



Information Services Governance Committee

Wednesday 18th March 2020

MINUTES

Present:

Professor Michael Arthur (Provost and Chair of COVID Response Gold)
Dr Celia Caulcott (ISGC Chair)
Professor Anthony Smith
Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker
Dame Nicola Brewer
Professor Stella Bruzzi
Professor Piet Eeckhout
Professor Mark Emberton
Professor Sue Rogers
Professor Graham Hart
Professor Christoph Lindner
Professor David Lomas
Professor Norbert Pachler
Professor Ivan Parkin
Professor David Price
Professor Geraint Rees
Professor Sasha Roseneil
Professor Alan Thompson
Ms Clare Goudy
Mr Tom Rowson
Ms Fiona Ryland
Ms Wendy Appleby
Ms Francesca Fryer
Mr Phil Harding
Dr Matthew Blain
Mr Simon Cane
Ms Collette Lux
Mr Alex Hall
Dr Fiona Strawbridge (ISD)
Dr Tom Crummey (ISD)
Mr Kevin Gallagher (ISD)
Dr James McCafferty (ISD)

Apologies:

Dr Paul Ayris
Mr Dean Stokes

Note: The meeting was held using a MS Teams video link due to the change in working practices arising from COVID.

Actions (including paragraph number and page number)

2.20. Action: Sue Rogers to take forward in the IOE – capturing the contingency work that is being done, for future learning.	5
7.7. Action: Bring cyber security back to ISGC sooner than one year’s time.	8

The Provost opened the meeting.

1. General update and discussion on COVID response

1.1. Anthony Smith reported that the change to remote working started yesterday but there were still a couple of issues to pick up, eg library closure. Stronger advice would go out today. Full closure from Friday was likely but this was still work in progress. It had been decided to move to a new formalised escalation structure:

- Gold = the Provost;
- Silver = Project Aquamarine (the rest of year academic year) and Project Sapphire (next academic year);
- Bronze = Individual unit response management, being set up.

The three recognised Trade Unions would be involved in five Project Aquamarine workstreams but not Silver Command.

1.2. Fiona Ryland reported that, operationally, they were identifying buildings which need to stay open and how to facilitate that. Other buildings would close by the end of next week. They would try to keep a few buildings open (possibly the Student Centre and Bidborough House).

1.3. David Lomas noted the intention of repurposing labs for NHS patients and wondered how can this be done in reality if everyone has gone home.

1.4. The Provost responded that UCL was trying to achieve the greatest safety for the greatest number of staff, and he didn't want to row back from that. However, the issue raised was of national importance and should be discussed outside this meeting.

2. Summary of IT support for business continuity through COVID

2.1. The ISD team presented on ISD's overall plans and approach:

- ISD priorities and focus points;
- ISD business continuity / operations;
- Key IT tools for remote teaching;
- IT tools for remote working;
- Key IT tools capacity/resilience during this period;
- Key systems risks and mitigations;
- Capacity Risks;
- Research IT;
- Project Delivery;
- Local support;
- Plans for Lock-down - limited travel to/from Bloomsbury;
- Sustaining Business-as-usual.

2.2. Various questions/answers for ISD's preparedness included:

- **Some people may have limited packages for broadband and wifi at home. Can we have guidance on the different levels of data usage, eg video calls compared with audio, so that staff could chose appropriately?** Will publish information about broadband data usage levels, eg MS Teams video vs. audio meetings.
- **Regarding joint degrees and modules, and compatibility with other institutions. Who is responsible?** Need to use best endeavours. Have local conversations first and then work out how best to implement them. Understand locally what the partnership institution is doing and make it work.
- **What if MS Teams falls over?** Various options available, eg use telephone conference calls. Need to advise people on fall-back arrangements.
- **PGTA had reported that students were heading back to China. Was Chinese IT restricted and would this effect MS Teams, for example?** Tests have been run to China between an MBA and the University of Peking. We have tested the standard tool set from there and it seems to work.
- **If colleagues encounter problems please escalate them through the Silver workstream for online teaching.** The Provost wanted to have just one channel. This would be picked up through Aquamarine 2 and 3.
- **If people don't have an appropriately updated PC at home, can they borrow one from UCL? What would be the volume of numbers?** There are laptops to loan but they would need to be prioritised. However a lot can be done even without the highest level of security, eg MS Teams and email.
- **When will we know when we have enough capacity? What happens when something falls over – will there be a cribsheet for the person leading or participants?** Will produce simple instructions of what to do if a system fails.
- **Is 4,000 enough for Moodle capacity?** Usage is being tracked and is currently less than 1,000. Load testing is being done this week and there is a gradual process to build capacity. Over 4,000 users may need a substantial re-architecture.
- **Ask@UCL is experiencing problems and had three times higher volume.** System performance was currently acceptable but a close eye was being kept on it.

