

Executive Summary

In 2007, Information Services at the University College Cork (UCC) was created when the reporting relationships of the Computer Centre and Audio Visual Media Services were reassigned to the University Librarian (resulting in the extension of John FitzGerald's responsibilities and expanded title of "Librarian and Director of Information Services"). The combination of the three departments was intended to provide the following benefits (as described in the Director of Information Services job description):

- *To improve the design and delivery of core academic support services by integrating planning and resource management across library, information technology and audio visual media services;*
- *To enhance access to learning and research resources by teachers, learners, and researchers;*
- *To improve the quality of technical support for all students and staff in their use of information systems and resources;*
- *To enable an integrated approach to the development of the University's infrastructure, leading to more efficient usage of resources and improved availability of services to users;*
- *To enable staff working in diverse areas of the Information Services Directorate to develop a shared sense of purpose, and to align their activities more closely with the achievement of the University's strategic objectives.*

Much has been accomplished within Information Services (IS) and its three departments during the interim, and the organisation must now respond to recent retirements at senior levels of IS and determine the appropriate next steps. An external review process was initiated by the President and defined by the Director and other key members of the administration to assess the progress that has been made thus far and to make recommendations that would guide its future plans and activities.

Such a review provides an opportunity to assess the entire organisation at a very high level, consider its overall values and strengths, evaluate the effective deployment of staff and other resources, and help to reconsider the appropriateness of current structures and approaches by which it serves the University community. The review was expected to provide a series of observations and recommendations across the full spectrum of IS operations and responsibilities. In addition, focused recommendations were requested in two key areas:

1. *The best design and configuration of the senior leadership team and the governance structures required to support and guide Information Services; and*
2. *A deeper review of the role and structure of the UCC Computer Centre that would consider the optimal organisational model with which to deploy resources and services, develop strategies and policies, and utilize human and other resources.*

Gene Spencer was retained to perform the review defined by the Terms of Reference in Appendix A. Gene is an independent consultant to higher education IT and library organisations based in Danville, Pennsylvania USA. Gene has over 33 years experience within higher education, and most recently served as the Associate Vice President of Information Services and Resources at Bucknell University, where he led a merged library, IT, and media organisation (see a brief description in Appendix B for additional information).

The review process included four days on the UCC main campus to meet with over 100 stakeholders including key administrators, selected teaching staff and department heads, the managers and staff within the Computer Centre (CC) and Audio Visual Media Services (AVMS), as well as the managers and a cross-section of staff within the Library. The conversations were revealing, as the participants shared their opinions and insights freely. Not all members of the community agreed with the concept of combining the three departments into Information Services, but most believed that the change could provide many potential long-term benefits. Those involved in the conversation wanted to understand how greater integration might be helpful to the University, especially in these difficult financial times.

Based on the conversations held during the review process, my understanding of the UCC context (based not only on two visits to campus, but also from access to key documentation supplied within the process), the changing conditions within higher education, and my experience with the advantages that other institutions have gained from similar organisational changes, I offer the following major findings and recommendations.

Summary of Major Findings and Recommendations:

1. **The Changing Environment:** Many changes occurring within higher education are adding pressures to the technology, library and media support organisations on virtually every college and university campus. Worldwide and local financial concerns, changing student demographics, increasing demand for service, and many other factors beyond the campus boundaries create the need for ongoing change. These same pressures exist at the University College Cork and are changing the environment in which the Computer Centre, Audio Visual Media Services, and the Library work to meet the needs of their constituents. Many institutions have developed appropriate responses to these pressures, only some of which are clearly evident in the current UCC approach.
2. **The University College Cork Strategic Plan:** The University's strategic plan for 2009-2012 provides an excellent framework by which the work of the institution can be leveraged toward common goals, actions, projects and initiatives. This plan is an excellent foundation upon which the work and plans of Information Services can be built.
3. **Observations of the Current Information Services Organisation:** The staff of Information Services is comprised of hard-working individuals who are dedicated to their roles, and have a history of serving the University community well. However, there are many ways in which changing conditions require the departments to respond differently (especially for the potential benefits of the combined IS organisation to be achieved). The recent retirements at senior levels create an opportunity for IS to deliberately and actively leverage the strengths of the three departments into a more cohesive structure and organisational culture to better serve the University's existing and future needs.

4. **Reporting Structures and Relationships:** With retirements at senior levels within IS, the time is right to examine its reporting relationships and to create more appropriate structures, as past assumptions and approaches are straining under current conditions. The new IS organisation would benefit from separating the Director of Information Services role from that of the Librarian (creating a Director of Library Services and a Director of IT Services, both of whom would need to be recruited in open searches), and elevating the current Director of Information Services within the institution (and assigning a new title). These changes should occur as soon as possible. In addition, all sub-units within IS should be evaluated, and reorganised and/or renamed as appropriate. IS should also create a greater emphasis on academic technologies, and improve relationships with distributed IT personnel in other units (who do not report to IS).
5. **Governance:** Changes in the internal and external governance model for Information Services will help ensure greater cohesion between its units and greater organisational alignment with the overall mission and plans of the University; as a result, UCC would enjoy greater accountability for IS in meeting the highest priority needs of the institution. A high-level policy committee should be created to advise and support IS, and focused user committees should also be defined to advise and support key functions such as administrative systems or activities supporting teaching, learning, and research.
6. **Leadership and Leadership Development:** Information Services will need to strengthen its focus on leadership (and how it differs from management) to enable the organisation for success in its complex environment. IS should create a shared leadership model, with specific descriptions and expectations of what it means to be a leader and a manager. It will also need a deliberate program to develop leadership skills and characteristics throughout the organisation (not just for those in higher-level positions).
7. **Physical Spaces:** There is an unfortunately large disparity in the quality and usefulness of the physical spaces currently assigned to the three departments. Improvements could be made by shifting personnel and functions within current spaces. In particular, parts of the Computer Centre and/or AVMS functions could move to the Boole Library (all face-to-face services should be in the Library at the academic centre of the campus). In addition, the former Official Publications Centre on the Q floor of Boole should be reassigned for a very high profile activity in support of teaching, learning and research, and severe deficiencies in the data center should be immediately corrected.
8. **Resources:** While this review was not intended to focus on specific levels of resources available to the various functions of IS, the issue of budget and staffing levels were a constant part of nearly every conversation. In fact, the creation of IS was partially motivated to more efficiently use resources; thus, comments on resources seem appropriate within this report. In particular, the merger of IS allows its leadership to think holistically about total resources (which are significant) and to create efficiencies by reducing service points, leveraging technology, using student employees, expanding consortial resource sharing, developing off-campus partnerships, and outsourcing. At the same time, the University needs to recognize that greater focus on research will naturally increase pressures on technology and information resources and services, and that resources will need to be available for its highest priority projects and initiatives.
9. **Organisational Culture and Organisational Development:** Each of the three departments has its own distinct culture, some elements of which are useful and some of which are detrimental. The organisation should work to explore cultural differences,

identifying the good elements of each culture, and making an effort to extend its benefits across the entire division. Changes to the culture should focus on expanding internal and external communications, increasing collaboration, becoming more open to the community, and increasing cross-functional activities. In addition, enhancing the professional development activities of the staff and embracing project management across IS would be welcomed improvements.

10. **The Information Services Strategic Plan:** The existing Strategic Plan for Information Services consists of three separate plans developed by the individual departments. There is no evidence of cross-departmental thinking and no mention of cross-functional projects or initiatives. Each of the three plans point back to the overall UCC Strategic Plan, but has little evidence that it was built upon that foundation. Information Services should spend deliberate energy on assessing the University plan and creating an inclusive process to imagine how the organisation can best support it.
11. **Next Steps for Information Services:** This report provides many recommendations across multiple areas of focus; the list is substantial and early progress should start in key areas such as strengthening internal communication, developing greater understanding between IS departments/units, creating a new leadership structure (and selecting appropriate leaders), taking concrete steps toward transparency, piloting collaborative efforts in key areas, and enabling greater staff involvement. In addition, there are four areas in which the existing departments need to consider very important changes at the earliest possible moment: begin planning an institution-wide identity management infrastructure, increase the operating hours for the Library and the Help Desk, correct deficiencies in the data centre, and start discussing the chargeback scheme and budget mechanism for AVMS; none of these will be simple, but each is preventing success of the organisation in very real ways, and will be important tests of character for IS.

A greater discussion of each major area, as well as a more extensive description of each individual recommendation, is provided in the sections that follow.

The Review Process

At the outset, the planning for the review process focused on developing an interview schedule that would engage the major internal and external stakeholders (to seek their opinion about the ways that IS currently serves their needs and understand how it might serve their needs in the future). Because of the timing of the visits, it was difficult to arrange conversations with students (only one member of the student's union was able to attend, however, he was most knowledgeable about student needs); I compensated for this circumstance by approaching several students at random (within the Library and walking about the campus) to ask their opinions about the Library, Computer Centre and AVMS.

In preparation for the visits, I provided a list of stakeholders that are typically involved in such a review. Working with key members of Human Resources, the interview schedule was drafted and continually adjusted throughout the process. I am especially grateful for the support of Mary Ward, the HR Partner to Information Services who guided and advised the process and for the work of Maeve Doyle, an HR Advisor who managed all of the details of the campus visits in a highly professional and helpful manner.

During two separate visits to UCC (a total of four days on 19-20 May 2010, and 15-16 June 2010), over 100 individuals from a variety of roles throughout the University were invited to participate in meetings associated with the review (see the list of individual and group meetings and invitees in Appendix C). People who were unavailable during the visits were encouraged to send comments via e-mail or to arrange a telephone conversation afterward. Interviewees were assured that specific comments and responses would not be attributed to any single person, but would be considered and reported in aggregate.

Significant background material was provided before the review, to help describe the current environment in which IS operates at the University. Those documents included:

- Strategic Plan for the University College Cork 2009-2012
- President's Report for 2008/2009
- Current organisational charts for the University's Senior Staff, the Library and the Computer Centre
- Strategic Plans for Information Services 2009-2012
- Report of the Library Policy Committee 2008-2009
- UCC Quality Improvement Report for Audio Visual Media Services 2000-2001 (and follow-up report of October 2002)
- UCC Quality Improvement Report for the Computer Centre 2001-2002 (and follow-up report of October 2003)
- UCC Quality Improvement Report for the Library 2004-2005 (and follow-up report of October 2006)

As I met with members of the UCC community, I naturally found diverse opinions about the ways in which the work of the Computer Centre, the Library and Audio Visual Media Services

was responding to existing needs. Although I received many comments about the excellent work of all three departments, virtually everyone with whom I met also had additional needs they perceived were not being met. In addition, the reduction of budgets and the decreases in staff positions were discussed in every conversation; reasonable questions about the operations of all three departments were asked by members of the University who had aspirations for ways that Information Services could enhance the ability of UCC units to achieve more in difficult times.

