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From the Program Manager’s desk
Alan Crooks, Student Administration Program Manager

Dear Users,

As I write, FlexSIS Release 6.2, due for launch on 29 March, is in the final stages of System Testing.

This Release represents the final stages of the replacement of SRS, a process that commenced in November with the launch of Release 5.5.

These 4 months have also seen the Release of new Student Financials functionality and Sessional Billing in Release 6.0 (early January) and the provision of Transcripts through FlexSIS in Release 6.1 (late January).

Associated with these Releases was an enormous amount of data migration and reconciliation between FlexSIS and SRS amounting to literally millions or records. This process is now largely complete and we are working closely with the Student Centre to mop up a small number of remaining issues.

Despite the major changes to FlexSIS that were implemented, the first semester enrolment period was reportedly very successful and FlexSIS performed well in supporting the business.

SRS has not been updated since 30 January but is still accessible to a small number of users in query mode for validation of data migration outcomes.

SRS is planned to be fully decommissioned during March.

Meanwhile Release 6.5, which will see International Office and the Faculties of Health Sciences and Rural Management come onto FlexSIS, continues apace with the Project Board and User Reference Groups meeting regularly and making good progress.

We also have a new member of the FlexSIS team, Patty McMillan, who joined on the 9th of March as Business Integration Manager replacing Annie Pye.

So all in all things continue to move forward at quite a pace and certainly the next 12 months are going to be very interesting and challenging – as have the last 18 months since we instituted these newsletters.

We could not be achieving the milestones we are without the active participation and support of you, our users, and teamwork will continue to be the secret of our success.

We plan to resume our successful Faculty Forums in May when we will share details of the functionality to be provided in Release 6.5 and outline the proposed Release schedule with you. We find these Forums very useful, and believe you do as well, and plan to continue them regularly during 2004.

Please remember that my team and I are here to support you and don’t hesitate to contact any of us if you have questions, issues or concerns about FlexSIS or the program generally that you would like to raise.
Sayonara SRS!!
Antony Talone, Change Manager

As part of the launch of Release 5.5 of FlexSIS the University’s legacy student administration system, SRS, has been withdrawn from service, and will be fully decommissioned in March 2004.

Since November 2003, the phased introduction of FlexSIS release 5.5 has been successfully providing users with the same student administration capabilities as SRS.

If you haven’t already done so, you can secure your FlexSIS logon details to get access to FlexSIS. Simply download the forms from this website and send them for processing to the FlexSIS Support Team, who will contact you when your access logon is ready.

Information about old and new system functions can also be browsed and downloaded from this website (see side-box at right for SRS-FlexSIS function guide). The newly revamped site shows how FlexSIS fits into the overall scheme of student administration processes, by giving users a set of workflows for all processes along with links to extensive online help.

You are urged to take advantage of this opportunity to review your FlexSIS access and see that what you are currently able to access in FlexSIS meets your operational needs.

The FlexSIS Support Team, contactable on 9351 5445, provide tailored training on FlexSIS so please take advantage of this service, otherwise please do not hesitate to contact the Change Manager on 9351 8082 or atalone@mail.usyd.edu.au for any information you may require.

Release 6.5 update
Julizvar, Project Manager

FlexSIS Release 6.5 is now full steam ahead. It’s fantastic to have support from faculties and individuals right from the early stages of this important project. This, for me, is a pleasant change, for I can honestly say from my past experience in managing projects outside the University that there aren’t many projects around that enjoy this kind of endorsement.

During the Nov 2003 to Jan 2004 timeframe, we spent loads of time in consultation with key users from the International Office (IO), Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) and Faculty of Rural Management (FRM). As the result of this process, we have now revised the Student Life Cycle Process Flow and produced Gap Analysis Documents for IO, FHS and FRM. These documents are currently under review by different User Reference Groups (URGs). I’d like to take this opportunity to thank several individuals who not only gave us tremendous support but also took ‘ownership’ of the project as much as the FlexSIS team did: Peter Dodd (Managing Director, IO) Barbara Chmielewski (Deputy Director, IO), Margaret O’Byrne (Manager, IO), Dr. Jim Sait (former Director, Sydney Summer School), Bharati Jayachandran (Head, Student Administration of FHS), and Bernie Duffy (Faculty Manager of FRM).

On the Data Migration front, we have formed 2 working parties that meet weekly to analyse in detail all the data elements of the existing FHS and FRM Student Admin systems (SPEEDO and OASIS respectively) that need to be migrated to FlexSIS. We have made excellent progress and we are very close to producing Data Element Specifications for both SPEEDO and OASIS. As of the day this article was written, we managed to identify 440 SPEEDO fields (from 1,775) and 143 OASIS fields (from 1,208) that potentially need to be migrated. Thanks go to Graeme Martin (Project Manager of SPEEDO, FHS) and Adam Robertson (Database and Web Administrator, FRM) who were instrumental in helping us achieve where we are at the moment.

The next couple of months (Feb – Apr 2004) will be an exciting and productive period. We plan to complete the Analysis and Design Phase of the project by producing key deliverables such as: Business Requirement Documents (to capture ‘what’ the business wants), Prototype / Screen Mockup (to provide preview on ‘how’ FlexSIS screens will look like) and Functional Specification (to detail ‘how’, technically, the FlexSIS team is going to deliver based on the requirements).

