

DRAFT

## **UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**

### **Senate**

#### **Minute of Meeting held on Thursday 30 April 2009 in the Senate Room**

##### **Present: Sir Muir Russell, in the Chair**

Adams D, Aidulis D, Bain M, Bain D, Beaumont S, Bell S, Berry R, Caie G, Carruthers G, Casey M, Chapman JN, Clancy T, Comerasamy C, Cooper R, Cotton R, Coton F, Coyle J, Danbolt J, Docherty I, Dominiczak AF, Dupree M, Durndell H, Ellam RM, Enslin P, Fearn DR, Forrest D, Gadeddaard N, Geraghty C, Gibb KDB, Graham S, Grams Z, Green G, Guthrie T, Hagan P, Hay G, Hendry M, Hough C, Hutchings D, Jenkins GI, Johnson NP, Jose J, Juster N, Law K, Laws L, Lee G, Long AR, Loughrey C, Lowther C, MacAulay V, MacAuley M, MacDonald I, McCluskey R, McKillop JH, Mable B, Martin W, Millar K, Moignard EA, Monckton DG, Moore DJ, Munro A, Nash AS, Newall D, Nimmo HG, Nolan A, O Maolalaigh R, O'Toole BJ, Owen A, O'Shea V, Pittock M, Paloni A, Ranford-Cartwright L, Reid S, Scott EM, Schlesinger P, Scullion AC, Shaw S, Skett P, Smith D, Smith JJ, Smith E, Steuart S, Strachan I, Strickland MJ, Strickland D, Titterington DM, Torsney B, Watt DA, Wheeler SJ, Wightwick J, Wilson FM, Wilson C.

##### **In attendance:**

Aitken JH

##### **SEN/2008/49. Student Lifecycle Project: Presentation (SEN08/038) (Reserved Business)**

Senate received a presentation from Professor Nolan and Mr Newall and associated paper on the Student Lifecycle Project (SLP).

In June 2007, SMG had considered the case for investing in a new student information system. Over many years, continuous investment had been made in developing the University's in-house student system to meet changing needs. SMG had concluded that this model of development was unsustainable. It meant the University was critically reliant on the highly specific knowledge of a small number of internal colleagues, and it involved Glasgow losing ground to its Russell Group competitors, all but one of whom had now implemented a third-party student system.

In recent months, a Project Board had managed a tender process, leading to the selection of Oracle's 'Campus Solutions' as the preferred student information system. The Board had then taken forward a process of due diligence in order that, before making a contractual commitment to the preferred supplier, the University should explore fully the supplier's approach to implementation, thus gaining a high level of confidence about timescales and resource requirements.

With the conclusion of the due diligence process, SMG had approved University implementation of Oracle's Campus Solutions. The estimated full cost of implementation, including internal staff commitments, was £13.2M. Part of this cost

was capitalised, and its impact on the revenue account therefore spread over 8 years. With a maximum annual revenue commitment of £2.5M (in 2011/12), the cost was affordable within the University's current financial projections. Implementation will begin in May 2009, with full completion in September 2011.

The SLP would help the University realise some of its key strategic objectives, deliver a marked improvement in the quality of service offered to students and staff, and achieve efficiencies in operations, allowing savings to be secured and staff time to be used more productively.

The paper also identified some of the key requirements placed on University managers. In order to secure the greatest benefit from this initiative across a range of academic policies and administrative processes, the University required to adopt a consistent approach, driven by the need to offer students the best quality of service and to make the most effective use of staff time. The paper also identified the main policy areas in which changes were required.

Professor Nolan drew Senate's attention to some of the key benefits of the SLP:

- To enhance the student experience by improving delivery of services
  - e.g. making payments, booking appointments e.g. careers advisers/effective learning advisers, graduation enrolment, individual timetabling
- To transform processes which support learning and teaching
  - Recruitment
  - Admissions
  - Retention
- To provide reliable and fine-grained management information
- To provide better support and service for staff
- To gain efficiencies

As indicated, one enhancement of University processes would be the improved capacity for timetabling and room booking. The SLP would also assist in an area such as student retention – identified as a key strategic priority. An Early Warning System to help identify students at risk of dropping out would be helpful and would be built into the system in an automated way. Another important area was management information. As a result of features such as the Faculty entry system, this had always been a complicated matter for the University – to the extent that at present it took several weeks to produce cohort analyses, when departments wanted to validate class lists and numbers.

The intended efficiencies the system would deliver were difficult to quantify in some areas. However, the paper provided for Senate listed 10 key sets of activity where such improvements had been identified, and it was estimated that these would save over £1M per annum. It was anticipated that further efficiencies would be identified once the process design phase of the project was completed. For some staff, the improvements were expected to be substantial.

There would be a range of policy changes to consider as a result of the SLP:-

- i admissions policies
- ii the role of advisers in course approval
- iii the process for allocating students to classes and class scheduling/ room allocations

- iv the level at which course components should be recorded and results published to students through the system
- v the harmonisation of progression rules and supplementary regulations
- vi management of research students
- vii Student Financial Aid and Scholarships management.

Responsibility for managing these changes had been allocated across the membership of the SLP Project Board. Some changes would address areas that would have been required to evolve regardless of the SLP itself. Appropriate proposals for policy amendments would be submitted to Senate.

Mr Newall reported that a team of high-quality experienced staff had been assembled from across the University to work with Oracle on the development and implementation of the SLP. It had been seen as essential that staff with well developed knowledge of the University and its structures and processes were involved in the Project in order to help ensure that the system delivered the benefits the University required. There were two joint Project Directors: Mr Sandy MacDonald, Director of IT Services, who would focus on the more technical aspects of the Project, and Mrs Christine Lowther, Director of Registry Services. Mrs Lowther had been seconded to work on the Project full-time. Staff would be recruited on a back-fill basis to provide cover for the University team during the secondment period. This had been costed into the Project.

Mr Newall also explained that the tendering process that had led to the final selection of Oracle had been very involved. A short-list of three providers had been drawn up for detailed consideration. It had been concluded on the basis of extensive reflection and involvement that Oracle's Campus Solutions provided the best system to meet the University's present and future requirements. Prior to contracting with Oracle, a further due diligence process had been involved. This had been followed by the due diligence process. Good progress had been made in this phase. The next stage was the Conference Room Pilot phase. This would use information gathered from the due diligence workshops to construct a pilot system. Succeeding phases would involve increasingly detailed designs for testing, training and then deployment. The SMG would receive monthly updates on progress with the Project, and there would continue to be regular reports made to Senate.

In discussion, members noted the attractive benefits the SLP would offer, including the speeding up of processes, and welcomed and supported the breadth of knowledge and strength of the team the University was deploying to facilitate development and implementation. The very broad range of staff involved in consultation was strongly appreciated.

Discussion also addressed the matter of the flexibility of the Oracle software, and its capacity to accommodate the historically diverse nature of the University and its academic provision. It was confirmed that uniformity would not be imposed, a variety of outputs were possible for different local needs, and that Campus Solutions could deliver the improvements the University wanted. The SLP offered an excellent opportunity for the University to review areas of its operations in order to upgrade them; again, it was timely to scrutinise long-standing practice. Senate heard also that the level of automation of activity would be appropriate in order to retain the positive, personalised characteristics of dealings with students.

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*Prepared by: Dr Jack Aitken Clerk to Committee x@xxx*

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