This report will focus primarily on themes that were heard from multiple sources, rather than individual comments expressed from a single point of view. In this way, the report can provide observations and recommendations that reflect the mainstream opinions of the UCC community, rather than a single point of view that might represent some outlying position.

Several questions were sent to interviewees prior to the visit; these questions were intended to build expectations for the face-to-face discussions and allow the participants to begin processing their thoughts and opinions in advance of the meeting:

- *In your view, what should be the key mission/chief objectives of the Information Services directorate?*
- *How are the services provided by IS perceived by the rest of the University, both academic and academic support departments?*
- *How should the service areas within IS interface with other sections of the University – both academic and academic support.*
- *Do you have a view as to whether the three service units within IS should continue to operate as distinctly branded services?*
- *Do you have suggestions regarding how IS should be governed in terms of committees, user groups, etc.*

I ended many meetings with a thought-provoking question designed to evoke a single, high-priority response, “*If you had one big wish for the future of Information Services and the way it serves the UCC community, what would it be?*” Responses to this question helped clarify what was truly important to that individual and helped develop a greater sense of the most critical priorities for the University as a whole.

This report has been written with the expectation that it will be shared broadly with members of the community, particularly those with whom I met during the four days on campus.

The Changing Environment for Libraries, IT and Media

Information Services works within a broader context that is constantly changing in both subtle and dramatic ways. For example, the global economic turmoil of the past two years has brought a serious recession to Ireland, and prospects for a rapid turn-around appear bleak. As a result, local and national pressures on budgets and staff positions will surely continue for the foreseeable future. Changes to its environment do not define success or failure for IS, but they do present its leadership and staff with significant challenges that must be recognized and

overcome. Successful organisations will be those best able to adapt to their changing environments by adjusting their strategies and tactics to quickly choose a more appropriate path.

Beyond the challenges of the recession, the University's strategic plan directs the institution in bold new ways, helping to ensure its continued relevance in a world driven by a steady stream of advances, particularly in the spheres of communication, information and technology. Aspirations for more extensive UCC research activities and an expanded global role will produce challenges that will be daunting at times. Devolution of the University structures toward greater responsibility and control to the individual Colleges has already produced increased scrutiny about the Computer Centre, the Library, and Audio Visual Media Services and how each justifies its contributions to the University, as well as the resources each consumes. The University is in a deliberative state of growth and change, and IS must respond.

New digital technologies appear and disappear with much greater frequency. As a whole, these advances offer exciting new ways to accumulate, store and transmit information. They also enable new methods of pedagogy, and allow students to demonstrate learning by transcending the limitations of a traditional examination or research paper. Individuals and communities can now interact in ways that cross divides of spaces and time. The ability to acquire external digital resources through the network creates an opportunity to expand capabilities more quickly and flexibly than if these resources had to be developed on campus. Advances in mobile devices, the emergence of enhanced tools for collaborative work and group learning, and further developments in classroom technologies will regularly reshape academic endeavors.

Information is instantaneously available from many sources, rather than being stored in a relatively few authoritative repositories (such as traditional libraries). As a result, tension exists between digital resources and traditional forms of information (as well as those who manage them). The worlds of scholarship, publishing, and textbooks are being revolutionized. The ability to navigate and exploit the power of digital information requires new and higher levels of competency on the part of readers and the expert staff within Information Services.

UCC's student population is becoming increasingly diverse and their needs are evolving in multiple ways. Today's college-age students, described by some as "born digital" and "always connected," are adept at multitasking, easily drawn to instantaneous access to whatever they believe they need, and willing to adopt (and eventually abandon) whatever promising new tool appears interesting to them. They exhibit a variety of learning styles, ask more complex questions, blur the distinction between technology and information, and exhibit a level of confidence that may exceed their actual capabilities. At the same time, the University is attracting more mature learners who are returning to gain additional skills or prepare for new careers. These students are driven by very different demands on their time, as many have families and work schedules around which they must manage their academic work.

New developments of teaching, learning and research are continually evolving in response to new challenges and opportunities alike. While traditional forms of instruction and research still have relevance, the changing needs of today's students, changing interests and motivations of a new generation of teaching staff, and advances in digital technologies have created opportunities for the University to embrace new approaches to student intellectual growth and development.

Today, students also learn through shared experiences such as group projects, internships, and other forms of hands-on learning, while they also benefit from individual or group research directed by their own interest and the interest of academic mentors. Experimentation, data visualization, data integration, and information exchange play increasingly important roles in the teaching/learning process.

These environmental changes put pressure on support organisations such as Information Services to meet a growing set of challenges within a fixed or shrinking set of resources. Assumptions must be rethought. Resources and services must evolve quickly. Structures and work assignments must be re-evaluated and modified. Some changes will be dramatic and disruptive; others represent subtle but sustained shifts over long periods of time. Many similar organisations such as the Computer Centre, the Library and Audio Visual Media Services throughout higher education are responding to these challenges in creative ways. Others are stuck and risk failure or even irrelevance. There are choices to be made and the risk is real.

This report offers some insights into ways that such organisations at various institutions have been evolving within their own changing environment. Below, the reader will find emerging trends and best practices that other institutions are employing within each of the functional areas. Many of these ideas and approaches will be worthy of consideration by members of Information Services and the community it serves.

Library Support and Services

- **The Library as “Place”:** The primary role of the library building on most campuses has been shifting from the storage and access of library materials to one that provides a variety of spaces to meet diverse needs of today’s students. Collections in the building have already begun or will soon begin shrinking, and additional spaces are being diverted to the needs of people and the advanced ways that they might interact with information, with technology, and with each other.
- **Maximizing Use of the Building:** Because students believe they can find good information resources elsewhere (through a simple Google search, for example), deliberate efforts are necessary to bring readers into the library building where they can have greater interaction with librarians and other expert members of the staff to evaluate and meet their information needs. Many libraries are enhancing the reader experience by providing a variety of physical environments within the building, with multiple forms of comfortable furnishings, easy access to electricity and data networks, and relaxed rules and regulations (particularly those having to do with noise or food and drink in the building). Other libraries are inviting service partners into the building to provide a common interface to services a student might need (e.g. support services such as IT services, writing assistance, learning support, academic advising, and counseling). In addition, many libraries are foregoing the “quiet building” approach and proactively zoning different parts of the building for varying noise levels (e.g. different vibrant zones, quiet zones and silent zones).
- **Beyond the Building:** In spite of activities designed to bring readers into the building, the staffs of many libraries are developing strategies to also serve the needs of readers when they are outside of the library. Many innovative libraries provide services digitally

(through an e-mail or chat mechanism, through social networking sites such as Facebook, through mobile devices, and/or through direct integration of library services and content into the campus learning management system). Other libraries have set up consulting services at remote sites like the student union or other popular study locations.

- **Access vs. Ownership:** As materials budgets have dwindled (in real terms due to budget cuts and in relative terms, as high levels of inflation have been common for scholarly materials over the last decade), libraries have shifted much more of their focus to accessing materials at the moment of need, rather than purchasing materials “just in case.” Efficient mechanisms for interlibrary loan and other forms of institutional sharing on a massive scale provide access to a greater level of materials and have been very successful in the eyes of the academic community.
- **Automating Processes:** Advances in information technology have created countless opportunities for improvements in streamlining internal library processes, moving paper request forms online, taking advantage of collaborative cataloging techniques, and purchasing books that are ready for placement on shelves as they first arrive on campus. Most libraries have leveraged these technologies heavily, allowing staff efforts to be more fully deployed to face-to-face public services.
- **Collaborative Collection Development:** Institutions with similar missions or serving a similar geographic area have been exploring ways in which they can collaborate on decisions to collect various kinds of scholarly materials. By developing their collections in deliberate alignment and actively sharing those collections, the collaborating libraries can provide access to a greater range of appropriate materials while saving budgets, processing time and storage space.
- **Everything Digital:** Access to digital resources and services has been driving significant innovation for libraries for more than a decade. Vendors of major information resources have been moving their content online because of the demands of readers for convenience and anytime/anyplace access. In addition, digital tools allow easy access to new forms of information. Many believe that there will be two kinds of collections in the future: special collections and digital collections (and that even the special collections will be fully digitized for remote use).
- **Simplified Services:** Today’s library is a product of long-standing traditions of excellent service, evolving with the changing needs of readers. Now that the library’s audience has many more choices available, library organisations, services, and resources must become much more “reader friendly.” Libraries are expanding their hours of operation, providing an open and comfortable atmosphere, simplifying services, eliminating separate services desk, and allowing food and drink. They are also replacing unfriendly terms such as “Circulation” and “Reference” (which mean little to a 19 year-old first-year student) with user-centric terms such as “Ask” and “Borrow.” In addition, many library services (e.g. “chat with a Librarian,” loan renewals, and purchase request forms) are moving into online formats where they can be easily accessed on a 24x7 basis.

Information Technology Support and Services

- **The Centre:** The concept of a computer centre is quite dated and points back to a time when the institution’s technology was defined by a single large computer housed in a key campus location. Distributed networks and personal computers have changed the focus

of technology outward toward the user, and the growth of mobile devices and wireless networks continue that trend. The work at the core is still critical, but it has become increasingly invisible to the user who does not care where it takes place, and much of it could easily move somewhere else.

- **Focus on Service:** While it is natural for the staff of IT organisations to focus most of their attention on specific technologies (particularly those within their own areas of specialization), the focus of the IT organisation must increasingly turn to the services it offers and the benefits that accrue to users. An enhanced service approach requires a new way of interacting with customers, attempting to better understand their needs, and welcoming calls for assistance as opportunities to serve.
- **Beyond Infrastructure and Transactions:** The development of campus infrastructure and the provision of good transactional services must be done well, but proficiency in this area is not sufficient to define success for a technology organisation. IT also needs to be seen as a consultant to campus constituents, an advocate for their needs, a creator of solutions, and a strategic partner with campus leaders. They must also be seen as serving institutional priorities and achieving institutional goals, particularly in areas of teaching and learning.
- **Leveraging Off-Campus Resources:** Many institutions (including UCC) are taking advantage of low-cost services such as Google mail or Microsoft Live to provide what was once considered a core function of their IT organisation. Other institutions are developing relationships with key vendors to host a growing number of off-site services. Consortial relationships are being developed between institutions to build centrally-managed core services that can serve multiple members. While the number of servers on a campus tends to be large and growing, some significant part of that infrastructure could be managed off-campus, at a significant savings.
- **Collaborative Relationships:** IT initiatives often require collaboration among people with varying expertise working together to accomplish a common goal. Increasingly, members of the community are finding ways to cultivate greater skill levels within their own unit, and some have hired their own IT support in the local setting. The work of the IT organisation is becoming increasingly collaborative with others outside of its organisational boundaries and is moving beyond the “us vs. them” mentality to an approach that ensures working collaboratively toward the success of all parties involved (for example, a service-level agreement or a joint covenant for success).

