University College Cork
National University of Ireland, Cork

Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance

Peer Review Group Report

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Academic Year 2000/2001

May 2001

Members of the Peer Review Group:

1.   Michael Peter Kennedy, Professor of Microelectronic Engineering, UCC (Chair)

2.   Alistair Lomax, Senior Consultant, Oxford Philanthropic Ltd., UK

3.   Kathryn Neville, Administrative Officer, University Dental School and Hospital, UCC

Professor Kennedy chaired the Peer Review Group.

Timetable of the site visit

Tuesday 1 May

12.00   Convening of Peer Review Group in Director's Office, Development Office, UCC, Western Road, Cork
Briefing by Director of Quality Promotion Unit, Dr. N. Ryan.
Views are exchanged and areas to be clarified or explored are identified.

12.15   Lunch with members of department responsible for co-ordinating preparation of Self-Assessment Report.

14.00   Consideration of Self-Assessment Report and other inputs along with all department staff.
 Schedule:
14.00 Meeting with Executive Directors Ms. Michelle Griffin and Mr. Cal Healy
14.30 Meeting with all staff
15.30 Individual meetings with all members of staff

16.30   Meetings with representatives of academic staff who interact/have interacted with the Development Office
Schedule:
16.30 Dr. Joan Buckley, Dept. of Management & Marketing
16.45 Professor Fernanda Oliviera, Dept. of Process Engineering
17.00 Professor Philip O'Kane, Dept. of Civil & Environmental
      Engineering
17.15 Professor Cormac Sreenan, Dept. of Computer Science

17.30   Meeting of Peer Review Group to identify remaining aspects to be clarified and to finalise tasks for the following day

19.30   Working private dinner for members for the Peer Review Group

Wednesday 2 May

08.30   Breakfast meeting with representatives of donors in staff dining room

10.00	Meeting with Mr. Michael Kelleher, Secretary & Bursar/Vice-President for Administration
10.30	Meeting with Mr. Michael O'Sullivan, Vice-President for Planning, Development & Communication
11.30	Meeting with Professor Aidan Moran, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
12.00	Meeting with Ms. Michelle Griffin & Mr. Cal Healy, Executive Directors
13.00	Working Lunch for members of the Peer Review Group
14.00	Preparation of first draft of final report Finalisation of plans for completing preparation of the Peer Review Report
17.00	Exit presentation, to be made by the Chair of the Peer Review Group or other member of Peer Review Group as agreed, summarising the principal findings of the Peer Review Group
19.00	Extern departs

Peer Review

<u>Methodology</u>:

The peer review group worked as a team, sharing all questioning. The report was written collectively.

<u>Self-Assessment Report</u>:

In the opinion of the group, the materials provided by the department give a fair and balanced view of a department which is undergoing a process of change. The most important operational issues are covered in the report and these have been explored thoroughly by the members of the Peer Review Group in consultation with the key stakeholders.

Some issues related to the strategic function of the Development Office were not explicitly highlighted in the Self-Assessment Report. These issues arose during our discussions with management of the University but are not referred to in detail in this report.

This peer review document covers the current functioning of the Development Office and does not anticipate the findings of Oxford Philanthropic's work on the Development Strategy of UCC.

The Peer Review Group acknowledges the efforts of the Development Office team. We are grateful for the frankness with which all parties have shared their concerns and their suggestions on how they could improve the service of the office.

Findings of the Peer Review Group

<u>Department Details</u>

Department details are accurate. Some staff are concerned about the permanency and security of their positions.

<u>Department Planning and Organisation</u>

The Department is undergoing major restructuring to amalgamate historically disparate functions and to improve the efficiency of the office. The vacancy of the post of Director of Development has led to uncertainty concerning planning and reporting structures. Members of staff have been proactive in building the administrative infrastructure and prospect profiles.

<u>List of Client Groups for the Department</u>

The Department correctly identified academics, administrative staff, and donors as clients for participation in the quality assessment exercise.

