Feedback on {get,send}OrganizationDataBC

Mobility Project, FS Norway

G. M. Vangen, Kai Quale, B. Kristoffersen, L. Hellebø

This is feedback from FS on the proposal for a new Mobility operation for exchanging organization business cards.

Input from IRO

The following summarizes input from Gøril Mellem, IRO at University of Oslo (UiO), collected from email correspondence.

An information sheet/business card for UiO, using the La Sapienza template, is attached.
UiO uses an information sheet similar to this, which is returned to partners as an attachment to bilateral agreements. Most European HEIs use the same kind of information sheet.

UiO- specific contact details
Because of UiO's decentralised structure when it comes to internationalization, we ask our partners to send their proposal/renewal of bilateral agreements, student nominations and so forth to the relevant department/faculty directly instead of sending it to International Education Office (IEO) – as they are the ones in charge of entering agreement and of admission of students. Sending the documents to the IEO this will only slow down the process.

When entering an Erasmus agreement (example is attached) we always include the contact details to the Institutional Erasmus Coordinator together with the contact details to the person involved at the departmental or faculty level. The partner institution is asked to give us the contact details of our counterpart at their side.

In addition, we also send an email to our partner institutions whenever there has been a change of staff at the IEO and ask them to update their directories. This routine is even more important for the departmental level because of rapid turnover, but I doubt that this is done.

Partner-specific contact details
Information regarding all bilateral agreements at UiO is registered in FS by IEO. When updating FS on the various bilateral agreements, the contact details to our counterpart at IEO at the partner institution is also added. For Erasmus agreements specifically this would mean the name and contact details of the Institutional Erasmus Coordinator. After the agreement is registered in FS, the IEO sends the agreement to the departmental coordinator at UiO who is asked to register the contact details to her/his colleague at the departmental level at the partner institution. However, because of rapid turnover amongst the departmental Erasmus coordinator at UiO this procedure is not always followed. The Institutional Erasmus Coordinator will therefore every now and then send a reminder to our colleagues at dep./fac. that it is their responsibility to do update their counterparts' contact details to FS.

Due to the high turnover amongst the departmental coordinators working with the Erasmus programme, efficient communication of contact information to our partners is important. Exchange of electronic business cards will reduce the work involved, both internally and at our partner institutions.

We often receive new Erasmus agreements for signing, where the contact person is incorrect. We will then need to ask our partner institution to correct and resend the agreement documents.

The use of business cards

The use of organization business cards is not restricted to student mobility, they are useful for a range of other purposes.

Even though some contact information from the business cards (information sheets) are now used to register data into the SIS (as reported by the IRO), we believe this is covered by the current Mobility operations {get,send}{OrganizationData,LearningAgreement}.

The use of business cards, as we see it, is mainly to present information. It is probably not a good idea, then, to store business cards for partner institutions in the SIS. This will only introduce the problem of keeping such information up to date. We believe it is better to invoke getOrganizationBC every time it is needed.

For the same reason we believe it is sufficient for Mobility nodes to implement getOrganizationBC, and not sendOrganizationBC.

getOrganizationBC

The operation getOrganizationBC will be used to present partner contact information, within a SIS application or maybe on a web page.

According to our IRO, this would be helpful, and much quicker than searching the partner website (in particular for HEIs not having english web pages). One should aim to collect the most important contact information in a single document.

The operation could be implemented simply by exchanging PDF documents, or even simpler, URLs to business cards. It may, however, be useful to define an XML schema for business cards, to ensure that important contact information is included for all institutions. This will also make it possible to present business cards in a uniform manner using style sheets.

A possible XML description of a "contact point" at UiO is included below. Note that, compared to person data in other Mobility operations, we do not see the need to identify persons using employee numbers or national personal IDs in this context.

```xml
<tns:contactPoint>
  <tns:organizationUnit>
    International Education Office
  </tns:organizationUnit>
  <tns:role>Incoming Erasmus students (LLP-SMS)</tns:role>
  <tns:contactPerson>
    <tns:givenNames>Helene</tns:givenNames>
    <tns:surname1>Johansen</tns:surname1>
    <tns:telephoneNumber>+47 22856207</tns:telephoneNumber>
    <tns:facsimileTelephoneNumber>
      +47 22854459
    </tns:facsimileTelephoneNumber>
    <tns:mail>helene.johansen@admin.uio.no</tns:mail>
  </tns:contactPerson>
  <tns:URL>
    www.uio.no/english/studies/admission/exchange/erasmus/
  </tns:URL>
</tns:contactPoint>
```

Optional operations

At the code camp it was decided to design a new WSDL for exchanging business cards. In our case, it would be even simpler to include the new operation in the current Mobility WSDL. We propose that Mobility nodes may choose to publish the business card operation in this way (not a big issue).

If the Mobility project should broaden it's scope to include more operations, and these operations share (parts of) the same data model, it will be practical to a have a single WSDL. Then we should consider allowing Mobility nodes to *partly* implement the WSDL, for example by introducing a SOAP fault "UnsupportedOperationFault". An alternative could be to introduce a "meta operation", say getSupportedOperations, returning the list of implemented operations.