As in any project around the world, there is no such thing as ‘smooth-sailing’, and I anticipate there will be new challenges to be conquered and lots of works to be done. Nevertheless, I am confident that we, as a united team, have the ability to carry the momentum of a good start right to the end of this important project.

The next Faculty Forum is planned for Tuesday May 4, 2004 in the Professorial Board Room (Main Quadrangle).

These forums are a great way for all users to keep abreast of new developments. More Information will be available closer to the date.
Software is often compared to a structure – a bridge – spanning the gaps that lie between the different parts and members of an organization. But one major difference between building software and building bridges is immediately clear: Unlike bridges – where you deliver the whole package at once – software managers can choose how much of the total package they offer people on opening day. When releasing software for an activity as critical as business administration, a phased release assures reliability while at the same time opening up new horizons for student centre, college, faculty and corporate users.

The first part of FlexSIS release 5.5 was launched in November, bringing with it a number of useful student admin tools, while simultaneously allowing the legacy SRS system – a mainframe system that was installed in the early 1980s – to be decommissioned.

FlexSIS now offers many new functions and, by adding those of the phased release of 6.0 (Release Early January 2004), the number of useful tools that are being made newly available through FlexSIS is noteworthy:

Release 5.5 functionality allows users to view (and change with the appropriate sign-on level) these new features:

- **Graduations**
  - See which ceremonies have been created.
  - View what ceremonies have been set up for a particular award or course.
  - View all the graduands allocated to a particular ceremony.

- **Results Processing**
  - Validate records that have been retrieved via the UoS list. The uploading process will validate correct records and reject records having nil results.
  - Note the location of the error report file, which advises users of any records that were not loaded.
  - Change the marks of each individual student enrolled in a UoS.

- **Prizes & Scholarships**
  - Create a new prize or scholarship.
  - Record the awardee of a particular prize or the recipient of a scholarship.
  - Change the award status of a prize from being active to either shared, resigned or deferred.
  - See reports via the FlexSIS Reporting Portal (FRP).

- **Credits**
  - Record an instance of credit achieved in another USYD degree course.
  - Validate that the internal credit that has been entered and update the new total approved credit points.
  - Add any credit obtained at another institution, in Australia or overseas.
  - Validate that the external credit has been entered and total credit points have been updated.
  - Check any credits transferred and modify.

- **Comments**
  - Add, delete, and save comments in numerous FlexSIS screens and tabs.

Release 6.0 allows users to view:

- **Exam Arrangements**
  - Maintain all general details for an exam paper, such as paper name, duration of exam, units of study and date and time of examination.
  - Record materials required for an examination, along with any notes to exam supervisors.
  - Search for an examiner and maintain their details.
  - Track exam seat numbers to a venue and view a schedule of all exams held in the room you have selected.

- **Student Account Management**
  - Conduct account enquiries at the level of the student’s course, down to the level of their UoS, and further down to the finest level of detail at the transaction level.
  - Following enrolment, view and edit the student’s liability, change the way they pay compulsory subscriptions, make part payments of fees.

- **Disbursements**
  - (Financial Services and International Office) distribute funds (based on actual PELS and fee-paying monies received) to Colleges based on UoS ownership.
  - (Colleges) view reports at critical times to see up-to-date budgetary information.

- **Transcripts**
  - Produce a range of transcripts on demand for students and graduates.

If you are having trouble viewing any of the features mentioned above, please call the FlexSIS Support Team to give you a training session. They can be contacted on 9351 5445.
FlexSIS Website

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

Check the FlexSIS Website for your questions on the new features implemented with releases 5.5 and 6.0.

Goings and Comings at FlexSIS

There have been several staff changes in the FlexSIS team.
FlexSIS would like to wish the following members of staff good luck in their future adventures:

Annie Pye – Business Integration Manager
After 11 months on our team Annie has left the University to take up a position in the Private Sector. Annie actively engaged all levels of staff throughout the University in identifying key requirements for FlexSIS. Annie introduced workflows which show FlexSIS in the context of Student Administration processes; these workflows are the basis of the Online Help System.

Mike Webb – Project Manager Release 6.0
This is the 2nd departure for Mike Webb. The question is will he be back? Mike left the University after the successful release of 6.0. You should have by now read about the new features of Release 6.0. Mike is to be congratulated for all his efforts in making this intricate part of FlexSIS work so smoothly. Mike is now enjoying a Ski Holiday in Europe. Watch this space to see whether Mike graces our shores again.

WELCOME WELCOME WELCOME WELCOME WELCOME

The FlexSIS team wishes to welcome staff who have joined our team.

Patricia McMillan – Business Integration Manager
Patricia (she likes to be known as PATTY) comes to the University of Sydney with many years of experience in other Universities. Patty’s last role was at Macquarie where she worked on several projects as a Project Manager; previous to her role at Macquarie she worked at the University of Queensland where she was instrumental in the roll out of their Web Portal. Patty has also had experience at Carnegie Mellon University. We wish Patty a very warm welcome to the FlexSIS family.

Reporting a problem or wanting a change to 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.

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