RESEARCH INFORMATION & IT SERVICES GOVERNANCE GROUP

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 4th June 2013
Time: 2.00pm – 4.00pm
Venue: Room G01 Central House 14 Upper Woburn Place London, WC1H 0NN

Present (20): Chair: David Price (DP),
David Balding (DB), John Brodholt (JB), Andrew Clark (AC), Peter Coveney (PC), Hazel Crompton (HC), Aaron Crompton (AC), Clare Gryce (CG), Graham Hunt (GH),
Nik Kaltsoyannis (NK), Sinéad Kennedy (SK), Alan Johnston (AJ), Samuel Massiah (SM),
Patrick Malcom (PM), Gavin Mclachlan (GM), Jacky Pallas (JP), Andrew Smith (AS),
Max Wilkinson (MW), Oliver Duke-Williams (ODW).

Deputies: Ben Waugh (BW) representing Jon Butterworth
Secretary: Rabina Choudhry

Apologies: Paul Ayris, Jon Butterworth, Richard Catlow, Anthony Finkelstein, Dipak Kalra,
Angelos Michaelidis, David McAlpine, Marek Zeibart

Matters Discussed
1.1 Welcome and apologies
1.1.1 The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting.
1.1.2 Apologies were noted.

1.2 Approval of Minutes
1.2.1 Minutes of the last meeting were approved by the Board.

1.3 Update on status of current Actions
1.3.1 The list of current Actions (below) was updated, and new Actions arising were added.
1.4 Report on Working Group 1: Research Computing Platforms
(Clare Gryce)

1.4.1 CG gave an update on the Legion IV project explaining that Phase 1 upgrade of high performance file system for hardware and software had been completed in January 2013, at a cost of £365,000. Phase 2 for Legion compute expansion would be initiated in two stages stage 1: July 2013 and stage 2: Late summer of 2013, a budget of £650,000 had been set subject to confirmation. CG highlighted that the central budget allocation for Phase 2 would derive from next years distribution of funds. CG presented the Legion service metrics, indicating that service availability was stable and reflected maturity, total CPU availability for service delivered was 6,500 cores, and spikes in the graph indicated outages.

1.4.2 CG explained the issues regarding data centre planning and the importance of an annual baseline budget, in order to plan for future projects based on forthcoming technology, and developing strategies that were technology research driven.

1.4.3 CG presented the current status for the Centre of Innovation (Cfi), IRIDIS expansion which had resulted in a 50% share of the machine to UCL and it was planned that this platform would be used for higher throughput capability jobs. Uptake for EMERALD by UCL was slow in comparison to Oxford and Bristol, and awareness and promotion was required for EMERALD services across UCL. CG informed all that Cfi encompassed four partners that needed to align operational processes to run collaborative research IT services. PC indicated that UCL must be creative collectively and work integrally. CG highlighted that funding was required to increase staffing levels, for outreach work and for governance arrangements.

1.4.4 CG informed all of the newly created Research Software Development Executive within the Research IT services area which would report to the WG5 Research Software Development Board. The Research Software Development team over the past nine months had undertaken 4 projects from a total of 25 project submissions over 3 free project calls. The team had produced high level results by substantially speeding up projects in the areas of code improvements, parallelisation and algorithm change, it was clear that UCL’s initiative and early investment in this area had been very much appreciated by UCL researchers.
1.4.5 CG also informed all of the Research IT Services Facilitation team whom would be responsible for proactive liaison with UCL departments and research groups, as well as communication strategies, training and events for Research IT Services.

1.5 Report on Working Group 2: Research Data and Network Services  
(Max Wilkinson)

1.5.1 MW gave a brief update of the Research Data storage project and emphasised the central concept of this project was core to the project rather than an extension of institutionalised storage. MW explained that currently phase 1 of the project had been completed and that Phase 2 Beta launch had begun using 30 Terabytes for 7 users over 2 months. This had generated both internal and external interest with particular emphasis on Cloud based storage at UCL. MW informed all that Cloud based storage was being tested on a variety of services.

1.6 Combined Report on Working Group 3: Research Management Applications and Working Group 4: Researcher Applications  
(Graham Hunt)

1.6.1 GH informed all that the following projects had been initiated for the academic session 2012/2013:

- IRIS Enhancements
- Funnelback over UCL/Discovery
- LAMIS
- Research Information Management System
- Equipment Register (Kit Catalogue)

REF2014 support project had been placed on hold as it required the support of the external company, Symplectic. GH also gave a status update of research applications, it was indicated that IRIS engagement was currently at 67% and there were approximately 300 non engagers on RPS. DP stressed the importance of engagement for Category A staff on both IRIS and RPS.
1.7 Update on UCL ISD Data Centre
(Gavin McLachlan)
1.7.1 GM presented the long term two tier strategy for UCL Data Centre which would encompass both an onsite and offsite Data Centre. A tactical onsite Data Centre would be built to address the requirements for the next three years, allowing UCL Estates to locate a space and build the new primary onsite Data Centre in Bloomsbury which would house a maximum of 200 racks of 4 megawatts. The tactical onsite Data Centre would provide 12 racks of 35 kilowatts which would primarily be used for HPC and low availability use. The intention was for Web, web hosting and email would be placed on Cloud services while other things could then be placed on either offsite or onsite facilities.