2.3. Final comments included:

- London Lockdown: will still need some onsite support. If a lockdown is in place, a team of volunteers would remain on campus.
- Gaining clarity on plans for online exams is key.
- Tough decisions may be needed in future, eg limiting demand on certain platforms
- This crisis will hugely accelerate us to our digital vision, eg:
 - Online teaching and content.
 - Working from home.
 - Potentially exploiting collaboration tools (g MS Teams) to support online teaching and learning.

2.4. The Provost said he completely agreed and these discussions are taking place in Gold and Silver. This crisis will change the world forever and we need to think ahead well into the next academic year.

2.5. It was agreed to issue more detailed comms covering IT arrangements. The reassurance this Group has received would be good to share.

- 2.6.** Fiona Strawbridge then gave an update on Teaching Continuity, including:
- Principles and recommendations;
 - Resources;
 - Training;
 - Uptake;
 - Where our students are;
 - Challenges.
- 2.7.** Key points covered:
- 87,000 exam sittings had been due to take place at Excel Arena after Easter.
 - Staff are being encouraged to go into Moodle every day to check in and remain in touch with their students.
 - [Teaching Continuity](#) pages have been produced by Katie Price's team and are the key source of authoritative and up-to-date guidance.
 - Moodle Users Group: a 'self help' Moodle course for staff has been repurposed and rebranded as [Moving Learning, Teaching & Assessment Online](#).
 - Nine 'How to' videos have been created and more will follow.
 - Moodle: the number of simultaneous daily users has risen over the last week from 650 people to 950 users at peak time. This is well within capacity. However in an exam period there could be 2,000 to 3,000 at the same time which is close to the maximum capacity of the service. Therefore it is important that the academic community reduce the number of simultaneous live exams as far as possible.
 - Lecture captures: the number of personal captures made on Monday and Tuesday this week was 315, compared with 13 the same two days last week, so staff are clearly engaging.
 - There are now 3365 Blackboard Collaborate sessions on Moodle. [Post meeting update – a month ago around 20 sessions were run per day.]
 - The geographic location of students connecting to Moodle showed that there had been an increase in students connecting from abroad. Of note was the increase in access from China 220 last week; 599 this week. It was reassuring that these students were clearly successfully accessing Moodle.
- 2.8.** Some challenges being faced include:
- Students' access to computers.
 - Ensuring accessibility of content and in particular transcripts of Lecturecast recordings.
 - Exams: It is felt that Moodle capacity may be able to cope with online exams, but that other technical issues might impact on remote exams such as student internet access and their hardware; how to prove mitigating circumstances.
- 2.9.** The Provost said it was fantastic and encouraging to see that data. How will this Group be kept informed? A regular update through Aquamarine? It would also be encouraging for the Governing body to know that the uptake was so good.
- 2.10.** The Provost was deeply impressed with what was happening and thanked Fiona Strawbridge and the team.
- 2.11.** Anthony Smith said he was bursting with pride about the work being done and thought staff were doing a fantastic job. He realised that the current online pedagogy won't

necessarily be beautiful but the long-term aim should be for high quality. However in the meantime “don’t let perfect be the enemy of good”.

- 2.12. Anthony Smith also noted the potential capacity constraints around Moodle and emphasised to Deans that ‘alternative assessments’ means alternatives **wherever possible** and that they should also be rigorous. The issues with exams via Moodle were capacity; international time differences; and connectivity time constraints (eg students downloading a paper and uploading an answer).
- 2.13. Norbert Pachler said they would liaise closely with Covid co-ordinators and look at keeping the volume of activity manageable.
- 2.14. Nigel Titchener-Hooker reported that some students have no access to PCs and he was rolling out instructions to all his departments to identify the size of the problem and suggest ways to mitigate it.
- 2.15. Sasha Roseneil noted that concerns were widely expressed across SHS about disparities over student access to PCs and quiet places to work. Although the Student Centre was open, students were following government advice and staying at home.
- 2.16. Nicola Brewer asked Fiona Strawbridge if the use of Microsoft Teams for 1-1s and ad hoc meetings was to be discouraged, and if there was a workstream for addressing digital exclusion and lack of accessibility. Fiona Strawbridge replied that they weren’t discouraging use of Teams but were noting that some individuals may prefer other channels, eg phone, Skype, Facetime. She didn’t know of a workstream on digital exclusion but would welcome any input on accessibility.
- 2.17. The Provost asked that they record the work they are doing, as this was a learning experience that could be used later.
- 2.18. Celia Caulcott reported that the Entrepreneurship Programme had moved online and they were thinking about how to get external validation. Regarding digital exclusion, this wasn’t an issue just for students, as some staff don’t have good home working environments.
- 2.19. David Price noted that the Research Unit was capturing what work was being done. Could this be done through the IOE?
- 2.20. Action: Sue Rogers to take forward in the IOE – capturing the contingency work that is being done, for future learning.
- 2.21. Concluding comments on overall ISD work - The ISD management team are all focused on dealing with this. If there are any issues not covered in this meeting, please e-mail James McCafferty.
- 2.22. The Provost asked James McCafferty for his top 3 concerns. James McCafferty responded:
 - Exams and Moodle: clarity around what arrangements will be made for alternative assessment.
 - Capacity of Desktop@UCL Anywhere meeting demand.
 - Levels of support (not just IT) for individuals who are remote working.
- 2.23. The Provost wondered if we can minimise exams and still be confident about quality of assessment. That should be considered by Project Aquamarine.

