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From the Director’s Desk

Alan Crooks – Director, ICT, Application Services

Dear FlexSIS Users,

2005 has been a very eventful year for FlexSIS so far.

We saw the inclusion in the first half of the year of the International Office (IO) and the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) into the FlexSIS family.

While this transition was not without difficulty, the system has now settled down well and it is comforting to know that FlexSIS now manages core aspects of the full administrative lifecycle, from application to graduation, for all students, local and international, in all Faculties.

Particularly interesting in the IO implementation has been the introduction of third party management and the generation of large quantities of electronic communication and it’s automatic transfer to the TRIM system.

We shouldn’t forget that we also saw the implementation of the new HESA requirements this year which involved a major effort across the business and ICT to ensure a smooth delivery.

Data migration was a major issue for both IO and FHS due to the large volumes and extensive range of data involved – while it was largely successful we are still working closely with both groups to clear up outstanding issues, largely related to historical data.

While the scale of developments on FlexSIS is winding down following this major milestone we are working hard this year to extend Research student management functionality, University Scholarships functionality, incorporate Summer School billing and continue the implementation of HESA changes.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank you all again for your support and if you have any questions about future developments in FlexSIS please don’t hesitate to contact either Antony or myself, or bring them up at the next Faculty Forum in October.

FlexSIS Forum

Antony Talone, Manager – Communications & Training

The next FlexSIS Forum is planned for Tuesday 11 October, 2005 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:

Devolved Services Project Update
New Steering Group for Student Administration Systems
New Functionality of Devolved Services Project

RSVP for this forum is: Wednesday 5 October, 2005, by visiting the online booking page.

Users are requested to RSVP by the above date to adequately book catering.
The Devolved Services Project (DSP) has been running since March. Under the Project Board, chaired by Prof. Masud Behnia (Dean of Graduate Studies), several working parties are running. They are the Credit and Graduand Assessment WP, the Research Management WP; the Scholarships WP; the Enrolment Changes WP; and the End-of-Year Financial Processes WP.

The major objectives of the DSP are to deploy credit and graduand assessment functionality to University faculties, improve on research management capabilities in FlexSIS; and beef up scholarships functionality in FlexSIS with the aim to use FlexSIS as the repository of scholarships University-wide.

The DSP is to be delivered in two phases. The first phase to be delivered in November/December is currently in the middle of the design stage. It includes the credit deployment after some revisions of the credit module, and the release of research functionality focusing on admissions and enrolment. For scholarships, FlexSIS will be able to record major scholarships and recipients. Modifications to the existing enrolment module will be undertaken with the aim of enabling the University to enrol students in January.

Phase two is planned to be in place by February/March 2006 and is currently in the analysis stage. This phase will include deploying the graduand assessment functionality to faculties. The release will also include research functionality focusing on study management and thesis exams. Scholarships functionality to be released will include scholarship reports and the scholarship payment schedule.

Replacing Julizvar, after a two-and-a-half-week handover, Francisca Wong has assumed duties as the project manager of the DSP.

Julizvar extends this thanks to the user community for the cooperation and support given to him over the past two years. He enjoyed working in the University and has made many good friends.

With the latest release of the FlexSIS student administration system, all of the University of Sydney’s students from its 18 faculties are administered on one system for their entire student lifecycle -- from admission through graduation.

Now that ‘core’ requirements are met, there are opportunities for the University to gain greater business value from the student administration system. The aim of the Student Administration Devolved Services project is to add this value by:

- devolving more functionality to faculties
- enhancing functionality for research student management
- enhancing functionality for scholarships management.

Faculties to take over data entry

To a significant degree, faculties will simply become the agents for entering into FlexSIS data that they had already produced. This is the case for credit for students to be added by faculties into FlexSIS. Credit for prospective students will be entered into FlexSIS by the International Office.

Faculties will also become responsible for operating the graduand assessment functions of FlexSIS. Graduand assessment, like credit, is a ‘mature’ function that has already been operating for at least a year with data input responsibility currently residing at the Student Centre.

Research functionality enhanced

Broadly, the research student management changes will allow day-to-day research student management to be carried out by faculty staff.
Currently, either the Student Centre is undertaking these tasks, or they are not being handled at all by a University system. The FlexSIS upgrade will involve fixing EFTSU calculation so that it is accurate at all times. Users will also be able to update semester status and enrolment status, and record that students have handed in their Annual Progress Report (APR).

In addition, it will no longer be necessary to readmit a student in order to generate an enrolment form. In future, it will be possible to generate enrolment forms directly from the Enrolment Variation screen of FlexSIS. Currently, enrolment forms must be reordered through the printer, QM.

This change among others will also impact the handling of coursework students.

For thesis exams, faculties will be able to record the submission dates, examiners' reports and outcomes, revise resubmit detail, and produce correspondence.

**Scholarships to be included**

Individuals in the faculties, the Research Office and the Scholarships Unit will be able to create new scholarships for approval by the Dean of the faculty involved. This type of scholarship contrasts with those others that are considered as 'prizes': awards in recognition of outstanding performance, academic achievement or service. A 'scholarship' in the first sense refers to an award made available to enable further study.

Handling of scholarships will enable the University to comply with the recording obligations it has under the NSW Records Act.

It will implement a facility for uniform recording and management of scholarships and recording of scholarship recipients.

It will also minimise the administrative effort expended in scholarship management.

New FlexSIS screens and functionality will be developed to affect these changes.

Learn more about all these changes at the upcoming FlexSIS Forum in October 2005. [Please book via our online booking page.](#)

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**New Project Governance**

The Student Administration System Steering Group (SASSG) replaces the FCCC and the Management Information Steering Group as the governing body of FlexSIS. The SASSG assembles university administrators and technical experts to discuss the usability, scope, and configuration of the University’s student administration system.

The SASSG will:

- prioritise development requirements for all aspects of the FlexSIS application
- review enhancement requests and adjudicate on their relevance and usefulness to the FlexSIS user base as a whole
- oversight development and implementation activities
- review business processes to ensure they make use of the functionality of FlexSIS in an optimal manner
- oversight performance aspects, including software defects, of FlexSIS and provide direction to ICT in terms of priorities and required service levels.

Details are available on the FlexSIS website. [www.flexsis.usyd.edu.au](http://www.flexsis.usyd.edu.au)

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**Staff Changes at FlexSIS**

The business analysis function of FlexSIS has been consolidated in the Relationship Management group, led by Ian Trevena.

Business analysts Alan Fung and Patrick Flynn have both moved on to new ventures. New business analyst Anne van Boheemen has taken over responsibility for the IO.

Patty McMillan has taken up a secondment position of Relationship Manager for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Kim Koorey is now acting Business Integration Manager.

Nigel Hall has returned to FlexSIS Production Support after working with the Change Manager on FHS training.

Julizvar is moving on from the University and has left his position as Student Administration Devolved Services Project Manager. Francisca Wong has taken his place.

Developer Adam Simmonds has left the University for the private sector after working for FlexSIS since the very early days. Ricci Astudillo has taken up the position of Lead Developer.
Jeffrey Wilson has joined the testing team. Vincent Ng has left the testing team.

**Thanks to FHS and IO**

We would like to extend our thanks to all staff at the Faculty of Health Sciences and the International Office for their cooperation and help during FlexSIS training for release 6.5 in December and the early months of this year. We enjoyed having contact with such a large number of people, covering a wide array of topics.

Release 6.5 has been successfully implemented with the contributions of so many people over a period of many months.

**FlexSIS Website**

http://www.flexsis.usyd.edu.au/

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

**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.

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