Audio/Visual and Digital Media Support and Services

- **Converging Technologies:** The various forms of media supported on a campus have largely evolved from analog to digital formats. While some still prefer the quality of analog media, the inherent advantages of digital alternatives have greatly expanded their availability, storage, and use. As a result, a great deal of innovation and technical refinement has improved the tools that are employed, and the skills involved are now more closely aligned with those existing in the IT organisation.
- **Explosion of Event Support:** As users have adapted digital technologies into their work and lives, the number of campus events that require A/V support has dramatically increased. Any event is likely to require an audio system or a PowerPoint presentation; but a growing number also require a video recording to capture a presentation or

performance (or some other advanced media support). More meetings are using digital technology to enable group research and decision-making, or to facilitate the interactions of participants at remote locations. Demands for such support will continue to grow and will regularly outstrip the institution's ability to supply the necessary services.

- **Permanently Installed Facilities:** Many institutions have responded to increasing demand by installing comprehensive A/V systems in many venues where events frequently occur, and providing training to allow them to be used in a self-service mode. To be successful, these facilities need to be designed in collaboration with those who will make frequent use of them, training must be provided, and an effective response system must be provided to correct problems that occur.
- **Outsourcing:** Limitations to institutional resources makes it impossible for an A/V unit to support the full complement of functions that its campus community might need, at the level of quality required. Such an organisation must clearly define its core functions, and develop competencies to handle primary responsibilities. Services that require greater skills or that occur infrequently (filming a graduation ceremony or installing equipment in a classroom, for example) could be outsourced to commercial partners that specialize in such work. In addition, mundane tasks might be outsourced, eliminated, or shifted to student employees.
- **Reporting Relationship:** The reporting relationships of A/V organisations have been shifting. Some were traditionally housed within the library because they grew out of a primary mission of acquiring and creating media content required within the teaching/learning process. Others have been developed within the computing organisation centered on the provision of classroom technology and support. Still others have developed as a standalone unit reporting to an academic dean or someone else in the academic administration. Reporting relationships of these units have recently come under close scrutiny to determine where the best integration of the department might be on a particular campus.

Merged/Blended Library, IT, and Audio/Visual Organisations

- **Bringing These Units Together:** Many institutions have brought similar library, information technology, and audio/visual organisations together under a single leadership position. The look and shape of these organisations varies from campus to campus, and is usually driven by local needs and the availability of effective leaders within the larger sphere. Although a few such mergers have failed, the vast majority have been successful in creating a better support environment, while also overcoming a variety of challenges that the individual organisations could not surpass. The consolidation of these organisations is becoming a common practice that has many advantages, including improved service, increased collaboration, an improved organisational culture, and greater efficiency in the use of resources.
- **Considering Resources Holistically:** The combination of these units can offer the opportunity to use their combined assets more effectively. Greater flexibility in funds, staff positions, spaces, and priorities can be achieved across a larger base. In addition, freed resources (provided by an open position or surpluses from a large project, for example) might be applied to the highest outstanding need of the total organisation rather than being used solely within the source department.

- **Simplifying Services:** Institutions with combined units have been able to simplify services to students and staff by collocating related function in a single location. Rather than requiring a member of the community to visit multiple locations in an attempt to solve a problem, a combined information commons, learning commons, or academic commons can provide a single location in which to get the assistance of multiple service providers.
- **Collaborative Endeavors:** Current efforts could benefit from the interaction of staff members across organisational units. Many institutions are using cross-functional teams or collocated service units to address some needs more effectively. Merged organisations can span traditional boundaries much more efficiently and transcend cultures more effectively than is possible with separate departments.
- **Expand Focus on Training:** Integrated training activities could provide a greater emphasis on skills development and educational opportunities for University staff and students than could be accomplished separately. The campus would also benefit from the availability of more training spaces and synergies in programs (integrating components of computer literacy into an information literacy program, for example).
- **Opportunistic Evolution:** A common practice in merged or blended organisations is to utilize an evolutionary technique that identifies change opportunities (that might be offered by a retiring staff member or the development of a major project) around which to create the next level of organisational change. Change is managed as a series of smaller steps (allowing staff support to be built), utilizing a continuous change management process rather than a single large scale reorganisation effort.

Many of these trends, events, developments, and common practices are being recognized by the organisations at the University College Cork, and some changes are currently underway. Others may not yet apply to Information Services, and it is not clear to what extent they will affect the landscape of the University over the next few years. However these trends are playing out in some form within many educational institutions on an international level, and the leadership and staff of Information Services must consider how each of them applies to UCC's unique situation, and the needs of its students and staff.

The University College Cork Strategic Plan

Because the University has a strong and active strategic plan that has been recently updated (2009-2012), the Information Services organisation can benefit by directly aligning its activities and measuring its progress against the University's larger goals. Because of the plan's role in guiding all major campus efforts (including those of Information Services), some discussion of key points of the UCC Strategic Plan is appropriate here.

The plan identifies the University's *raison d'être* and its future aspirations at a very high level:

Vision: *To be a world-class university that links the region to the globe.*

Mission: *In an environment which gives parity of esteem to teaching, learning and research and where students are our highest priority, the University's central roles are to create, preserve, and communicate knowledge and to enhance intellectual, cultural, social and economic life locally, regionally and globally.*

The plan articulates essential values of Integrity, Accountability and Collaboration, while underscoring the importance of Innovation, Diversity, Excellence, Leadership and Responsiveness. These qualities were clearly evident during my visit, and it seems appropriate to include them directly in the organisational transformation of Information Services as it moves forward.

The plan describes the **five strategic goals** of the institution as:

1. *Enhance teaching and learning and the overall student experience*
2. *Enhance and increase innovation, commercialization and research output of the highest quality*
3. *Strengthen external engagement and the contribution to society*
4. *Strengthen and diversify the resource base*
5. *Improve the staff experience*

Over the past two decades, many institutions created strategic plans that identified information technology and/or library resources as part of a small number of strategic goals. This most often occurred when there was a specific crisis to resolve (such as a failing organisation that required significantly new resources and new institutional focus), but was also driven by a broader realization that technology and information were becoming much more strategic.

More recently, however, technology and information resources are rarely defined as one of an institution's primary strategic goals. Instead, their contributions are most often evident within virtually all of the goals, strategies, tactics, and initiatives of the strategic plan; these functions have become much more strategic as they directly enable reaching the primary goals of the plan. This is precisely the case within the current UCC Strategic Plan; where the activities of Information Services will need to strongly support and enable the University's work toward its goals and strategies on a regular basis.

In addition to explicit statements affecting IS within the UCC plan (such as "developing projects that exploit the full potential of library and IT facilities", "integrating information systems across the University," and "strengthen library resources by investing in additional collections"), there are many other tactics, projects, and initiatives where the management of information, the facilitation of communications, or the application of technologies will obviously need to support specific activities. Those themes exist throughout this plan.

One can easily imagine many direct and indirect contributions that IS will also make to the Leading Actions identified in the plan:

1. ***High quality research-led teaching is at the core***
2. ***Strengthen the student experience***

3. *Develop improved opportunities for **life-long learning***
4. *Increased **flexibility** for the learner*
5. *Strengthen UCC's role as a **fourth-level** university*
6. *Identify and prioritize **research quality***
7. *Strengthen **internationalization***
8. ***Diversify income** sources*
9. *Develop **leadership** University-wide*

For example, improving the quality of teaching and/or research has obvious implications for library services, IT systems and services, and media support, as do activities to improve the student experience and communicate/collaborate with the broader world. The UCC Strategic Plan is an excellent foundation upon which the plans and priorities of Information Services can and should be built.

Observations of the Current Information Services Organisations

Naturally, the departments within Information Services are driven by their own traditional approaches to providing service, defining work, organising their collective activities, and providing management and leadership. These organisations are also working within the changing environment of the University, and national and global environments that are creating local pressures for change. This external review provided an opportunity to meet with members of these organisations (to understand their challenges and opportunities) and with those members of the community who rely upon them (to understand their needs and desires).

As I met with staff members from across Information Services, I became impressed with the overall quality of the group. On balance, these appear to be hard-working individuals who have great respect for the institution, and its mission, and who are dedicated to their roles. Many of the staff had questions about the overarching IS organisation and even the departments in which they work, which implies a greater desire to understand Information Services, to be involved in setting its direction, and to take greater ownership in its success. Ironically, some individuals did not understand that the larger Information Services organisation even existed, or confused it with a smaller unit in the Library of the same name.

Beyond these generalizations, I offer initial observations concerning each of the specific departments below.

The Boole Library

Expanded and refurbished in the fall of 2007, the Boole Library is a wonderful facility at the heart of the campus that appears to be appreciated and well used by the University community. Their service-oriented staff (approximately 93 full-time equivalent positions) is focused on the teaching, learning and research needs of the UCC community, and provides services through several physical locations and via the Library's well-designed and distinctive web site (www.booleweb.ucc.ie, which unfortunately has a different "look and feel" than the University's main site). The Library organisation still seems highly focused on printed materials, although

significant digital resources are available (mostly through IReL – the Irish Research eLibrary). Library technical processing efforts do not seem to have benefited from automation and streamlined processes that most libraries have used to gain considerable efficiencies. Readers experience traditionally restrictive policies about noise levels and the use of food and drink in the building (which many libraries have already relaxed), and the hours of operation are very limited compared to most academic libraries (only 88 hours/week in a typical mid-semester week; 44 hours/week when classes are not in session), and recent conversations to increase the hours for this high priority were unfortunately complicated by cuts in budgets and staff lines. While there are significant areas throughout the building for readers to study, few of those areas could be called “comfortable” or “intimate.” In addition, the majority of the spaces have been designed for individual study rather than collaborative work or groups of students studying together in a social atmosphere. The building is, however, well appointed and there is excellent signage to help readers find their way. There are seven different service desks within the main Library building, which create significant staffing challenges, and must surely create confusion on the part of a reader trying to find a particular service or resource. A large space is currently open on Boole Q floor that housed the former Official Publications Centre (a collection which has been weeded and relocated). The library also serves the University through two other sites: the Boston Scientific Health Sciences Library at the Brookfield Health Sciences Complex and the Library Store, an off-site storage facility located in Pouladuff to hold resources that are not likely to experience heavy usage.

The Computer Centre

The staff within the Computer Centre (approximately 51.5 full-time equivalent positions) provides ongoing stewardship of the University’s central IT infrastructure, including the campus network, the large administrative systems, the learning management system, a variety of open access computing labs, and personal computers used by most of the University staff. The centre is located on the top two floors of the Kane Building in facilities that do not effectively meet the needs of its staff members and the infrastructure they maintain (for example, the current data centre is cramped, oddly configured, and exists under a roof that is prone to leakage). There is significant evidence of the staff working well together (in very innovative ways), but also many individual concerns were mentioned about siloed services or projects that were problematic. The Computer Centre spaces are not welcoming to outsiders who might need to visit, and provide many compromises to the successful functioning of the department. Nonetheless, their facilities appear to have been significantly improved since the University expanded the CC offices and services onto the third floor of Kane in late 2009. The focus of an IT organisation on “the centre” is very dated (largely extending back to the “mainframe era” of the 1970s and 1980s) and is unfortunate, because of the image of separateness or inaccessibility that it portrays to the University community (which is reinforced by other intentional and unintentional messages that the organisation transmits to the campus in trying to limit demand). The department seems to be making good progress on several key projects serving the campus community (e.g. installing a new HR system and planning for a student portal), but progress on a critical Identity Management system (on which an advanced digital environment will depend) seems to be stalled without a clearly defined mission and decisive leadership. There is little signage within the building to help people find services and staff (except for a few student services and the Training Centre). Access to the organisation is directed through a small number of standard e-mail

addresses and phone numbers, rather than through open and transparent access to the entire staff. Their website is of limited use. The University also employs 25 full-time equivalent positions to provide decentralized computing support in a variety of units (see Appendix D for the list), and collaborative activities (including conversations about technical standards, common skills, and possible joint projects) vary widely from group to group.

