**School of Arts, Languages & Cultures**

**Web Committee Meeting on Wednesday 15 March at 3pm**

**Venue: Samuel Alexander building A4**

*Unconfirmed minutes*

Present: Mark Woolstencroft (Chair), Fred Schurink, Siavush Randjbar-Daemi, Ignacio Aguiló, Kostas Arvanitis, Roddy Hawkins, Andrew Fairhurst, Rachael Jordan, Anne-Marie Nugnes, Philip Moores, Warren Gates.

Minutes: Hannah Garrett

**10/WC/17 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Abi Saffer, Daniel Garner, Rakhi Sinha, Phil Olsen, Julio Villa-Garcia, Sean Peters, John McGuire and Stuart Campbell.

**11/WC/17 Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

**12/WC/17 Matters arising from the last meeting minutes**

Regarding **03/WC/17**, there was a report from Rakhi Sinha updating the committee on the outstanding projects from the previous year:

The following videos have been completed and rolled out across internal channels, including course pages and social media platforms:

Art History and Visual Studies

Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies

Modern Languages

Religions and Theology

The following are almost complete:

Linguistics and English Language – we just need to reshoot a short interview

MA Screenwriting – the audio track needs to be added

It was confirmed that Rakhi will communicate directly with the Recruitment and Admissions Officer for each subject area when the remaining projects are completed.

Regarding **04/WC/17**, the Chair suggested that it is useful to keep the Web Committee separate from the External Relations Committee due to the considerable remit already discussed at that committee. The Chair confirmed that the Web Committee has strategic purpose and governance.

Regarding **05/WC/17**, the Chair confirmed that George Walkden completed all outstanding action points involving PURE apart from the issue of photographs. The Chair reported that he has asked Kim Hunter in the School Office to collate all known images of staff in order for them to be catalogued onto Flickr by a student intern.

Siavush Randjbar-Daemi added that colleagues should be able to opt-out from displaying an image at all as it is a personal matter. The Chair agreed that colleagues can decide for themselves.

Regarding **07/WC/17**, Philip Moores reported that he cannot update the committee on the proposed Teaching and Learning blog yet as he is still to meet with Pete Morris to discuss the idea.

**13/WC/17 Report from Faculty Web Board**

The Faculty Web Governance document was circulated for the attention of the committee.

The Chair reported that standardised Wordpress templates have been created and will be released for use across Schools. The Chair also reported an update on the second phase of the responsive web development plan, which involves scoping of the Martin Harris Centre and Electroacoustic websites.

Philip Moores informed the committee that a new News Asset has been created and is awaiting approval from Communication and Marketing colleagues before being available for use.

**14/WC/17 Area Updates**

Kostas Arvanitis reported that the ICP website is now up and running, and he expressed his thanks to the Faculty web team for their work.

Rachael Jordan informed the committee that the University Language Centre has a new director who has set up a web group to look at their website and consider feedback and improvements to the site.

Fred Schurink reported that the Centre for New Writing site is now up and running and has been very well-received.

Siavush discussed web plans from History and explained that the subject area has an external blog site which is well used but can be disconnected from the university-hosted page as there is no immediate link between the two sites. He and his colleagues are considering how to incorporate the blog in to the main History page. The Chair suggested that feedback on site usage would be of use, and Anne-Marie Nugnes warned against adding too much content to the blog rather than the website.

Andrew Fairhurst reported that he is looking at improvements to the Graduate School website structure. He also offered to tidy up pages with information about graduate students for other subject areas in the School. This was well received by other web officers.

**Action Point:** Andrew agreed to contact web officers and to start on updates.

Anne-Marie reported that the web team is now working on the Martin Harris Centre site, and a new web capture form is in progress.

Two new Social Media Editors have been recruited for SALC languages and they are tasked with promoting news, events and research. The previous SALC SME has not continued with her role so alternative options are being considered.

Anne-Marie also reported her work with Faculty Marketing and Communications Officers to develop the Making a Difference pages on the SALC website. This content will also be used for a new magazine.

Warren Gates added that some sites can pull in blog posts to the subject area and this might be useful for History.

**Action Point:** Warren was asked to show Siavush what this looks like.

**15/WC/17 AOB – proposal from Roddy Hawkins**

Roddy submitted a paper to the committee to discuss two issues:

1. Course Marketing Pages, which are separate to the subject area micro-site. Can they be housed together? Warren provided the following update:

When we originally launched the Phase 1 version of the SALC website, for any given course or programme we essentially had three instances:

1. The version that appeared within the specific subject area ‘courses’ section
2. The version that appeared within the School ‘all courses’ section
3. The primary version that is held on the Corporate website

 From an SEO perspective this was never ideal. The version that existed on the Corporate website is, and always will be, the canonical version. As such, Google will always give more weight to this. So, when a user Google’s ‘BA History Manchester’ they will always be presented with the version that exists on the Corporate website – rendering our versions somewhat redundant.

In addition to this redundancy, the ‘local’ versions of the courses actually find themselves competing with each other when it comes to search rankings.

However, one of the reasons we originally created local versions was because the Central version of a given course offered almost no signposts to the ‘parent’ subject area. This however has largely been resolved with the introduction of a call to action button that allows the user to ‘discover more about this subject area’.

So, I believe we are now in a position where we can really begin to consider the role of our local course pages. Should (when in a given subject area) we link directly to the course pages as they appear on Central?

This is obviously quite a radical departure from how we do things currently so would of course need to be backed up by robust user testing and a full consulting with colleagues – should choose to do this.

1. Social Media Strategy. Roddy suggested that academic web officers are not best placed to promote time-sensitive content via social media, but could students be paid to take on this work? Anne-Marie added that using students has worked well in some areas. Additionally, Central Marketing is creating a standardised template for reporting on social media activity. The Chair suggested discussing the possibility of Workload Allocation for social media work, but this might not be sufficient motivation as not all academic web officers are experienced social media users.

The committee discussed the role of Academic Web Officer and whether they are the most appropriate person for the tasks set for them, such as adding events to Columba.

It was agreed that a small group of web officers would meet to discuss this separately and report back at the next meeting. This group consists of Mark Woolstencroft, Kostas Arvanitis, Roddy Hawkins, Siavush Randjbar-Daemi and Fred Schurink.

**Action Point:** the Chair asked the committee to consider the role of the web officer, and to report back at the next meeting.

**16/WC/17 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17 May 2017**