From the Program Manager's desk

Alan Crooks, Student Administration Program Manager

Dear FlexSIS Users,

Since I last spoke to you there has been an immense amount of activity in continuing to move FlexSIS forward to more completely and comprehensively meet the business needs of the University.

SRS has been fully decommissioned and in fact the machine that it used to run on has gone to that great computer room in the sky! We, of course, have a full copy of all SRS data available as a backup but as yet have not had to access this.

Release 6.5 has now entered development and implementation phase and we have a very comprehensive range of functions to be implemented in 4 Releases between August 2004 and April 2005.

By far the biggest of these will be Release 6.5 (November 2004), which will see major changes to Admissions functionality to accommodate International Office, and Release 6.6 (January 2005), which will see major changes to enrolment and billing functionality associated with International Office and implementation of the HEIMS requirements of the Federal Government.

Planning for the migration of data from International Office, Cumberland and Orange legacy systems is proceeding well, with the Cumberland and Orange Course and UOS handbook data to go online during July.

We are currently on target to have all continuing Cumberland and Orange students, and all 2004 International Office applicants migrated to FlexSIS by mid November.

Another significant change for 2005 is that the format of new Student ID’s will change from the current format to a new one which will allow us to allocate more numbers in 2005 and future years to accommodate International offers.

A typical new 2005 SID will be 305000985, where the 05 indicates 2005, the next 5 digits are consecutive and the last digit is a check digit. As well as providing more numbers the use of a check digit reduces the likelihood of accidentally entering a wrong SID.

All existing SIDs will remain unchanged and existing Cumberland and Orange SIDs will be converted to the current standard format as part of data migration.

We have a very busy time ahead of us and are confident that by continuing to work closely with the business we will have a successful outcome.

Thanks again for all your support and if you have any questions about the program please don’t hesitate to contact either Antony or myself.
FlexSIS Faculty Forum
Antony Talone, Change Manager

The next Faculty Forum is planned for Tuesday 03 August, 2004, 11:00am – 2:00pm in the Professorial Board Room (Main Quadrangle).

These forums are a great way for all users to keep abreast of any changes and new developments.

Topics of interest at this forum will be:

- **Project Update** (Alan Crooks)
- **HESA and HEIMS** (David Bowan)
- **New SID Format** (Alan Crooks)
- **Release 6.5 Drilling Down** (Patty McMillan & Antony Talone)
- **FRP – FlexSIS Reporting** (Roman Rosenbaum)

RSVP for this forum is: 29 July, 2004. Users are requested to RSVP by the above date to adequately book catering. As of publication we have 85 registered participants attending this event.

Release 6.5 update
Julizvar, Project Manager

In my last newsletter update, I wrote about foreseeing an exciting and productive period of work to complete the Analysis Phase and commence Design Phase of Release 6.5. How right was I? Not only have those objectives been achieved, but the project team has also completed the migration of FHS Handbook Data into FlexSIS production environment!

Patty McMillan has produced an excellent requirements matrix that allows the project team to map every single requirement to the appropriate functional specification. We have identified around 35 functional specifications needing to be written and have slotted them appropriately into the Functional Release Schedule covering the period of Aug 2004 to Apr 2005. The release schedule itself has been fine tuned to fit into the student administration lifecycle based on users’ feedback. As of the time of writing this article, we have acquired signoffs on several Functional Specifications and our Development Team has started code development for this functionality.

On the data migration front, we are very pleased to have Graham Trent back working with us to help us project manage International Office (IO) data migration tracking. IO data migration will involve the full replacement of OMNIS (a legacy admission, financial and correspondence system rolled into one) and part replacement of 9 separate FileMaker Pro databases that manage agents, scholarships, and study abroad students. The IO Data Analysis Phase has been completed and IO staff are now in the middle of a data clean up exercise in conjunction with data mapping. In regards to FHS and FRM data migration, the project team has devised a 3-step strategy to migrate the data into three separate logical groups: Handbook data, Student Personal Details data and Student Academic Records data. Handbook data migration will be completed by end Jul 04, Student Personal Details by Aug/Sep 04 and Student Academic Records by mid Nov 04.

On the project governance side, we have merged IO Application & Admissions Management URG and IO Study Management URG into one combined IO URG based on users’ proposals. The same arrangement happened to the Finance Working Parties. We have also set up a new Operation Working Party to look into the business process calendar of Camperdown, Cumberland and Orange. The objectives are to identify gaps between the calendars and to anticipate any changes required with any Camperdown processes once Cumberland and Orange are brought into FlexSIS. This Working Party is chaired by Richard Mabbitt of the Student Centre. The HEIMS URG has also formed a working party chaired by David Bowan to look into all administrative and system preparations to fulfill HESA (Higher Education Support Act) requirements.

