Minutes of FASIG 8th November 2006

Attendees:
A Binge (Chair) and 37 members of the group attended (not everyone signed the attendance sheet).

1.   Apologies
J.M. Child, H. Clarke, J. Evans, V. Hemingway, J.M.Lunnon, J.C. McCartney, D.L. McNeill, K.Pope, M.H. Todd, S.M.Whyte

2.   Minutes of previous meeting

3.   Matters arising
Accounts payable: Problems in ability to check bank details had been identified. If you continue to have problems accessing bank details screen please e-mail the APTOS helpdesk aptos-support@exeter.ac.uk.

Personnel: Steve Pocock appointed project manager for new HR system.

Alternate views: Development of Alternate Views (which is an existing level of functionality within APTOS) will improve the way information can be grouped and viewed and has the potential to simplify coding whilst enhancing the analysis that can be achieved. This is an ongoing project and school users will be consulted once the technical development is complete.

Terms of Reference to be reviewed: – to put on next times agenda
Volunteers with a technical interest needed to test APTOS system. Please volunteer!

Year end matters: Anne Shrubshall reported that the year-end procedures had been successful and that University accounts had been completed on time. She congratulated everyone for their hard work.

League tables: **–** later meeting needed to iron out coding issues previously raised.

4.   Procurement Presentation
A "Fundamentals of Procurement" presentation was given by Kathy Hill.
Kathy outlined a number of issues notably the discrepancy between the numbers of purchase orders against the number of invoices (all goods or services should have PO); EU procurement/tender requirements for contracts of £25k and over £144k, with associated legislation etc., being aware of planning timescales and penalties for non-compliance; contracts to be kept for 7 years; HEFCE requirements for PO information; buying online enables the University to take advantage of preferential contract prices from approved suppliers (ie. that supplier has been vetted for eg. Public Liability insurance cover etc. These slides can be found on the APTOS website – http://www.groups.ex.ac.uk/fasig/

5.   Practical issues arising from procurement.
Dick Leitch gave a short talk. He highlighted the discrepancy between the number of purchase orders and the number of invoices paid.   He also gave some statistics about the number of cancelled/closed PO's and possible reasons for why these would have arisen. Dick outlined progress to date with electronic procurement and how it is envisaged that this would work. It will be called PARABILIS and hopefully produce considerable savings for the University and will be available as soon after April 2007 as possible.
Dick emphasised the need for the use of PO's for all areas, services as well as goods.

6.   General update
Anne Shrubshall told the meeting that the year-end timetable, which was 2 weeks shorter than previous years, had been met. Any pinchpoints were internal to finance and efforts will be made to reduce these by July 2007. Procedures for processing internal invoices prior to year-end need to be reviewed – perhaps having a later cut-off date to reduce the impact on yearly budgets.

Alternate views – still in progress, looking at Oracle reports.

General Ledger journals – quite a few users inputting these now, auditors remarked that some guidelines were needed here, also possible training as to how to complete journals, authorisation and what backup needs to be kept.

Multicurrency – functionality exists within APTOS but its use needs to be tested. In future receiving and making payments in a foreign currency is envisaged.

Aptos User Group – 80 users in UK. Attending group meeting gives Exeter a chance to see and add to planning proposals. St Andrews (94 group member) is currently working on an internal trading group which may be of use at Exeter. It is envisaged that this will be linked with enhanced GPC government procurement cards eg. like our current Nat West purchasing card.
Bplan (APTOS software developers) devote 140 development days to each year to develop enhancements requested from users through the user group. A ballot of members determines which enhancements will be taken forward. Exeter has requested 13 enhancements in 2005/6.
There are no plans to replace APTOS and improved functionality is being added via this route.

7.   Topics for next meeting
Change for 2007/08 staffing codes to align with HERA codes.
Review Terms of Reference for FASIG
Meeting after next – coding issues.

8.   Date of Next Meeting
Middle to late February – to be advised

Minutes of this meeting can be found at:
http://www.groups.ex.ac.uk/fasig/