Audio Visual Media Services

The Audio Visual Media Services department provides a variety of support services from its base in the Áras na Laoi building not far from the centre of campus. Its spaces are reasonably well designed and configured, and the organisation utilizes the space very efficiently. Their staff (approximately 8 full-time equivalent positions) provides support for the use of technology in campus classrooms, and they design, maintain and deploy a variety of projection and presentation equipment. The staff provides support for various videoconferencing facilities throughout campus, but also provides a central site in their office space (although its hours are severely limited). In recent years, Audio Visual Media Services has been requested to provide increasing levels of support for all types of events on campus. While these activities have drawn heavily on their time and talents, their chargeback system has become a major barrier to the effective use of AVMS services by the campus community. Many individual and departments reported the need for AVMS support, but complained that the cost of those services was prohibitive; thus, they called upon friends or found a way to “do it yourself or do without.” This regularly causes a great deal of frustration within the campus community, while also minimizing the positive impact that the department could have. The chargeback scheme has become a way to say “no” without actually saying “no”, and UCC customers often look elsewhere in frustration. The acting leadership for the department (functioning since the retirement of its long-term director in March 2010) is currently considering a change to this model.

Information Services

The combination of these services departments into a single organisation is a common approach throughout much of higher education. Many institutions have combined their library, information technology, and/or media support organisations for a variety of reasons that include the desire to leverage limited resources, the need to resolve a leadership problem in one organisation, the expectation that a better service environment might be produced, a desire to simplify “who to call,” and the need for greater integration of the services and resources they represent. The combination, blending, or merger of these units may take a variety of forms, from a simple change in reporting relationship (as currently exists at UCC) to a large-scale integration of the separate units into one. Information Services has thus far integrated its activities in a modest way, with the leadership of the Computer Centre and Audio Visual Media Services reporting to the Librarian and Director of Information Services. Because of the strength of the existing “brands” within the UCC community, the difference in organisational cultures, and the ongoing demands on the staffs, efforts to create greater synergy and leverage across the units have been limited.

It is my belief that the creation of Information Services was an appropriate change for the University in 2007 and that the articulated goals for the combination of these departments are

even more valid today. With the recent retirements at senior levels in IS, it is now time to deliberately and actively leverage the strengths of Audio Visual Media Services, the Library and the Computer Centre and to capture synergies between them. While those leadership changes alone were sufficient motivation for this review, the additional pressures of the world-wide recession (including decreasing budgets and staff positions), the demands of an aggressive UCC Strategic Plan, and other ongoing needs within IS, place a premium on this review and increase the stakes for bringing together the efforts of these three departments into closer alignment, culture and service.

Reporting Structures and Relationships

Any particular structure can succeed, and any structure can fail. A structure can help the individuals who work within it to be successful or it can frustrate their efforts. A structure can make the organisation responsive to the community it serves, or it can serve as the bureaucracy that gets in the way of excellent customer service. An organisation's structure is only one factor that leads to success, but enhancing the structure can also improve the likelihood that other critical factors might also be improved within it.

An important theme emerged from many of the comments heard within the review process; there are significant ways in which the current departments, their structures, and their characteristics are frustrating the good work of their staff and managers. To be sure, excellent work is regularly occurring within the Computer Centre, AVMS and the Library, but significant levels of friction exists as well. In most cases, concerns are focused on specific issues like the levels of staff positions, budget, space and other resources. But based on my experience, such frustrations typically grow out of an increasing need to look more deeply into the whole organisation to plot a course that is different in some key ways from the current course. From many comments heard from the IS staff, I predict that they would welcome changes resulting from this review, as they hope for a better working environment.

The current managerial positions within IS are filled by individuals who seem very capable of performing their individual roles. From our conversations, these managers appear to be committed to the success of their units, motivated by a dedication to the institution, devoted to the success of their staffs, and driven by their understanding of the needs of the communities they serve. On the other hand, as changes to the structure are identified to capture some of the benefits of Information Services, each of the current managers will need to be open to organisational change and to the redefinition of roles and responsibilities based on the overall needs of the University.

In five years, I imagine to find a much more cohesive organisational culture and leadership model across all of Information Services than exists across the individual units today. All of these changes will happen over time in increments that are both large and small, and the evolution can begin with a series of structural changes suggested below.

Recommendations:

1. **Separate the Roles of Librarian from the Director of Information Services:** These two roles should be separated, and a new director-level position should assume the leadership of the Library under the Information Services umbrella. This change will allow the leader of the combined organisation to focus on higher-level issues (such as refining the interdependencies between IS and the institution, creating a true strategic plan, and developing an overarching positive culture, as well as allocating key resources and setting the highest priorities in an institutional manner).
2. **Elevate the Position of Director of Information Services (CIO):** In institutions with a similarly combined organisation, the leader of the division (often referred to as the chief information officer or CIO) most often serves with a title of Vice President (reporting to the President) or Associate VP (reporting to the chief academic officer). Information Services is a large division that is critical to all aspects of UCC (and to its strategic plan), and it will play a significant role in many of the change initiatives underway. The leader of IS should be sufficiently-well positioned within the University to best leverage the impact that the division can and should have.
3. **Merge the Computer Centre and Audio Visual Media Services:** The Computer Centre and Audio Visual Media Services should be integrated into a combined department with a new name, such as Information Technology Services (or IT Services). The department should be led by an individual defined as the Chief Technology Officer of the University (responsible for negotiating and defining a vision for the application of technology to the UCC mission and goals). AVMS should remain as a cohesive unit, but it should be renamed to something more appropriate, such as Media Services, and its new leader should serve on the leadership team of IT Services.
4. **Recruit the New Director of Library Services and Director of IT Services:** The University should hire a new Director of Library Services and a new Director of IT Services as soon as possible. The two units should remain as separate departments within Information Services (maintaining their strong individual brands). Both positions would report directly to the chief information officer and serve on the leadership team of the combined organisation. They would each ensure that the day-to-day responsibility for managing the services and resources was effectively discharged, and thus should be allowed significant latitude in defining their management teams. Each manager should also be expected to play a leading role in the cross-functional work within all of IS and for the execution of its strategic and tactical plans.
5. **Create a Greater Focus on Academic Technologies:** Direct support for innovation in teaching and learning seems significantly understated at UCC, particularly within the Computing Centre; the number of staff available in the Learning Technologies unit to support instructional technology is relatively small for an institution of this size, and they have been combined within a unit called Electronic Publishing. A group encompassing the current Learning Technologies unit and additional staff and resources should be created at a higher level to provide more proactive support of UCC's academic activities, and might use approaches such as the Scholar's Lab at the University of Virginia (www2.lib.virginia.edu/scholarslab) or the Center for Digital Learning and Research at Occidental College (www.oxy.edu/cdlr). The unit could report to the Director of the Library, the Director of IT Services (or possibly both), but should have a high profile

within the institution. In addition, the group should have innovative spaces and resources in which their staff can work with teaching staff to test concepts and try new technologies, and they should be strongly linked with the Teaching and Learning Centre, Ionad Bairre.

6. **Evaluate All Information Services Sub-Units:** The division of responsibilities between the Library, Computer Centre and AVMS are historical, and have areas of inefficiencies, duplication of effort, or question about where to turn for service. A thorough review of all sub-units (as well as their responsibilities and services) should be undertaken over time, using the opportunity to make necessary improvements through thoughtful change management efforts. Such changes might be achieved through greater collaboration or some form of reorganisation. For example, the interrelationship of the Library's IT services with the larger IT organisation should be fully explored to leverage the strengths of both. Similarly, the overlapping roles and interrelated processes of the Computer Centre's User Services, Systems & Network Operations, and Systems & Network Engineering should be evaluated for greater clarity and efficiencies. The Electronic Publishing unit in the CC has a role not typically found with an IT organisation and seems more fully aligned with the Library's activities. The interconnections and reporting lines between these units ought to be reviewed and possibly adjusted.
7. **Remove Confusing Organisational Names:** Some of the historic names of sub-units that made sense within their own departmental configuration (such as the Library's units called IT Services, Information Services and Customer Services, as well as the Computer Centre's units called Electronic Publishing and User Services) now create confusion within the larger organisation. These names should be re-evaluated and new names assigned to reduce confusion.
8. **Improve the Relationships with Distributed IT Support Units/Personnel:** In an institution the size and complexity of UCC, some technology support is often distributed to other campus units outside of IT Services. There are a significant number of these positions at the University and considered together, they provide a significant level of technology support. Such local support usually has a profoundly positive impact on the host department, division or college, because their roles tend to be much more closely aligned to the needs of the users. Managing the close working relationships with central IT support requires deliberate attention and effort on the part of the central and distributed units. In some cases, there may be a need to reconsider a formal reporting relationship (when the host organisation does not feel it can adequately manage the complexity of such support, for example). In most other cases, however, stronger working relationships and collaborative efforts can product benefits in both directions.

Governance

As various institutions have brought their library, IT, and AV departments together under a single umbrella, they have had to consider the systems of internal and external governance that historically served the departments in the past, and determine how they should be adjusted (or redesigned) within the organisation's new realities. This provides an opportunity to consider how to best define governance based on current and future needs.

With the recent retirements of two senior-level leaders in the Computer Centre and AVMS, the internal governance is currently being maintained through appropriate temporary arrangements. The members of those departments and the individuals serving in temporary leadership roles indicate that those arrangements are working, but they are clearly short-term strategies that need to be replaced with more permanent solutions.

Externally, the Library works with a Library Policy Committee and a Library Users Committee; while I had an opportunity to review the Library Policy Committee's final report of 2008-2009 (which was an articulation of the library's activities apparently written by members of the Library staff), I did not have an opportunity to meet with the committee itself. The Computer Centre director reportedly met with an IT policy committee that has been inactive for a few years. More importantly, there is no mention of any of the governance committees within the Information Services strategic plans, so it appears that the committees were not integral to their creation. Ultimately, IS will benefit from stronger and more active systems of external governance that ensure its plans and activities are aligned with the needs of the institution.

