

Units Database Meeting Notes

3 April 2003

Future of Units Database	<p>The new student information system (SIS) – Callista – will hold some of the data that is contained in the Units database, but not all data (such as things like the objectives, graduate attributes, textbook information). It is yet to be determined whether the new SIS will be modified so that it can hold all unit-related information, or if UNE will develop a database in Oracle. Oracle is the platform on which the Callista database operates, hence the two would be able to “talk” to each other so to the user it would appear that it was the same database, but behind the scenes it would be two separate databases. Using Oracle would also mean that the database would be maintained by UNE IT staff, the same staff who are responsible for Callista.</p> <p>It is expected that some of the information contained in the units database will be migrated to the new system – so there is a need to keep the data as “clean” as possible so that it is accurate when migrated to the new system. Armidale IT (who are now contracted by UNE to carry out development and maintenance work on the current database and who in turn can sub-contract this sort of work to Tim Scott) are currently investigating the building of a second database to sit behind the Units database. Changes to certain key fields (such as unit code, unit title) will be copied through to this second database and checked on a regular basis against Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee/Academic Board minutes to ensure the accuracy of data that goes into the handbook, schedule of units, etc.</p> <p>For the time being, the Units Database will be maintained on Filemaker Pro, but could be re-built and migrated across to Oracle at the end of 2003, ready for updating by schools in 2004 with 2005 information.</p>
List Server	Trevor to check how accurate the current listing is – users to notify Trevor of any new staff which need to be added.
Time Lines	<p>AGREED that we work to the following time lines for 2003:</p> <p>Schools to distribute reports to academic staff and input changes for 2004 by the end of May Schools to sign-off on 2004 by the end of June.</p> <p>Database to be closed for update access from 30 June – with possible exception of textbook and unit coordinator details. Only certain key users (probably one in each Faculty Office) will retain update access – all late changes will need to be passed through these people for entering onto the database.</p>
Training	A “back-to-basics” training session to be organized. All are invited, although it will primarily be aimed at people who are new to the database, or who haven’t been involved with it on a regular basis.
Book Shop Problems	<p>Problems with the Bookshop/textbooks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate information in the database printing out incorrectly on the back of enrolment variations – this resulted in the need for Schools to contact students directly with what the correct information should be • Inaccurate quantities ordered – the bookshop doesn’t appear to use quantities as estimated by schools when ordering in stock <p>Suggested that a return to a print-based catalogue which listed texts for all units, and which could also be put up on the web, would be a better solution.</p>
Previous Databases on Server	Copies of previous Unit databases to be archived and removed from the server to avoid confusion.
Units to be Deleted	Units marked as “To be Deleted” on 2003 database have been copied across to the 2004 database. These need to be deleted ASAP.

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	Also noted that some units were listed as deleted or withdrawn in the semester field – these need to be found and deleted as well.
Report problems	<p>For some units, some of the fields do not print the full record contained in that field (e.g. objectives, attributes), even though for other units a larger record prints without any problems.</p> <p>Still a problem with producing booklist reports for combined units.</p> <p>Still a problem with PC's in that certain fields do not print fully/clearly.</p>
Meetings	<p>Agreed that meetings should be held on a regular basis, at least up until the end of June. Meetings to be held on a regular basis at 2pm every second Thursday – but to check if this clashes with any regular school meetings.</p> <p>Next meeting scheduled for Wed 16 April at 2pm (as Thursday fortnight is the Thursday before Easter).</p>
Timetabling	<p>UNE is currently investigating the use of Syllabus Plus in conjunction with the new SIS to handle the timetabling of internal classes (lectures, labs and tutorials), external residential schools and examinations.</p> <p>Certain key data will be extracted from the units database to be used by the Syllabus Plus system. In particular, data as to the lecture, tutorial, lab, etc requirements of internal units. Requested that for the next meeting, schools establish what type of internal sessions need to be identified, and how we can build this into the system by validating the data as much as possible so that it is consistent across the university.</p>
New SIS	<p>Trevor reported that he would like to use the Units Database group as a reference group to help determine what information schools would like to be able to access in the new system.</p> <p>It's expected that these workshop sessions won't start until later in the year, but he requested that people start to think about and document just what they access from the current system (Banner) and the sorts of things that they would find useful in the new system.</p> <p>Trevor also reported that should UNE go down the path of closely integrating the collection of unit information with the building of such information in the SIS to enable enrolment activity to take place, then the role and responsibilities of the Units Database group will need to be reviewed.</p>