To prepare for the FlexSIS 6.5 implementation, Antony Talone has produced a comprehensive Communication, Training & Support Plan and has started talking with various groups within the University to come out with an appropriate strategy to make sure that each stakeholder is properly informed of what will happen and what will be expected of them. Specific training programmes and sessions are being defined and will be run at Camperdown, Cumberland and Orange to ensure each end user is appropriately trained based on his/her roles.

I am pleased to announce that we launched the FlexSIS Release 6.5 website.


This website functions as a project repository to promote better communication to all project stakeholders, especially Project Board and URG members. The website hosts project background information; latest news on the project; members of Project Board and URG; meeting schedule, agendas and minutes; project status reports, issues and risks; as well as all project deliverables such as: Process Flows, Impact Analysis and Gap Documents, Business Requirement Documents (BRD), and Functional Specification Documents (FSD).
As you see from this update, the project team has done a lot of good work in the last couple of months. There will be even more work to be done, especially when we enter the Development and Testing Phase in the next couple of weeks. Nevertheless, I feel that the level of trust and cooperation that has been earned and built in the last couple of months will guide us through to the completion of the project.

Inside scoop on Release 6.5
Matthew Da Silva, Change Management Team

FlexSIS users will be aware that there is significant change on the horizon with the implementation of the International Office, Faculties of Health Sciences and Orange Campus due for release beginning August 2004 through April 2005.

As part of FlexSIS Release 6.5, major student administration functionality enhancements are being introduced. This is a review of some of them. Some functions that are being designed for International, such as application tracking and qualifications, may also be applicable for others in future.

HEIMS

- From January 1, all Australian citizens, New Zealand citizens and holders of permanent visas will receive a Student Learning Entitlement (SLE) giving access to seven years’ of equivalent full-time study (Equivalent Full Time Student Load -- EFTSL) in a Commonwealth supported place. This is called ordinary SLE.
- Study entitlement is no longer to be measured in EFTSU.
- When a student applies, personal details are sent to HEIMS, which allocates a CHESSN (or returns an existing CHESSN) and unlocks access to the person’s ordinary SLE.
- Additional SLE is available for students enrolled in courses with duration of over six years.
- University must publish Unit of Study data (Census date, EFTSL, student contribution amount, and tuition fee) by September 1 of the year prior to the commencement of that unit of study.

Course Maintenance
- New International tab allows data entry by International Office but visible to faculties, schools and departments.
- New Data:
  - CRICOS code
  - Start/end dates
  - Deposit Fee
  - Additional costs
  - Standard duration
  - Minimum entry requirements.

International Admissions
- Changes to the Admissions Wizard and the Admissions Variation module (to be renamed Admissions Maintenance module.)
- International applications to be performed solely by International Office (IO). After admission, international student management data can be viewed by faculty, school and department staff.
- Pre-approval application status tracking.
- http://cricos.detya.gov.au. Many courses are listed on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students’ (CRICOS) website. We can add an international student’s application only if a course is CRICOS-registered (has a CRICOS code) for most categories of International student.
- Conditional offers. Students may need to meet certain conditions.
- Qualifications and English test scores attached to an application are to be recorded, enabling the processing of offers and the recording of when the qualification is attained.
- Third party. When a third party is attached to a student, checks are made (between the third party’s role and the student type). Third party history to be visible, also information on whether payment was made by the student or invoiced direct to the third party. Tables enable calculating the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) charges and the commission.

Admission List
- A faculty, school or department officer to see lists of applying students to assist processing.
- Use the filter function to screen out unsuitable students, leaving a shorter, more accurate list of suitable admission candidates. Filter students by year, semester, student type, faculty, degree.
- Save the displayed list as a text file onto your computer hard disk.

Student IDs (SIDs)
- During record retrieval, most SID entry fields currently allow use of the last 7 digits of a SID (or the entire SID 9 digits). In future, the last 7 digits of the SID will not be
used to search for a student. Users will be required to enter the whole 9 digit SID.

Enrolments
- Added functionality to enforce business rules regarding international student enrolments.
- Students to have a valid eCoE (electronic confirmation of enrolments -- initially established at Admission, or maintained post-admission), dependant on visa type.
- All courses enrolled by students must be CRICOS registered (dependent on visa type).
- Prohibit enrolment in courses which have a CRICOS end date (dependent on visa type).
- International Office can look up student’s enrolment information to confirm enrolment statuses legally compliant.

Fee Calculation
- The barrier that currently prevents International Fee Liability Groups from inclusion in the calculation process will be removed. The International Fee Liability Groups category will be changed from Exempt to Fee Liable and the fee calculation routine will follow the same method as for Local Undergraduate Fee Paying students for international students commencing in 2005.
- Both Local and International Postgraduate Coursework Fee Paying liability groups will follow the same fee calculation method.
- Inbound Exchange students and inbound Cotutelle students are exempted from paying course fees.
- The fees for Study Abroad are a fixed amount per semester.
- International financial information will be visible in FlexSIS to all users in the same way as for local students.