Recommendations:

1. **Create an Operational Leadership Team for IS:** Leadership for the entire Information Services organisation should be the responsibility of a senior management team made up of the CIO, the Director of IT Services, and the Director of Library Services. These three individuals should be jointly responsible for the entire organisation, rather than responsible for their individual parts. The leadership team should develop common leadership principles and philosophy and meet frequently to keep the organisation performing effectively and well connected to institutional goals.
2. **Create a Broader Management Team for IS:** The broader management of IS, as well as its departments, and sub-units should be the responsibility of a larger management team, comprised of the CIO, the Director of the Library, the Director of IT Services, and appropriate managers from within the organisation responsible for major functions.
3. **Develop a High-Level Governance Committee to Guide IS Policy:** External governance for Information Services as a whole should be provided by a highly-placed committee that would advise the overall work of the division, assist in allocating resources at a gross level, align major efforts, and define the most significant priorities. This committee would be responsible for providing input into the IS strategic plan and for approving that plan. Because it would (by design) include several members of the University senior staff, it should also be responsible for understanding the resources needed for major IS initiatives and advocating for those resources in University-wide discussions.
4. **Create User Committees Focused on Strategic Areas within IS:** Several user committees are necessary to provide governance in key areas of focus for IS; such user committees should be asked to provide input and to make appropriate decisions about priorities and projects and should serve as sub-committees to the high-level policy committee. Any existing sub-committee ought to be regularly evaluated to ensure that it is still necessary and useful. The high-level governance committee (described above) ought to create the initial set of sub-committees and approve all new or retiring groups.

5. **Create A Sub-Committee for Administrative Systems:** In particular, a sub-committee focused on administrative systems would be useful to guide the complete range of applications used by UCC (including their necessary level of integration, the development of a campus-wide reporting strategy, extending the data warehouse, and making decisions about purchasing new applications, including decisions about continuing the current “best in breed” philosophy or looking at an integrated suite).
6. **Create a Sub-Committee for IS Activities in Support of Teaching, Learning and Research:** Many institutions have found it extremely useful to create a governance committee that works under the philosophy described by the Teaching, Learning and Technology Group (www.tltgroup.org). This non-profit organisation has created a model by which teaching staff can be drawn into greater discussion about the use of technology to improve teaching, learning and research activities in appropriate and affordable ways, and for increasing the level of technology support for it. This particular model may or may not be appropriate for UCC, but the idea of a sub-committee focused on these general areas seems important, considering the prominence these issues play in the UCC Strategic Plan.

Leadership and Leadership Development

Information Services requires gifted and competent leaders throughout the organisation who are empowered to act, but also willing to work collaboratively toward common goals. Two retirements at senior levels of IS create an opportunity to not only replace that leadership capacity, but to also deliberately change the definition of leadership style and characteristics the organization needs to respond to current and future needs.

On an ongoing basis, Information Services will need all of its managers and leaders to be flexible, innovative, highly communicative, selflessly collaborative, able to motivate those around them, dedicated to managing performance, and adept at leveraging limited resources. They must also grow beyond current loyalties to units and departments, and become committed to the ongoing success of Information Services as a whole. They need to be good coaches of staff and be open to coaching themselves. They will need to find new ways of developing staff potential and developing a work environment that can ensure individual and group success. They will need to work tirelessly toward the creation of a more cohesive IS culture and align themselves with it.

Discussions with staff members throughout IS (including subsequent e-mail conversations with staff after the visits) revealed that they felt a strong sense of management within the various units of IS, but also felt an equally strong lack of leadership in making progress on long-standing issues. As I asked members of the staff about the qualities required of new leadership in the Computer Centre, they offered comments like: decisiveness, clarity of roles and expectations, equally spreading the burden, well grounded in technology, and a good manager. These qualities seem to describe qualities of management; thoughts about the qualities required for effective leadership seem to be missing.

In my conversations with AVMS, it was clear that their historical chargeback scheme keeps it locked in an ongoing vicious cycle (people thought highly of their services, but could not afford them; ultimately, good service was unavailable). In the Computer Centre, I heard many comments that the role of the Director was to protect their interest and “fight our corner;” I believe strongly that this “battle mentality” keeps the department distant from the community and lowers confidence in them. Similarly, I witnessed concerns within the Library about inflexibility of systems, management and staff; believing that the organisation was inflexible prevented discussions about critical changes in the Library that must take place. The strong and long-standing themes of historical approaches, protection, and inflexibility were evident in all of IS. Real leadership, at multiple levels, will be required to move past them.

I received one e-mail message from a member of the staff that included the following comparison of management and leadership (she or he couldn't remember where it was found):

- *Management is the science of directing the present - Leadership is the art of envisioning the future.*
- *Management maintains the status quo - Leadership brings about change.*
- *Managers ensure that things run smoothly - Leaders see that things get stirred up.*
- *Managers count things made - Leaders make things count.*
- *Managers push people to produce - Leaders inspire others to excel.*
- *Managers make short term profits - Leaders pursue long term goals.*
- *Managers impose rules - Leaders provide examples.*
- *Managers think about realities - Leaders are obsessed with possibilities*

Clearly there is a role for both leadership and management within IS, and a delicate balance must be struck that is not currently in place. The comparisons above are both compelling and appropriate for the current discussion; it is my belief that true leadership throughout Information Services (as described on the phrases above) are needed to inspire the organisation to move beyond the themes that separate it from greater success. Historical approaches, protection, and inflexibility will not help IS in the long-run. Inspiration, change, and a continual focus on possibilities will. Many members of the staff desire a new style of leadership that currently does not exist within their unit and department.

Most organisations have been moving to more inclusive forms of leadership with significantly greater staff engagement and empowerment, and they have been achieving far greater results. Such a model can engage all of the staff in creating excellence in service and use of resources. Creativity and synergy can flourish. Communication can be improved in all directions. Morale can naturally improve, as people at all levels come to realize that their contributions are valued. Staff will be engaged and motivated to deliver their best performance. Managers will have the ability to act, and the power to lead effectively. True leadership can come from anywhere in the organisation and is not limited to a small few at the very top.

A new leadership model will require a new leadership philosophy, as well as new tools and new approaches. The organisation needs individuals with well-developed leadership skills and capacities. With guidance and support, IS could develop a shared vision of leadership that could inspire the entire organisation. Leadership behaviors and characteristics should not be limited to

the few who serve in higher-level roles, and they should not be left to chance; good leadership should flourish throughout the organisation. With an agreement about what it means to be a leader in IS, good leadership can positively inspire the organization by consistently operating in ways that people understand and appreciate.

Recommendations:

1. **Consider Management vs. Leadership:** The creation of Information Services provides an opportunity to rethink the roles of management and leadership that had existed in each of the departments, and to ask the whole organisation to consciously think about the necessary role of leadership, as IS moves beyond its former limitations. The messages of historical approach, protection, and inflexibility need to be replaced within Information Services, and effective leadership (beyond good management) is required to do so.
2. **Define a Shared Leadership Philosophy:** The organisation needs to describe what it means to be a leader within Information Services and agree upon what is commonly expected of people holding formal and informal leadership roles. Unit and department heads should be expected to develop a cohesive sense of empowerment, responsibility, collaboration, self-accountability, and other positive characteristics. New leaders and managers should be hired with consideration of their likely abilities to work in this new environment.
3. **Continuously Develop Leadership Capacity:** Information Services should create a plan for developing leadership capabilities throughout the organisation (both in management and line positions) that is in alignment with the UCC strategic plan (leading action number 9 states “*We will complete a University-wide exercise in Leadership development*”). In fact, the IS leadership development plans could move well beyond, as ongoing training could be provided through a series of workshops to enhance the leadership capacity throughout all of IS, making it a model for the UCC community.
4. **Engage Leaders across the Organisation in Substantial Change:** The successful management of ongoing change, not limited to the recommendations in this report, is a leadership capacity that needs to be greatly developed within Information Systems for success in the long-term. The organisation (across all levels, from the CIO to entry level staff members) needs to fully embrace an ongoing and evolutionary process that focuses clearly on “what’s best for UCC students.” The change process can be simultaneously sensitive to the needs of the academic community, to the needs of managers, to the needs of the University, and to overall staff concerns. The role of the staff union will be particularly important here, as it too will need to openly embrace changes that will have long-term benefits in its partnership with the University.

Physical Space

The issue of assigned physical space represents the greatest disparity between the three departments of Information Services. No other condition varies so widely as the availability of suitable space to meet the needs of the groups, the staffs, and the services they provide!

At one extreme, the spaces of the recently renovated Boole Library are attractive and comfortable, built around the services and functions necessary within the building, and flexible enough to accommodate changing needs and conditions over time. Students use the building heavily for a variety of reasons, and can easily take advantage of the array of services offered there. The Library's features are appreciated by the community, and it appears to meet their needs in an excellent fashion. The service areas are attractive and well designed, and they can easily be reconfigured and take on new roles, as necessary. The former space used for the Official Publications Centre on Boole Q floor (a prime location) has recently been vacated and awaits a new assignment commensurate with its prominent location.

The spaces provided to Audio Visual Media Services in the Áras na Laoi building seem to be suitable for their function and are effectively utilized. The staff has reasonable office areas and they have created effective and well managed storage space for equipment and parts, which is a major requirement for their work. They also maintain a video conferencing facility that is used by the UCC community, and a studio that can be used for sound and video recordings.

In stark contrast, the space devoted to the Computer Centre in the Kane building is not effective for the staff or functions of a modern IT department. Despite the recent additions of extra space on the third floor, the facilities are cramped and uninviting, services and staff are difficult to locate (although better signage could certainly help), storage is minimal, and the data centre is woefully inadequate. Air circulation within the space is reported to be deplorable (various offices were oppressively hot when I visited on a particularly sunny afternoon). Overall flexibility of the facility is severely limited. The Computer Centre also maintains some lab facilities across campus, and in particular, maintains two significant public labs that are "nearly in the Library" (the Boole Basement Open Access Student IT Centre can be seen through locked doors on Q-1, but are inaccessible from within the Library).

Simply put, while the success of the Library and AVMS are enhanced by their accommodations, the success of the Computer Centre and its staff is made much more difficult by poor quality accommodations. This is a serious issue not only for the Computer Centre, but also for all of Information Services, and it needs to be relieved as soon as possible.

Recommendations:

1. **Consider Moving Parts of IT Services to the Boole Library:** Considerable pressure could be relieved if some percentage of the Computer Centre staff could be relocated outside of Kane. Since Boole Library has sufficient space that could accommodate additional services and staff, some IT staff could easily be moved to higher-quality space there. A thorough space analysis should be performed to consider how to best utilize the total range of space within the Library (including the spaces for the current Open Access Student IT Centre) and to respond appropriately to this severe space problem.
2. **Consider the Library as the Public Face of Information Services:** Many institutions have developed facilities called an information commons, learning commons or academic commons to bring together key technology, library, and media services in a single location. In this way, the institution makes it much simpler for students who need to find a resource or solve a problem; multiple services could be housed together with extended

hours of operation and greater accessibility. The Boole Library should become the place where all public services within Information Services are provisioned, as sufficient space already exists there to easily accommodate an expanded function, and thoughtful integration of these services could do much to improve the student experience.

