives and APUC.

APUC are leading on finalising requirements with input from steering group members. Blackboard are providing their roadmap. Group focus is on ascertaining core functionality applicable to all and identifying add-ons for additional features.

PT reported that UCISA were aware of market share falling and vendor needing to do more to protect the remaining number of institutions using the VLE.

3e. Moodle
DT updated the group on the limited progress of this sub area. Efforts were being concentrated in creating a requirements document and a meeting of interested parties was being scheduled following the departure of the previous sub-group convenor. Members encouraged the liaison with SMUG through the RSC Scotland.

The group discussed the work undertaken and sought to clarify that this project could include both purchasing hosting from a third party as well as collaborating ourselves.

MT raised the overlap with the Blackboard sub-group, particular in relation to add-ins like TurnItIn.

The group turned discussion to other strands of shared services beyond the sub-groups. AMC updated members on the progress with the Aberdeen data centre.

DT set out existing shared working and development of best practice; e.g. work ENU undertake to host and assist regarding use of SharePoint. The Chair   AH
agreed that a snapshot of undertakings by the sector in the area should be sought.

MT updated the group on progress within SCURL and SCONUL in particular relation to Library IT systems in cloud environment.

The group then received an update on the Scottish Public Sector Network from MT summarising the previously circulated reports.

4.   **Future of HEIDS**
The Chair introduced the item and summarised the meeting in Stirling of the members tasked with looking at possible models for the future of the group. It was reported that there should be greater inclusion of FE, that the wider sector is looking to a cross sector group for action on HE/FE IT matters and the need for financial support to progress projects.

MT stated that commonality was quick to achieve. PT described UCISA relationships with regional groups and a desire to better manage and work with these groups. Consideration would be given to how this would/could be achieved in Scotland.

BG stated the importance of the current model with regular meetings and networking opportunity. BG also stated that the finance question would be a big contention; larger HEIs expected to pay more and would therefore expect more in return.

The group then discussed the main requirements and possible mechanisms for managing the relationship with FE; relationship with external bodies looking to the sector for results; changes to the structure of the group to accommodate this.

RM agreed to progress a register of interests of members.   RM

MT agreed to progress with UCISA areas of common interests.   MT

The group were asked to consider, for later discussion at AGM, the need for

both Chair and Vice-chair offices and any subsequent change in constitution. The group were also reminded that as a result of no dramatic change to the HEIDS model, members would be expected to volunteer for personal commitment as part of progressing work on behalf of the whole group.

5.   Update on FE/HE ICT strategy
AH updated the group on the work currently being undertaken to develop an ICT strategy for Scottish FE and HE however this had not reached a stage where any documents were able to be shared.

The Chair also took the opportunity to update members on the FE/HE oversight board for ICT; a new group which was broadly representative of the sector. The board aimed to be receptive to ideas and responsive to the community. Universities Scotland reserved the right to nominate representatives to the board. Members include the HEIDS chair, David Beards from SFC and Lawrie McDonald from Adam Smith College.

The Chair then updated the group on the main strands of the ICT strategy; benchmarking and performance; identify areas for work; mechanism for implementation; information and data landscape across the sector.

6.   Reports from groups
The Chair stated that updates would be taken out of order so that information could be received from those who need to depart early.

6.7   SCURL/SCONUL (MT)
MT welcomed comments from members on his report circulated previously.

6.5   SMCG (MT)
Updates from this group were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6.2   UNIVERSITIES SCOTLAND (DT)
The following update was received from DT via email.
US are aiming to produce a finalised efficiencies plan for consideration by Principals at their meeting in Aberdeen on 3 April. It is US intention that the plan will be updated/refreshed on an annual basis for the next 3 years.

The Governance Review's final report, published earlier this month has a total of 44 separate recommendations in regard to various areas of university governance. Circular 07-2012 (available from http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/index.php?page=publications) summarises the report's recommendations, provides details of how US is developing its response and includes copies of the media release by both Universities Scotland and the Committee of Scottish Chairs.

One issue which has already been highlighted to the Scottish Government is the potential adverse impact on the sector's ability to continue to achieve efficiency targets and goals, should some of the Governance Review's recommendations be accepted and implemented in full, without revision.

6.1   SFC (DB)
Updates from this group were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6.3   JISC
DB updated the group in relation to the JISC review report now published and work undertaken to promote the impact in Scotland. PT reported work in UCISA

to seek uniformity across funding councils.

6.4 JANET UK (FN)

FN updated members on recent work within JANET (UK); engagement with SPSN; shortlisting of JANET 6 suppliers; Public access to JANET project; JANET brokerage; JANET Portal for private and public groups and discussions; Desktop Video-conference service; JANET Scotland briefing days.

6.6 RSCs

RSC Scotland bedding in and making new contacts Scotland wide. Drive to work in a more collaborative way with partner agencies (i.e. SQA).

On the JISC review: the impact on RSC Scotland still unknown, but lobbying to maintain national (Scottish) identity. Expected that RSC will be of great support during the regionalisation of Colleges. RCS steering group has suggested that it would be useful if membership of the shared services working groups could be publicised on the HEIDS website so people would know who to contact on particular issues.

As part of the draft RSC National strategy, JISC would like to see a wider HE role for RSC's. To this end, the JISC Advance- RSC's HE Extension Project (JHEEP) has been set up to investigate the potential for further extension of an RSC-type service to the UK HE community.

6.8 UCISA

SF reported that attendance at this year's conference was expected to be larger than ever.

6.9 APUC

AD reported a reorganisation of resources at APUC, especially with respect to support for FE, McClelland and HEIDS reports. Updates were also received on progress in category management, including HEIDS work but also FM and Estates. ProcHE is in need of refreshing and this is underway.

7 AOCB

There was no other business.

8 AGM

Members agreed seek amendment of the constitution to allow an appointment to the office of vice-chair and that no elections would therefore take place at this meeting.

Members agreed to allow this to take place electronically and for the Secretary to undertake this. Once agreement has been reached, should it be necessary, electronic votes would be considered.   FM

The group formally thanked Alun for his chairmanship of the group over the past three years.

Fraser Muir
22/02/12