1.7.2 GM indicated that an offsite Datacentre proof of concept agreement with Eduserv had been signed in April 2013. This was to test Eduserv’s capabilities, test UCL’s remote datacentre management capabilities and resolve long term contractual and legal frameworks.

1.8 Strategy Presentation
Gavin McLachlan
1.8.1 GM explained that the research strategy encompassed three aims:
- Leadership founded in excellence
- Cross Disciplinary grounded in expertise
- Realising the impact of a global University
These aims were dependant on world class and scalable research support and training, scientific equipment and research, as well as research and IT infrastructure. The key research IT principles needed to be aligned with the aims of UCL’s Research Strategy. It was imperative to divide the strategy along the key infrastructure domains, while ensuring that the strategy met the needs of each domain as well as reinforcing each other. Each domain service would need to be easily accessible and useable for UCL industrial partners. The area of information security and resilience would require the building of secure facilities and services in order to attract industrial collaborators at UCL.
1.9 Straw man proposal

Gavin McLachlan

1.9.1 GH informed all that a proposed ISD capital budget for fiscal year 2013/2014 of £11 million was presented in a business case, providing the RIISG with £2.1 million cash (£2.5 million with 20% overspend). The Senior Management Team (SMT) had met and there was consideration of an ISD capital budget of £6.6 million, providing RIISG with £1.2 million cash (£1.4 million budget with 20% overspend). Further discussion at the SMT would be required to decide which scenario would be used.

1.9.2 DP informed that the business case for Research IT capital spend needed to be reviewed from an academic prospective. DP suggested that the spending review meeting be deferred pending funding decision and suggested a phased request to the SMT to release funds.

1.9.3 GM highlighted to the group the consequences of a £6.6M Capital budget in FY 2013/14 – that would result in the prioritisation of only a few from the Research IT project portfolio including the following projects:

- REF
- IRIS
- RIM
- Research Data

DP highlighted that there was an urgency to push forward the REF project, however AC and SM stressed the importance of projects such as LAMIS (Laboratory Animal Management Information System) and IDHS (Identifiable Data Handling Service). It was indicated that both these projects be given a “Must” priority, as if they were not undertaken there would be severe legal implications for UCL, such as the revoking of licenses which would impact greatly on research at UCL.

**Action: GM** - Produce a phased plan of projects for the next quarter to be circulated to members for input.
2. **Action Points**

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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Owner</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.4.4</td>
<td>G.H</td>
<td><strong>WG3 - Seek replacement for Andrew Clarke</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.5.6</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Discuss HPC strategy for 2012/2013</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.8.2</td>
<td>G.H</td>
<td><strong>Research Accelerator – Liaise with Kate Oliver Engineering Faculty re promotion strategy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.5.7</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td><strong>Research Network – Gavin McLachlan to deliver a report on the current and future planning Research Network and Research Network Strategy.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.5.7</td>
<td>CG</td>
<td><strong>Long term RC Strategy and roadmap – Clare Gryce to provide and updated and long term Research Computing strategy and roadmap for consideration.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>1.5.1</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td><strong>The Research Network map: Gavin McLachlan to liaise with Prof Alan Smith, Department of Space and Climate Physics to discuss HPC access problems for MSSL.</strong></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>1.10.1</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td><strong>Report from WG#4 Research Applications: Gavin McLachlan to investigate funding from UK RC for equipment register</strong></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.4.3</td>
<td>GH</td>
<td><strong>Equipment Register (Kit-Catalogue): Graham Hunt to place this project under Green category (anticipated bids 2013/14)</strong></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.5.4</td>
<td>CG</td>
<td><strong>CfI usage: Clare Gryce to present CfI usage data at next RIISG meeting.</strong></td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.7.2</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td><strong>Identifiable Data Handling Service (IDHS) project: Sam Massiah to advertise and promote awareness of this service</strong></td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>1.4.9</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td><strong>Budgeting: confirm the RIISG projects that could be funded by the CHAPTER MRC grant.</strong></td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>1.4.23</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td><strong>Budgeting: talk to Finance about methods of smoothing large projects’ costs across fiscal years</strong></td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>1.5.5</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td><strong>Business Case: send out Business Case to group for comments on the bids are written</strong></td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>GM <strong>Bid list:</strong> Consolidate the bids down to a lower number</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td>AT THIS MEETING</td>
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<td>1.5.5</td>
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<td>4.6.2013</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>GM <strong>Business Case:</strong> Look at the plan for the scalable HPC project and see whether the project can be phased across fiscal year boundaries to help smooth the spike in costs</td>
<td>ONGOING</td>
<td>GM in current discussions with UCL Finance Division</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>GM <strong>ISD capital budget for fiscal year 2013/2014:</strong> Produce a phased plan of projects for the next quarter to be circulated to members for input.</td>
<td>NEW</td>
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3. **Next Meeting**

3.1. 4th November 2013, 10.30am – 12.30pm, Venue to be confirmed