3. **Reallocate the Former Official Publications Centre for a High-Profile Function:**

The prime space on the main floor of the Boole Library vacated by the Official Publications Centre is currently available and should be used for a function that is very strategic in nature. As one reads the UCC strategic plan, the initiatives to improve teaching, learning and research, as well as the initiatives to improve the student experience, seem likely candidates. The available space (easily accessible from the main stairwell and elevators) could easily be used to provide faculty support of teaching and learning by hosting Ionad Bairre and/or to provide research support by hosting NAIRTL (the National Academy for Integration of Research and Teaching and Learning). Another possibility would be to use this space for student learning support that could be fully aligned with the activities of the Library and student-facing IT services. This space is in a strategic location and should be used for a strategic University goal.

4. **Correct Severe Deficiencies in the Data Centre:** Focus immediately on correcting the most egregious deficiencies within the existing data centre (I believe this discussion has already begun with the Office of Buildings and Estates), while also developing a long-term plan to create a better space elsewhere on campus (to which much of the servers and services could be migrated over the long-term).

Resources

The combined departments of Information Services constitute a significant portion of the University's investment towards its academic mission. The resource base of IS includes approximately 152 staff members, €13.8 million total annual budgets, and significant facilities in three buildings across campus. The creation of IS was, in part, motivated by the desire to use limited resources as effectively as possible, as described in the Director of Information Services job description:

- *To enable an integrated approach to the development of the University's infrastructure, leading to more efficient usage of resources and improved availability of services to users;*

A complete assessment of the resources that support the work of the Computer Centre, Audio Visual Media Services and the Library was excluded from this process. Nonetheless, concerns relating to decreasing budgets and staff lines were a part of nearly every conversation during the campus visits, and I need to touch on this topic, albeit in a superficial way.

The Bursar and Chief Financial Officer explained the University's "devolved" budgets, which provide funding directly to the four Colleges after allocations are made for central services (all functions of IS are identified as central services, and thus the budgets for these units are allocated from funding that might otherwise flow to the Colleges). The system of devolution is a long-

term strategy for the University and the ongoing conversation about the level of funding that must be provided to support central services will naturally continue over the long-term.

I understand that the University has been required to cut positions and that the expectations for those cuts have been apportioned to operating units. It is also my understanding that IS has been working to achieve those targets and that the matter is well in hand. As I reviewed the number of personnel within the various IS units, it appeared on first blush that staffing for the Library was significantly larger than for the Computer Centre (most institutions have similar numbers in each). On the other hand, when the total number of staff available for campus-wide technology support is calculated (the staff of the Computer Centre, plus the staff of AVMS plus, the number of distributed IT support staff; $51.5 + 8 + 25 = 84.5$), the total compares to the total providing library support (the Library staff minus those in the Library's IT Services; $93 - 7 = 86$). This is not a statement about the need for more or less staff in either area; it simply acknowledges that the staffing levels for library and technology support at UCC are in reasonable balance.

While one can always make an argument for additional staff within a service unit (which is a cost centre), it is important for the departments within Information Services to make the best possible case that current staffing levels are being used as efficiently and effectively as possible, and applied to the institution's highest priorities, before suggesting that the next initiative requires additional staff (that case would be difficult to make today). In addition, it is important to note that if and when funding levels start to resume an upward trend (the recession will someday end), new allocations of resources and staff lines will likely be devoted to new strategic initiatives and services, rather than simply replacing what was lost. Waiting for the return of former funding or lost staff lines is not a good short-term or long-term strategy.

Recommendations:

1. **Find Success in a Devolved Environment:** The UCC system of devolution is a departure from past practices. It has specific advantages over other methods of governance and resource allocation, and it has disadvantages. As imperfect as the devolved environment may be, it is critical that leaders within IS find ways to help the community understand the significant contributions they make to the University and individual Colleges. The definition of success has changed within a devolved environment, and IS needs to develop strategies to respond accordingly, by making the best possible case.
2. **Think about IS Resources Holistically:** Together, the complete budgets (including salaries) of all IS departments make up a significant percentage of the overall University budget. While the division does not have all of the resources required to meet its aspirations, IS has the resources necessary to do almost anything it chooses to do. The creation of IS provides an opportunity to look at its full set of resources holistically and to spend the next euro or devote the next open staff position to the area with the most pressing need. It is also important that each individual within the organisation contributes most effectively, in order to have maximum impact to the University's students and staff.
3. **Understand the Greater Cost of Increasing Research:** The focus on increasing the quality and quantity of research is a key element of the University's strategy. However,

the institution must acknowledge that greater research activities often bring growing demands on IT and Library organisations to provide higher-level resources and more time-intensive services. In some areas of the Colleges, distributed IT support staff have already stopped some operational activities and “transferred” them back to the Computer Centre (often without consultation and agreement). It is likely that those local personnel are being increasingly drawn into research activities, requiring them to find efficiencies of their own (and the burden is shifting to IS).

4. **Reduce the Number of Service Points:** It appears that the overall IS operation has an inordinately large number of different service points. Each service point creates staffing burdens, which are difficult to manage as the size of the staff shrinks (especially without student employees to fill gaps). In addition, multiple service points create confusion for students and staff about where to go for a particular service. IS should conduct a thoughtful analysis of all services points and consolidate where possible.
5. **Leverage Technology to Create Efficiencies:** Some work within IS departments, particularly those in the Library, could become significantly more productive through process improvements leveraged by technology. While some time-saving devices are being used (including a book sorter for returning volumes and several self-checkout stations), other parts of the Library operation are woefully behind in streamlining processes (for example, book acquisitions, and cataloging are still largely manual tasks that have been automated in nearly every library). Library staffs (in all sorts of libraries) are using technology to create efficiencies. Information Services should conduct a comprehensive review of how automation can save staff time that could then be devoted to other, more critical areas of need throughout the whole of IS.
6. **Lower Costs by Outsourcing:** As staff lines become more constrained, the ability to provide greater levels of service through an outsourcing partner could allow existing staff time to be leveraged against projects and services that only they can perform. Some infrequent services, major new projects, and repetitive tasks in all three departments could be outsourced at a significant savings. For example, AVMS might outsource high-level video production and the installation of classroom equipment, the Computer Centre might outsource the hosting and maintenance of servers running large applications or the annual installation of desktop computers, and the Library might outsource backroom processing such as acquisitions and cataloging to outside vendors who could do it better and/or cheaper (when all costs are truly accounted for). All of these outsourcing arrangements and others like them are being considered in much of higher education, as current staff time is needed elsewhere.
7. **Use of Student Employees:** It appears that none of the IS organisations utilize student employees to any significant extent, while most other institutions use students extensively to assist with IT, media and library support. Because student employees provide an inexpensive way to accomplish highly repetitive tasks that do not require the skills and expertise of staff, and to work at service operations outside of normal office hours, the staff at most institutions heartedly welcome their assistance. Student employees could be an important resource for drastically expanding the service hours of the Boole Library and IT Help Desk, for example.
8. **Expand Consortial Resource Sharing:** The development of IReL (the Irish Research eLibrary at www.irelibrary.ie) has provided opportunities to access extensive collections of digital materials through an initiative of the Irish Higher Education Authority and the

Science Foundation Ireland. While national funding for IReL has decreased in the last year, it still provides access to far greater resources for a fraction of the cost. Similarly, HEAnet provides Internet service targeted to higher education at a significant savings over commercial partners. These consortial relationships add great value to UCC and the Irish system of higher education. Information Services could play a leadership role in developing models for other resource sharing arrangements, such as the ability to remotely host servers (by renting rack space), creating a common Irish learning management system (based on Blackboard or some other commonly used tool), developing the capacity to store large research datasets in a central location, running common administrative applications used by multiple institutions, installing a nationwide library management system, or any number of other projects that could be accomplished more effectively together than separately.

9. **Develop Off-Campus Partnerships:** If these kinds of sharing arrangements cannot be developed across the national fabric of higher education, key partners might be found regionally or within a smaller number of similarly-minded Universities that might understand the value in sharing joint development costs.

Organisational Culture and Organisational Development

Departments such as AVMS, the Computer Centre, and the Library typically have their own culture, including distinct approaches to service, leadership, communication, and operational activities. Some of these differences result from the varying mission of the department and exist for valid reasons; others are less useful. It is common for an organisation's culture to grow and evolve organically. Parts of a historical culture are linked to circumstances in place long ago (which may or may not still be valid). Other cultural elements might result from assumptions of a key leader who is no longer with the organisation. The culture shapes and guides a group's actions and reactions, and to be effective, must be based on current realities.

Clearly, the culture of each department within Information Services is different. Each has varying approaches to service, different assumptions about the role of staff in making decisions, contrasting philosophies about transparency and communication, and distinctly different ways of setting priorities. Each culture has certain advantages that should not be lost, but each also carries inherent weaknesses.

The creation of a new entity such as Information Services creates an opportunity to step back and examine existing cultures based on new information and appropriate assumptions. Where a culture works toward success, the positive parts of the culture should be affirmed and nurtured (and extended to other parts of IS). Where the culture is dysfunctional or weak in responding to current needs, the negative elements of the culture should be identified and deliberately replaced. One of the key goals of the creation of IS, is found in the current job description of the Director of Information Services (as described above):

- *To enable staff working in diverse areas of the Information Services Directorate to develop a shared sense of purpose, and to align their activities more closely with the achievement of the University's strategic objectives.*

Developing the culture for Information Services can and should be an opportunity to enhance the best of the current individual cultures and combine them to create a stronger and more purposeful organisation-wide culture.

Discussions with the staff of AVMS revealed that they are already questioning elements of their culture that they had previously assumed to be useful, but are in reality hindering current progress. They are reconsidering their fee structure, their support model, their hours of operation for the video conferencing room, and the potential to create a new partnership with the campus Services and Security Operatives (SSO) to provide first level support for classroom and event technologies. In this way, a new culture is being developed for the whole unit, because the retirement of a long-standing leader allows them to question the validity of long-held assumptions and approaches.

There is an acknowledgement within the leadership of Information Services of the benefits of a more cohesive organisation-wide culture across all of the departments, and of the need for deliberate developmental activities to support this change process. While there is value in having some cultural differences within separate units, having greater consistency in key areas would provide benefits and would also be welcomed by the campus community. It may seem daunting to change a culture, but it is much easier to change outdated elements of a culture than to continue living with their effects.

