Information Services Committee

University of Toronto
Faculty of Information
Friday, March 8, 2013 9:00 – 10:00 am
Room 212 (DCR), Bissell Building

Minutes

Present: Dean Seamus Ross (Chair), Prof. Kelly Lyons, Prof. Aviv Shachak (via teleconference), Ms. Susan Brown, Ms. Nalini K. Singh, Ms. Eva Piorkowski, Ms. Adriana Rossini, Ms. Mari Vihuri (MI Student), Ms. Emily Porta (MI Student), Mr. Antonio Gamba-Bari (PhD Student)

Regrets: Prof. Brian Cantwell Smith, Ms. Ana Martins (MMSt Student)

Observers: Prof. Lynne Howarth, Mr. Alex Dvornyak, Mr. Tony Lemmens, Mr. Percy Lo, Mr. Jerome Poon-Ting

Recorder: Ms. Areti Vourinaris

1. Approval of the Minutes of February 1, 2013

The minutes were approved as amended re: members who had been absent at the last meeting because of the OLA Super Conference (January 29-February 1).

2. Matters arising

Under Item #4, Staffing and Resources, there was a follow-up discussion about the endorsed idea from the membership to merge the “Support.iSchool” and “Help.iSchool” support email addresses. There was some discussion about the implementation and communication strategy for the faculty, staff, and students. It was suggested that Mr. Alex Dvornyak and Mr. Tony Lemmens would sort these logistical details. Members agreed with this suggestion.

Under Item #6, Long-Term Planning, Ms. Eva Piorkowski reported that with regard to the iSchool Institute website, there had been no change and that she had started moving in another direction.

The Chair reported that the discussion with Chief UT Librarian Larry Alford about potentially securing a seconded IS Director for an 18-month term was still in progress. The Faculty Librarians indicated that they were not keen on the proposed “exchange” of each of them for sequential 6-month periods to UTL, as this arrangement was seen to be disruptive to the function of the Inforum. It was noted that the Librarians were nonetheless very appreciative of the efforts
of the Chair to provide professional development opportunities. The pending issue was whether there could be a single person seconded for an 18-month period, given Mr. Ivan Sestak’s departure, and that perhaps there was an opportunity to make an appointment for an 18-month period while the IS Task Force could finish its deliberations, complete its report, and that report be considered by the Faculty and what actions would be identified and taken forward from it.

There was some discussion about the impact of Mr. Ivan Sestak’s departure as Senior IT Administrator on long-term planning. The Chair asked who would be able to follow up on his proposed comprehensive plan with ideally a 3 to 5 year vision. Ms. Susan Brown offered to bring annual financial charge details forward. Prof. Kelly Lyons also offered to help with reviewing the details of a software and hardware budget. The Chair tasked Mr. Alex Dvornyak and Mr. Tony Lemmens to communicate requesting additional information from Mr. Ivan Sestak by the next meeting e.g. also online collaboration software options and pricing etc.

3. Student Tech Fund

Ms. Emily Porta reported on the upcoming MI Tech Fund referendum (March 27-29) and the status of activities lately which had come to a halt with the departure of Mr. Sestak e.g. the main area of concern being the refreshing of the laptops, end-of-year events, and renewal of the LibGuide subscription. There was some discussion.

Ms. Porta said that the Tech Fund had been working with Ms. Piorkowski on developing workshops for students and to try to launch them over the summertime with the participation of recent graduates and current students. There was some discussion.

Prof. Kelly Lyons mentioned the very low turn-out for the “Code Rally Info Session” on March 7 with IBM software developer colleagues about Java programming. She noted that this event had been planned, at the request of students, with respect to technical and professional skills development. There was some discussion about March being a very tough time of year for students who were completing course work and meeting deadlines as a reason for the low student attendance.

The Chair suggested offering a “Tech Week” as part of the iSchool program and perhaps building it into curricular requirements via the Programs Committee. It was noted by Ms. Adriana Rossini that, with the implementation of the Co-Curricular Record available to all University of Toronto students starting September 2013, this option seemed worthy of pursuit. There was some discussion about whether there would be student support for this initiative. Members agreed with the suggestion to look at this issue in the future.

4. Staffing and Resources

The Chair noted the departure of Mr. Ivan Sestak as Senior IT Administrator. There was some discussion about the possibility of making a short-term appointment until the IS Task Force report would come forward with its recommendations. There was some discussion about the progress of the Task Force on Strategic Directions for Information Services.
5. Update on the Web

The Chair recognized Mr. Jerome Poon-Ting and Mr. Alex Dvornyak who gave updates on the development of the new website.

There was considerable discussion regarding the web.

During the discussion of the item, the following issues were raised:

- The premise of having recruitment-focused information first.
- The “News and Events” section that still needed to be populated.
- The content that had been populated to date for current students had not been decided in its finality.
- A list of items that were to remain public: “Studies,” “Services,” “Careers,” “Job Shadowing”, “Contacts.”
- The issue of maintaining a student directory on the public-facing site and the issue of clean-up. (Ms. Singh had implemented a clean-up procedure to do with the directory for which the Chair gave thanks).
- Various recommendations from: student consultation from Prof. Joan Cherry’s INF 1006H class, the Careers Officer, the Recruitment Officer, the Senior Web Developer, and the Academic Librarian and Reference Services & Web Content Coordinator.
- The pressure to demonstrate and respond to recruitment targets set 10 years ago.
- The need to clarify and identify technical and operational issues e.g. 1) navigating from the regular site to the recruitment site, or 2) navigating from the recruitment site to the regular site.
- The issue of identifying and finalizing the recruitment criteria being developed for the new website in a way that was comprehensive and appealed to the decision-making process of prospective students.
- There was a scenario given of what a user might experience navigating two websites.
- The impact of having web re-directions as part of a transition phase on external users.
- The recommendation for a communications plan with respect to the new website.
- The focus on surmounting obstacles to launch the Microsite as the main view of the website.
- The navigation and information architecture issues of the new website.
- The suggestion to support the recommendations of the Recruitment Officer and move forward.
- The recommendation to look at reviewing concerns and points-of-view and figure out how to solve them for the long-term and plan for the future.
- There was some discussion about risk management/implementation.
- Ms. Singh asked if the Committee would like the reports from the Careers Officer, the Senior Web Developer, and the Academic Librarian and Reference Services & Web Content Coordinator to be circulated for information. Members agreed with this suggestion.
6. **Long-Term Planning**

Discussion of this item was postponed.

7. **Other business**

Ms. Singh announced that she had resigned as Web Content Coordinator effective March 31, 2013.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.