# Learning Spaces – Development and Use

## New Facilities

The James France building has had a major refurbishment. This includes the 3 tiered lecture theatres and the adjacent 3 flat-floor rooms. There has also been a reorganisation of the space used by the Environmental and Ergonomics Laboratories as a result of the freeing up of the Muslim Prayer Room and this has resulted in a new teaching space being created off the exhibition area with a mezzanine-level student learning lounge above. The exhibition area has been refurbished and can be extended as the new lecture room can open up into the exhibition space. Initial reactions have been very positive.

The Haslegrave ground floor has a new IT facility following a shared development between IT Services and Computer Science. There are a large number of computers which can be used in a range of ways (they are triple-boot machines which can start up using different operating systems) as well as a PC Clinic to offer advice to students.

Both facilities offer very modern looking facilities.

There are some initial discussions relating to the creation of an improved large (400 seat) lecture theatre in the EHB as well as the possibility of adding another lecture theatre off the James France exhibition area in the area between the James France and the Stewart Mason Buildings.

## Central Timetabling

We have purchased a system called CMIS (pronounced see-miss) from Serco Learning and are now working in partnership with them on the implementation.

Michael Earl is the new Timetabling Manager based in Facilities Management and Lokesh Bhatia is the Software Engineer based in IT Services working on the project.

Mike has talked with many colleagues around the campus in academic departments and in support services to gain a full understanding of existing processes and of the hopes and fears for this project. The project management board chaired by the sponsor Jennifer Nutkins has good representation from academic departments and support services. The board recognises that the project must move forward in a way which is consistent with reducing unnecessary administration, which simplifies processes and which results in an improved experience for both students and staff. The new system will enable the publication of timetables for staff and students in a consistent and timely way.

The aim is to enable a better use of our teaching space and for the system to help model our academic plans and their space requirements to feed into our capital development and space planning considerations.

In the project so far we have been using CMIS to replicate our room booking information alongside our existing system for semester one requirements. For the semester two requirements (required in November) Mike will be working with two departments (Aeronautical & Automotive Engineering and English & Drama) to enter their requests into CMIS for central pool rooms as well as departmental rooms. All other departments will provide requests as they have done before. Following the submission of requests Mike will work with three departments a month to look at their semester two requests so that departmental administrators become familiar with the system using real data and will look ahead with them to submitting requests for semester one next year. This phased approach will enable Mike to work alongside and fully support colleagues in academic departments.

During this period we will be working to automate the information coming from other systems, such as LUSI for student data, Trent for staff data and Archibus for space data.

There are discussions to be had and decisions to be made regarding how far we automate the production of the timetable and how much we constrain it. To produce better timetables for students and staff and to improve our space usage we need to add in more flexibility than we have now, but the project team know that this must not be at the expense of the academic experience. Other Universities have gone down this road ahead of us and we will be able to learn from their experience and plan to do this.

In summary, the project has made a good start and the pace of change towards a consistent system is taking account of the changes required, the pressures on those involved and the need to provide high quality training and support during the changes.

*Anne Mumford*