Recommendations:

1. **Honestly and Openly Explore Cultural Differences:** The different cultures within IS are real, but they are not sacred. None of them is perfect, and none is inherently bad. Information Services should sponsor conversations about the best parts of each culture; members of the staff can also have open conversations about the parts of existing cultures that may need to be overcome. Issues such as the service model, the philosophy of internal and external communication, the overall leadership model, methods for setting priorities, considerations about staff professional development, agreements about working together, and other important considerations should be openly discussed and areas in which to create consistency across the departments explored.
2. **Grow and Enhance a Positive Organisational Culture:** IS could sponsor an ongoing reflection on its culture, with deliberate activities (provided by internal personnel, training resources within the HR department, or outside facilitation) that could guide its staff to a new, more cohesive culture based on the best elements of existing cultures. IS could also build on personal and organisational strengths, accentuate positive achievement and create capacity for positive change. These efforts will take time, but significant progress can and should be made in less than six months. Creating organisational documents such as the mission, vision and values of IS, agreements about how members, units and teams work together, setting expectations about professional

accountability, and other purposeful activities can help build a new IS culture that will benefit both the internal organisation and the campus community.

3. **Focus on UCC Essential Values:** As Information Services engages in organisational change, it will be important to focus on a list of shared values (jointly agreed by all members of the staff). As a starting point, the University's essential values of Integrity, Accountability and Collaboration could serve as an early focus. In addition, IS should also consider how the additional UCC qualities of Innovation, Diversity, Excellence, Leadership, and Responsiveness fit within its work and approach.
4. **Expand Internal Communication within Information Services:** Begin to establish the expectation of greater internal communication within Information Services. Establish a new e-mail list that includes all members and use it to create a vibrant flow of information (in all directions), including regular updates about the current activities of various groups. Build new expectations for communications about new projects, planning efforts, organisational changes, and other significant decisions. While communication should flow from all parts of IS, the ideas and initiatives from John FitzGerald and other key members of his leadership team will be particularly important to everyone.
5. **Regularize and Expand External Communications:** Some parts of IS focus heavily on communicating with constituent groups, providing regular status updates for requests, describing available service options, and identifying specific individuals who have the skills necessary to meet particular needs. Other parts of the organisation provide little communication at all. The best communication practices within Information Services (broadly considered and across multiple channels) ought to be examined, and regular expectations for communication should be set across the organisation.
6. **Create a Culture of Collaboration:** As Information Services moves forward, it is obvious that effective collaboration (a core UCC value) will be a necessary and critical organisational capability. Working together on common projects might be an effective way to build this capacity. Developing collaboration between AVMS and the Services and Security Operatives to provide local support was mentioned as a possible high-priority initiative. In addition, creating better collaboration between IT Services and the twenty-five distributed IT staff might be an important early focus toward better working relationships and interactions. IS should also explore ways to enhance collaboration through training opportunities and pilot initiatives that allow members from across the various departments to practice working together.
7. **Begin Creating a Culture of Openness:** Building transparency for the entire Information Services organisation will benefit the UCC community, as well as internal members of IS (many of whom do not know each other). Creating a simple directory of all IS staff members with e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, key skills, current responsibilities, and possibly even pictures could help both the community and colleagues better understand the groups and individuals within Information Services. Other opportunities to increase transparency across IS should be regularly explored.
8. **Establish a Professional Development Philosophy:** The digital environment managed by IS can only be fully leveraged, if its staff members have appropriate skills. IS must regularly assess the need for skill development and devote resources to enhance skills based on individualized training plans. This philosophy ought to extend beyond the development of technical skills to skills described as "collaborative skills" (those that

enhance interpersonal relationships and cooperation). Skills within the University community must also be developed so experts in IS can be freed from mundane tasks to perform the work that they are uniquely qualified to perform.

9. **Consider the Model of Sharing Offices:** Some units of the Computer Centre participate in a unique approach to sharing office space; members of two or three units might share a single office space. Those who participate praise its ability to enhance communication and collaboration. This is an innovative part of the CC culture, and it ought to be explored to determine in what situations it would be most useful (and possibly extended in other areas of IS where it might work toward broader goals).
10. **Create a Framework for Cross-Functional Efforts:** Cross-functional teams can be an effective tool across an organisation that must maintain resources across the units, develop a more integrated approach to new projects, and use resources more efficiently. Information Services will need to quickly build the capacity to develop and manage cross-functional activities, and a standard framework will be necessary to provide expectations of how such projects will be managed, how members will divide their time and energies, and how budgets and priorities will be set.
11. **Build a Common Approach to Project Management:** The University's ability to effectively manage projects could easily be hampered by one of several possible deficiencies, such as an inadequate articulation of the project requirements, a lack of appreciation for managing project scope, issues of priority in relation to other activities, or a misunderstanding about when a project will be considered to be complete. Such problems can reduce the overall effectiveness of the organisations working on a project; in some cases dealing with more than one such deficiency can completely strangle progress a whole portfolio of projects. Minimally, the following characteristics should be clearly defined for any approved project: stakeholders, executive sponsor, priority, scope, timeline, expected quality, resources, and the definition of project completion. Issues that delay or defer a project should be clearly communicated to the executive sponsor (and other key stakeholders) of the project and an alternative plan developed. This minimal level of project management (PM) would be beneficial, but ultimately, the organisation (and the whole institution) might benefit from determining a more formal PM methodology (supported by appropriate software), building formal skills with some of the staff, and possibly even setting up a formal PM sub-unit that would help to manage projects across the full spectrum of IS activities.

The Information Services Strategic Plan

Three Strategic Plans were written for the departments of Information Services to define the efforts of each during the 2009-2012 timeframe. Each plan has a different format and describes its connections to the University's plan in a different way.

The "strategic plan for IT" identifies a portfolio of projects and initiatives aggregated into three sections that seem to flow from its overarching theme described as "Towards e-Community"):

1. *Virtual Learning Environment;*

2. *Virtual Research Environment; and*
3. *e-Business Environment to support administration and management.*

Sections describing the needs and plans to upgrade infrastructure, and provide proactive support and training services are provided. The list of initiatives and projects described is significant (as one would expect from a multi-year IT strategic plan), and “target dates” are provided for each project, although it was not clear if the date describes the initiation or completion date.

There is no sense of how the initiatives are prioritized. For example, item 5.7 Identity Management/Authentication is described in strong terms: “*A ubiquitous and systematic authentication mechanism is an enabler for most, if not all, of our ambitions in this strategic plan – its absence will constitute a major logjam...*” I concur. If done correctly, a comprehensive ID management system would make other projects (such as a portal) much simpler. Unfortunately, this enabling technology was not targeted until 2010, and there is no evidence of any ownership with the Computer Centre focused on moving the project forward, and the logjam clearly exists! Several members of the staff reported internal frustration that the project had languished and admitted that time is regularly wasted on existing inefficiencies or needing to work around this deficiency. This project should have a higher priority!

The document concludes with a rather dire articulation about the lack of critical resources including funding, staffing and accommodation, and it compares UCC resource levels to those reported by other institutions. Through discussions with the staff and managers of the Computer Centre, it was obvious that significant progress has been made on various parts of the plan. Unfortunately, this plan does not describe how its elements are interrelated or describe any dependencies that might exist, so the reader is left wondering how much of the plan will be accomplished and how the pieces will fit together.

The Library strategic plan serves to set ongoing directions of their activities over the planning period rather than identifying a portfolio of specific projects. It identifies seven broad strategic goals that seem typical in a library setting including:

1. *Strengthen the library collections*
2. *Enhance availability and accessibility of the collections and the other information*
3. *Provide the optimal physical and technical infrastructure*
4. *Develop flexible services to meet the changing needs*
5. *Develop partnership and collaboration*
6. *Ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfill this plan*
7. *Ensure support from high quality staff*

Under each of these goals, the plan articulates specific projects such as revising a particular policy or reviewing the integrated library management system. Most often, however, the underlying sub-goals describe an ongoing direction such as ensuring minimum delay in sourcing and delivering requested library materials, ensuring opening hours commensurate with the changing needs of the community, or work with other libraries regionally and nationally as appropriate. The plan leaves the reader understanding general directions, but does not articulate

what exactly will be accomplished or why. It is also not clear how priorities are set and decisions made.

The Library plan provides even less description of when a particular initiative might happen or how priorities will be set. Like the Computer Centre plan, it also does not demonstrate how initiatives are linked together or when one particular initiative might enable greater leverage of the overall plan. For example, the plan assumes that demand for 24/7 access will increase and mentions a goal (4.4.3) to “Ensure opening hours commensurate with the changing needs of the community.” However, many members of the community complained that restricted hours of operation are still in place and it is not clear when or how that might change.

The plan for Audio Visual Media Services also provides a list of strategic goals that appear to be a re-articulation of the work they are already doing:

1. *Deliver the required audio visual systems, services and practices at the highest possible standard*
2. *Deliver the required media production, post production and support services at the highest possible standard*
3. *Achieve a comprehensive balance in these services and communicate their extent to the College community*
4. *Develop partnerships and encourage collaboration*
5. *Ensure adequate resources are available to deliver these services*
6. *Support AVMS staff in the development and expansion of their skills and knowledge*

The sub-goals of the AVMS plan articulate how each of the key areas might be improved. This strategic plan, however, makes no mention of a key issue that is likely to be a factor of the ongoing success of the department; the current chargeback scheme was an often mentioned problem for AVMS in that it was the primary means with which it created income to spend on its activities, and it was the most significant obstacle to its success on campus.

All three plans point to specific sections of the UCC strategic plan to indicate alignment with institutional priorities. It appears that these connections occurred after the planning process; in my opinion, each plan was written and then justified back to the institutional plan, rather than developed upon the foundation of the overarching plan.

Integrated planning was defined as a key goal for the organisation (as found in the current job description of the Director of Information Services, described above):

- *To improve the design and delivery of core academic support services by integrating planning and resource management across library, information technology and audio visual media services;*

These separate plans do not in any way weave together elements across IS or look for synergies between their efforts. The plans did not consider areas where the work of one could support another, or look for ways that their combined efforts could better serve the students or staff. In a quick review of the three plans, only the AVMS plan seemed to even mention the other

departments within IS. The IS plan needs to be much more strongly aligned with each other and with the overall institutional plan in a way that is not currently apparent.

Recommendations:

1. **Read the UCC Strategic Plan as an Organisation:** As a prerequisite of the next IS planning process, all members should be encouraged to read the institutional strategic plan, and participate in cross-functional discussions (both between members of IS and with other members of the campus community). It will be important for all members of the staff to reflect on the ways in which IS can fully leverage their activities in support of the University's plan. When all staff within IS are intimate with the UCC plan, the opportunities for innovation will be enhanced, and possibilities will emerge to develop tools and resources that can be applied across multiple aspects of the campus plan.
2. **Start with the UCC Strategic Plan:** To create an effective strategic plan for Information Services, the organisation needs to create a plan that builds up from the foundation of the greater UCC plan. IS will need to determine what it means to support an enhanced teaching and learning environment or to improve the student experience, among other things. In this way, efforts currently in progress to create a digital campus environment could be coordinated with a single vision energized by collaborative action and well placed priorities.
3. **Create an Inclusive Process:** An inclusive process is the best way to develop a strategic plan that serves the community. To the greatest extent possible, members of the staff and key members of the campus community should be able to participate in a collaborative planning process. Open conversation, exploration of different options, and discussions between individuals with varying points of view can lead to innovation and effective priorities that could be the difference between an acceptable plan and a transformational plan. Many of the aspects of the UCC plan will only be attainable if the IS plan can be truly transformational in its support.
4. **First Things First:** To be strategic, Information Services will need to plan carefully for major steps that can enable all of the other elements of the plan. Certainly, taking action on many of the recommendations in this review can help position IS for greater success. However, four key changes could leverage much greater success of many other efforts: bringing services together in the Library building, drastically increasing IS service hours (by at least 25%), implementing a campus-wide identity management and directory services infrastructure, and finding a different way to fund AVMS activities so as to significantly change/reduce the chargeback system. With these key changes, much of the potential success of other elements of the plan can be leveraged.