End-of-Year Financials
- Record and display details of previous year’s credit and liability amounts against current year.
- Shows amount of liability for OSHC.
- Similar information. Total$ tab of the Enrolment Management module and Account Enquiry module.
- New tab. Carried Forward tab to be added to Student Liabilities Maintenance module.
- Student Centre and Financial Services. This change allows for the follow-up of small debts from one year to the next and the roll-over of small amounts of credit.
- International Office student account management. Carry-forward enables managing international students’ deposit pre-payments, OSHC and other payments and charges that may be in the student’s accounts at the end of the year.

FlexSIS Website – What do you want to see?
http://www.flexsis.usyd.edu.au/

Check the FlexSIS Website for all your questions on anything related to FlexSIS.

The FlexSIS Change Management Team is always revising the information on our site, to keep our users abreast of any changes and developments in FlexSIS.

Users, who have recently surfed our site, will have seen the new graphical front page that we have adopted to make your surfing for information all the more easy. Please let us know if you like the new look and feel and don’t hesitate to alert us to any information that may need updating and or changing.

Communication & Training Plan

The Communication and Training Plan has been submitted to the FlexSIS Release 6.5 Project Board.

Over the next few months, new users from the International Office, Faculty of Health Sciences and Orange Campus will be contacted in regards to User Access Levels they will receive to use FlexSIS and then be able to register for training in functionality required to carry out work tasks. Training Sessions and rooms are currently being developed and planned.

For existing users of FlexSIS, the team will provide Information Sessions as were carried out for the Release of 5.5 and 6.0, giving users a comprehensive understanding of the changes.
Roving the Trenches; a Business Analyst perspective:

Our reporter Antony Talone has been out in the field finding out what the scoop is on all things FlexSIS….

Antony posed some questions to Alan Fung (Business Analyst – FlexSIS Project) and here is what he had to say about the development of FlexSIS Release 6.5, giving us a look behind the screens.

Describe some of the main elements required to begin the Business Requirement Documentation process?

Alan: The process begins when there is a gap between the current system in place and identified requirements for future processes required by the business. These requirements could be due to external circumstances requiring the business to adopt legislative changes --- for example the new HESA changes or the need to upgrade and or change existing systems that perform key business processes.

What are some of the hurdles that the Business Analyst faces when trying to elicit information to understand the need for changes?

Alan: The main hurdle for me is some customers may not be able to provide all the information required defining the current system or processes, this is usually not the customer’s fault, but rather a limitation of the existing legacy systems. As a Business Analyst it is imperative that we involve our customers as early as possible throughout the development process. Other hurdles are often related to changes of requirements after the gap analysis process has been completed.

Tell us what happens once all the requirements have been defined?

Alan: Once the requirements have been defined, they are documented in a Business Requirements Specification, which is reviewed and approved by key stakeholders (in FlexSIS’ case via the User Reference Groups, Project Boards etc) It usually takes several iterations to address the issues raised by all parties. Once approved, the BA works closely with Developers and users to produce a Functional Specification document. This document highlights any new functionality or changes that need to be done in the system. While the Business Requirements are high level describing the requirements needed, the Functional Specification covers a lot more detail and including the look and feel of screens and any reports needing to accompany the data on the screen.

At the present time, FlexSIS is developing over 35 Business Requirement documents and Functional Specifications for the Release of 6.5.

Report a problem with FlexSIS!

Contact the Support Team in the Student Centre on 9351 5445 or email: flexsis@mail.usyd.edu.au.

The team will log your problem or request on the HEAT system and advise you of the job (ticket) number. After the issue has been assessed, it will be assigned for action to a group in either ITS, FlexSIS Development or the Student Centre.

Requests for enhancements and changes are assessed by the FlexSIS Change Control Committee (FCCC), with representatives from Faculties, the Student Centre and the FlexSIS Development Team.

You should receive some feedback about your issue from the person assigned to deal with it. If you want to follow up on your issue before that time, please contact the FlexSIS Support Team on 9351 5445 or flexsis@mail.usyd.edu.au and have your ticket number at hand.

Timing out no longer a problem!!

Have you come back to your computer to use FlexSIS and find that it has automatically logged you off? We can now report that the 30-minute no-activity log out for Citrix has been extended to 1 hour. Users are advised to continue to take care when leaving their desks for periods of time while FlexSIS is logged on due to confidential data stored in the system.

Your feedback

The FlexSIS team is always available to receive your feedback and comments. Users’ perspectives and ideas are always welcome; let’s work together in making FlexSIS the best Student Administration System around.

Antony Talone
atalone@mail.usyd.edu.au
Editor, FlexSIS Newsletter.