The Peer Review Group is concerned that anonymity has not been preserved in reporting names and addresses of the research population for the survey (Appendix 9). It was suggested that there may have been a possible misunderstanding concerning the document preparation guidelines.

<u>Service Standards</u>

The academic constituency appears well-disposed towards the activities of the Office. However, relationships with individual departments appear to have been initiated on an ad hoc basis. Those with whom the Office has regular contact are satisfied with the level of service.

Donors expressed concern about historical follow-up to donations in terms of thanks and progress reports on developments. There have been improvements recently in this respect; donors specifically mentioned letters of thanks from the President. Further improvements are required in the area of ongoing reporting on Development activities of the University.

<u>Staff developments</u>

Some key personnel have been recruited recently to improve the operational service level of the department. Overall, the staff have a positive attitude, but would welcome further support in terms of training and career development.

<u>Departmental Budget</u>

There is need for greater clarity in budgeting, as identified in the Self-Assessment Report.

<u>Departmental Co-ordinating Committee and Methodology employed in preparation of the Self-Assessment Report</u>

The Self-Assessment Report is concise and clear. Staff in the Office engaged actively with the Quality Assessment process. It appears that the methodology has been effective both in preparing the report and in helping the staff to identify issues where they can improve their own performance.

Overall Analysis

UCC's overall strategy for development is currently being formulated by senior management of the university in consultation with Oxford Philanthropic. The Development Office anxiously awaits the delivery of this strategy document.

The staff of the Office is currently unsure of its direction. Once the strategy has been agreed, it is imperative that it be communicated effectively to all members of staff so that they can understand their roles in this team effort.

This report is expected mid-May 2001.

The Peer Review exercise should be considered in this context. Our analysis and recommendations are intended to assist the office in providing a higher level of service to its client groups.

We have identified four key areas where improvements can be made:

<u>Leadership</u>

The importance of the vision of UCC and the endorsement of the President, supported by volunteer leadership, are fundamental to the success of fundraising activity.

There is a sense of uncertainty about the direction of the office and the roles of the individual members of staff. It is important that a Director of Development with appropriate vision and influence be appointed urgently.

<u>Communications</u>

Both internal and external communications can be improved. Internally, the roles and reporting structures need to be clarified. Donors could receive a greater level of care.

<u>Systems</u>

Administrative processes (database management, report preparation, planning, financial matters, publications) can be improved.

<u>Staff</u>

Staff development, career structures, ownership of projects and budgets, retraining where necessary, are issues which need to be addressed.

<u>Recommendations for Improvement</u>

<u>Leadership</u>

The Development Strategy of the University must be communicated clearly to the Development Office and its client groups. A presentation on the Development strategy should be made to the Development office by senior management of the university. The strategy should also be communicated to all internal constituencies.

The post of Director of Development should be filled as a matter of urgency.

<u>Communications</u>

Development Office & Officers of the University
- Communication and reporting lines between the Office and the Officers of the University should be clarified.
- The budget of the Office should be devolved.
- Fundraising successes should be celebrated.
- External publicity efforts should be integrated at College level.

Academic
- Once the Development strategy of the University has been agreed, the Development Office should be proactive in communicating this within the university.

- The complementary roles of academics and the Development Office professionals in fundraising should be formulated under a negotiated code of conduct.
- There should be regular communication between academics and the Development Office on donor interaction.

Donor care
- Formal structures for follow-up with donors should be initiated.
- A formal programme of donor recognition is essential.

Alumni
- The effectiveness of communications with alumni should be measured.

Systems

The team needs to devise pro-forma for the production of proposals and reports to achieve consistency of presentation and to avoid duplication of work. Best practice office procedures should be agreed and implemented by the team.

Staff

The roles and responsibilities of staff members should be clarified to improve their effectiveness. A training needs analysis should be performed and appropriate training provided, where required.