- 2.24.** The Provost thanked James McCafferty and the team for ISD's deeply impressive and extraordinarily professional response.
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The meeting then continued with the usual ISGC agenda, chaired by Dr Caulcott. Due to time constraints not all agenda items were covered.

3. 20/03/01 Minutes of the previous meeting on 13th November 2019

The Minutes were not reviewed.

4. 20/03/01 Progress Update on ISD review

This was not covered, but provided for information only.

5. 20/03/03 My HR Update

- 5.1.** The accompanying paper was for note, and James McCafferty said consideration was needed on how to constitute the review of the MyHR project. An external review had been considered.
- 5.2.** Kevin Gallagher explained that it was proposed to do something locally at the moment and capture what we know. Some project staff were due to leave and there was a risk of losing knowledge and feedback. An external review could be conducted later.

Discussion:

- 5.3.** Nicola Brewer agreed that an immediate review should be conducted in-house. Things could be investigated further when we have capacity, possibly with external support.
- 5.4.** Celia Caulcott said it was important not to lose the learning opportunity. However the review shouldn't be allowed to interfere with ISD keeping the university online.
- 5.5.** The Provost asked how this related to the Audit Committee and could use be made of the internal auditors.
- 5.6.** Fiona Ryland replied that KPMG had been used a year ago for a review which the Finance Committee had requested for audit purposes. She said we know why the project went wrong and we should document that.
- 5.7.** The Provost wondered if an internal audit could be repurposed, rather than pay for an external review. He didn't feel strongly on the matter.
- 5.8.** The Provost noted that this was relatively low priority given the COVID.
- 5.9.** Nicola Brewer agreed but said we don't want to lose the opportunity.

Decision:

- 5.10.** Will continue with an immediate MyHR project internal review to capture inputs before team members roll-off the project.

6. 20/03/04 The UCL Centre for Advanced Research Computing

Summary of the paper:

- 6.1.** David Price explained that this proposal would join up elements relating to research computing. He suggested if it would be suitable for Project Sapphire to take up.
- 6.2.** Geraint Rees said it was a reiteration of previous SMT conversations but in more detail. The Centre for ARC would be a hybrid: within Professional Services and reporting jointly to the COO and VP (Research). Research IT across UCL could move into a framework of joint academic and PS leadership in relation to priority setting. The advantages were set out in sections 1.7 to 1.10:
- Academic alignment and engagement.
 - Pedagogy: data-driven activity and HPC computing for taught-course students, and data-driven science in the training programme of the UCL Doctoral School.
 - Leverage funding: considerable funding was already be leveraged but this could be advanced further and philanthropy could also be brought in.
 - Careers: develop career pathways and communities of practice.

Discussion:

- 6.3.** The Provost said consultation should include the Academic Committee and Academic Board.

Decision:

- 6.4.** The proposal was agreed in principle, and would progress to consultation, including presentation to Academic Committee and Academic Board.

7. 20/03/05 Changes to Information Security Governance Structures

Summary of the paper:

- 7.1.** James McCafferty explained that the proposal was for the Information Risk Governance Group to pick up responsibility for deciding investment for IT security. This would still feed into the Risk Management Working Group as normal, but would reduce the number of committees in this area. Graham Hart had kindly agreed to be Domain Chair for this new IT investment domain. This proposal would result in a much improved organisation.
- 7.2.** Graham Hart said he was the Senior Information Risk Owner and thought needed to be given to succession planning. His term as Dean finishes in July 2021 and SMT would need someone who can report on it. He recommended this paper.

Discussion:

- 7.3.** The Provost commented that the overall direction of travel seemed sound. The proposed structure was simpler and had fewer committees.

Decisions:

- 7.4.** Celia Caulcott noted that the direction of travel was agreed. Other comments could be taken offline and she was happy to work with James McCafferty.
- 7.5.** Graham Hart suggested reviewing the structure in a year's time and making sure nothing had been lost along the way. There was a resource issue and they were looking to significantly increase support for information security. In terms of cyber security, there was a huge amount of data stored across the university and externally.

7.6. Celia Caulcott said she would want to hear about cyber security sooner than a one year review.

7.7. Action: Bring cyber security back to ISGC sooner than one year's time.

8. 20/03/06 Information Security Update

8.1. The accompanying paper was for note and not discussed.

8.2. Cyber Security Essentials had been raised at the last meeting and James McCafferty reported that three separate units had now become accredited and this was good because having accreditation was now often required for government funded grants. He asked that if anyone wanted individual units to be accredited then please get in touch with him.

Any Other Business

There was none.

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