ICT Forum – March 2011

Business Services and Projects Report

The paper provides an update on the status of the UAS Systems Development Programme and also an update on plans to revise BSP's "business as usual" activities.

1. UAS Systems Development Programme Update

The main priority developments for 2010/11 agreed by the UAS Information Systems Board are:

- to progress the new HR systems programme, with final completion in 2011/12;
- to complete the implementation of the new Development and Alumni Relations System and complete rollout to early adopter colleges and departments;
- to assess options and deliver a recommendation for the replacement of the Oracle Student System;
- to assess options and deliver a business case for the upgrade or re-implementation of Oracle Financials to the next release;
- to continue with the planned replacement of Resolve, the University's research costing and approval tool, following sign off of the requirements phase.

An update on the main initiatives is given below.

Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) Programme
The HRIS business case was approved by Council in July 2009 and the HRIS Programme was launched in November 2009. This followed a comprehensive review of the HR information requirements and processes across the University.

Within the overall HRIS programme there are five major implementation projects (Recruitment, Personnel Administration, Budgeting and Forecasting, Training Administration, and Payroll) two of which are currently active. Following two successful pilots, the new e-recruitment process is now being rolled out across the University. The Programme Board agreed in October to take a similar approach to the implementation of the central HR records functionality, with a phased rollout now planned to start later in Hilary Term 2011. Further information can be found at the HRIS website http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/hrisprogramme.

Development and Alumni Relations System (DARS)

The University is currently moving towards a collaborative and cohesive process of development and alumni relations. This involves a collective approach between the Development Office, colleges, divisions and departments. Currently this is limited, mainly due to the historical nature of development activities, the collegiate structure, and technological capabilities.

The new fundraising database (Blackbaud Enterprise CRM) to support the new process is now in use in the Development Office, the Said Business School, St Benet's Hall, and the Earth Sciences department, with two colleges, St John's and St Peter's, scheduled to migrate in the very near future. A further phase of development was authorised in June 2010 to deliver additional functionality that is essential to meeting the benefits stated in the original business case, and to extend the rollout to more colleges and departments. Further information can be found at the DARS website http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/dars

Student Systems Replacement Programme

A small team is working with staff from across the collegiate University on the detailed evaluation of suppliers and their products with the aim of replacing the Oracle Student System which will no longer be supported after August 2013. A key objective of this programme is that the requirements and associated evaluation activities not only focus on current OSS functionality, but also systems and processes in support of teaching and learning activities and integration with other key systems such as GSS, OxCORT, WebLearn, AdSS, ADMIT, Embark, teaching timetabling, student enrolment and the Business Intelligence/Data Warehouse programme.

Detailed evaluation of the two shortlisted suppliers' (Tribal and Unit 4) proposals is now underway and the team plan to deliver a recommendation in Trinity term.

Finance Systems

The current version of the Oracle Financials system will be out of support in late 2013. A business case for the upgrade or re-implementation to the latest release is currently being finalised. The intention would be to start the project in early 2012 with a view to implementing at year end in July 2013.

Resolve Replacement

Resolve is the University's research costing, and pricing and approval tool used to calculate the Full Economic Costs (FEC) of a sponsored research project and then determine the price according to the requirements of each sponsor. The current in-house developed system no longer meets the University's requirements and approval has been given to seek a replacement. Earlier work identified that there is no suitable third party product available and so the project progressed on the assumption that a bespoke solution will be built. Last year agreement in principle was reached with Cambridge to built a system jointly, thereby significantly reducing the costs.

Since the end of the last Academic Year, discussions with a third party supplier of HE systems, Unit 4, have been held with a view to Unit 4 building a system for Oxford and Cambridge and then creating a new product for sale to other HE institutions. Contractual agreements are have now been finalised and the project is now finally underway. This approach will bring further cost savings to the original plan.

It is anticipated that development work will complete in late 2012.

Infrastructure Modernisation Programme

Following an initial review project in 2009/10, the PRAC Budget Sub-Committee authorised a comprehensive refresh of BSP's technical infrastructure covering servers, data management, networks, security and access, disaster recovery and data centre management. The programme aims to provide a level of availability in line with the expectations of users and flexibility to accommodate increasing demands. The intention is to introduce infrastructure that is more cost-efficient and resilient, less dependent on human intervention for recovery and easier to maintain, while minimising disruption to end users.

The first phase has delivered improved capacity, performance, and resilience for the IBM pSeries servers that underpin our enterprise level systems. The second phase is underway and will deliver improvements in our virtual infrastructure, storage, and networks. This work is planned to complete by July 2011.

2. Review of BSP's Service Delivery Model

The current support model was put in place in 2006, following the creation of BSP. The Customer Services team provides helpdesk and second line support and system administration with additional input from Technical Services and others. Consistency of process such as Incident and Change Management across all business systems support has enabled good delivery of measurable services.

When reviewing and approving the BSP strategy and objectives in 2010, sponsoring departments asked BSP to be sure to maintain efficient and effective live systems support as a priority, alongside delivery of projects. It has also been noted that there are often multiple touchpoints between BSP and departments which can be confusing, and where an Account Manager role has been in place, this has been a valuable position for both the business and BSP.

In response to this, BSP has been reviewing options for a possible revision of our support model. Discussions are underway with the major stakeholders within UAS but are still at a very early stage.

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4 March 2011