Next Steps for Information Services

This report provides many observations about the current state of the Information Services organisation and provides recommendations (large and small) designed to help it achieve its goals and aspirations. At the same time, IS and UCC must respond to such recommendations in an environment of shrinking resources (which is likely to be the case over the next several

years). Hard choices will need to be made in order to continue progress within its resource constraints; nonetheless, progress must be made. Information Services has significant resources (i.e. approximately 152 staff members, a total €13.8 million total budget, and significant physical space in three buildings). Within that overall base of resources, strategic reallocations are possible and significant improvements can be made.

Taken together, this report's recommendations provide guidance on a variety of ways in which IS can make positive progress. The list may be daunting and the UCC administration and the IS leadership will need to decide which are worthy of its attention over time, which are beyond the interest or the means of the University, and which must be an early focus. I understand that only a portion of these recommendations will be accepted and acted upon. I urge the institution and the leadership of IS, however, to come to a quick conclusion on which will be the most appropriate to start soon, and which will need to be sustained over time.

Developing a shared sense of purpose, a more cohesive culture, and a greater alignment of activities will require deliberate effort across the entire organisation. Its members need to better understand the roles and responsibilities across the larger organisation, create opportunities for groups and individuals to explore common areas of effort, and engage in cross-functional projects toward institutional needs. These changes are not insignificant, but they can be accomplished with both perseverance and patience.

Change is a process that can and should be managed, and the roles of everyone in that process should be acknowledged. People can be engaged in that process in a way that is encouraging and positive. Unfortunately, the status quo has significant power in good times and in bad, and the current fiscal difficulties at UCC seem to drive energy to protection and/or retrenchment, rather than creativity and innovation.

The creation of Information Services signaled the beginning of a long-term change process, although the initial efforts were limited to establishing new reporting relationships and seeking to understand the full range of the nascent organisation's responsibilities. The changes so far have been subtle, but they began a process of transformation that was intended to be evolutionary in nature. I applaud that approach. It is time, however, for the next steps in that evolution, some of which will be subtle and some of which may appear quite dramatic. Nonetheless, this does seem like the time for action.

The work of Information Services is inherently "change oriented" as these departments regularly bring change to the campus community. From reading the UCC Strategic Plan and from my conversations at the University, it is also clear that the community expects IS to enable a greater level of change in the future than in the past. People and organisations create moments of change, but in very real ways, people also resist change. Change can be difficult but fun, terrifying but exciting, painful but freeing, and exhausting but incredibly gratifying. From my own personal experience, the greatest pain felt within a change process was caused by my own resistance to change. As I let go of the natural resistance and embraced the changes that were before me, my ability to work with and enjoy the change dramatically increased, as did my creativity and my opportunities.

Of the many of recommendations that have been made in this report, several initiatives rise to a level of importance that suggests quick action:

1. **Create the New Leadership Structure:** Highly qualified individuals will need to be hired into the organisation's leadership structure as soon as possible. It will be important to retain staff members in those positions who are dedicated to the success of the entire division, as much as they are to the success of their own department or unit.
2. **Focus First on Internal Communication:** Deliberately work to enhance the quantity and quality of communication across and between departments and units, and upward and downward in the organisational hierarchy. IS-wide communication must be improved to begin developing a shared sense of purpose.
3. **Develop Greater Understanding between IS Departments:** Create opportunities for members of IS to learn more about the roles, responsibilities, challenges, and successes of individuals and units in other areas of IS. Allow positive opportunities for staff to ask questions of one another and to offer ideas about improving processes and services. Develop a process of learning about IS and allow a free-flow of ideas about the needs for communication, the values of leadership, and the ways the organisation might work together in greater resonance.
4. **Select Leaders Who Exhibit Desired Leadership Qualities:** As new leaders are brought into the organisation, it will be critical for candidates to be evaluated on the basis of how their leadership philosophy will fit within the IS shared definition for leadership.
5. **Take Concrete Steps toward Transparency:** The transparency of Information Services is uneven, based on traditional assumptions and operating methodologies; the UCC community will sense a direct improvement by simply creating common expectations of openness and transparency across the division. Deploying a simple directory of all IS staff members with e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, and pictures could help the community better understand the departments, and their staffs. This would be an important first step towards developing a new IS relationship with the UCC community.
6. **Initiate Pilot Collaborative Efforts:** There are significant ways in which the current departments can collaborate on projects of common interest that would also provide high value to the University community. For example, an initiative might be launched to allow librarians greater access to the Blackboard courses in their areas of expertise (carefully negotiated with academic administration and teaching staff), a project to develop more efficient interactions between the University's new IRIS (Institutional Research Information System) and the Cork Open Research Archive managed by the Library, or collaborative work on a possible citation database for the University. Members of IS and the campus community should seek other opportunities for pilots and other collaborative efforts that could create quick wins for the organisation.
7. **Discuss Current Activities Toward Common Outcomes:** Discussions should be started immediately to outline all of the initiatives and efforts currently underway to create an eLearning strategy or support enhanced research. In some of these cases, disjointed efforts are working toward solutions that may not work well together or are simply wasting resources. Efforts are also underway to deploy videos and podcasts, some of which already exist on YouTube, others of which are being considered for iTunes University. No formal strategy exists for managing or making these resources

available. These disparate initiatives should be brought together, planned strategically, and led by a team or leader that can eliminate wasted effort and energy.

8. **Enable Staff Involvement:** While some of the staff in IS units seemed to be fully engaged in conversations about the future of their group, others seemed distant from those conversations, expecting a leader to manage those conversations. Working to define an effective organisation is part of the work to be done in modern organisations and all staff should feel that they have both a right and a responsibility to be involved. The strength of shared definitions is that all members of an organisation are engaged.
9. **Be Strategic Before Writing a Strategic Plan:** As an organisation, Information Services needs to become much more strategic in its plans and actions. While there is a need to rethink its strategic opportunities and to act on them, IS will need to come together before it will be able to effectively create a new strategic plan. Groups within IS should review the existing plans and create a sense of urgency for the projects and initiatives that can make the greatest strategic difference. I offer four areas in which I believe that new strategic thinking is required in the short-term: begin planning an institution-wide identity management infrastructure, increase the operating hours of the Library and Help Desk by the beginning of the new academic year, correct significant deficiencies in the data center (a conversation which has already begun), and start reviewing the chargeback scheme and budget mechanism for AVMS.

The retirement of two senior leaders in IS has created an opportunity to consider serious change within the organisation, and it appears that the time is right for that change to begin. The process can be difficult, but there are tools and approaches to effectively manage change and to work toward positive outcomes that will benefit all. Individuals will be asked to work and act in different ways, which will create short-term problems and inefficiencies. However, greater effectiveness will result in the long-run. The combined resources of Information Services can become a greater force at the University, and these departments can contribute to a far greater level than they can today. It simply takes the will to do so.

UCC will be a better institution as IS captures the possibilities that lay before it. Not everyone will choose to participate; that is a natural outcome of such a process of change and renewal. However, those who make the effort to define positive new ways of working together will likely find a much more satisfying environment, along with the pride of making a greater contribution to the University, and in improving the experience of its students and staff.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference – Review of UCC Information Services

A key recommendation of the review of Senior Management at UCC undertaken in 2007 was the establishment of Information Services as a body incorporating the Audio Visual Media Services Unit, the Computer Centre, and the Library. The aim of creating Information Services (IS) is to provide a unified strategy for planning, development and provision of information services. Within the context of the University strategic priorities it is timely to review a number of structures and processes within IS and to monitor and assess their impact on efficiency and effectiveness.

It is important to ensure that the operating structures within IS:

- Facilitate effective deployment of staff and other resources
- Retain our core values and strengths and
- Ensure we have appropriate but not over burdensome structures and procedures

The terms of reference include *inter alia*:

- Definition and agreement on strengths and areas for improvement in the current structures and governance
- In particular, having regard to University devolution, recommend revisions as appropriate to establish a future structure which will facilitate more effective strategic management of this key central function, defining standards, best practices and procedures

This review will advise on two specific issues:

1. The make-up of the IS senior management team and how best the team should function in overseeing and coordinating the activities of IS
2. As part of this exercise, a review of the role and structure of the UCC Computer Centre will be undertaken in order to establish and make recommendations on the optimal organisational model required to deliver on the IT strategy and to serve the IT requirements of the UCC Community; and on the Computer Centre's role in formulating and implementing IT policy across the University.

The review will also determine how the Computer Centre can retain its ability to adapt to a rapidly changing technology environment.

Project Management

The review will be managed by the Librarian & Director of Information Services with assistance from the Department of Human Resources. A team of stakeholders will be established to evaluate and advise on the recommendations of the review.

It is envisaged that the review will be undertaken by an agreed practicing Information Services leader with both national and international perspectives. The reviewer will consult with relevant stakeholders in the preparation of the review.

Appendix B: Brief Biography of Gene Spencer



Gene Spencer Consulting

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Gene Spencer is an independent consultant serving the higher education information technology and library communities, focusing on areas of organisational effectiveness, organisational design, leadership development, leadership searches, work redesign, quality customer service, collaboration between IT and library organisations, and synergies between people, information, and technology.

Gene has over 33 years experience in the higher education library and information technology environments. Most recently, Gene held the position of Associate Vice President for Information Services and Resources at Bucknell University. In this role, Gene served an integrated library, information technology and media support organisation with responsibility for all aspects of computing services, library services, networking, instructional technology, enterprise information systems, library collections, information access, audio/visual, and telecommunications. His primary focus at Bucknell was organisational development, leadership development, quality customer service and creating a collaborative work environment.

Gene has been a member of the EDUCAUSE Management Institute Faculty (2004-2007), serving for the last two years as its Director. He served on the EDUCAUSE Professional Development Committee and the EDUCAUSE 2000 program committee (Nashville). He served as chair, vice chair and secretary of the InCommon Federation Steering Committee (2006-2008). Gene has been active in the Consortium of Liberal Arts Colleges (having served on the board of directors including terms as treasurer and chairperson) and in the Oberlin Group of Library Directors. Gene is a Frye Fellow from the class of 2001, and he served on the Frye Institute faculty in 2006 and 2007. Gene is a frequent speaker and author, and he hosted a Chronicle of Higher Education live “brown bag lunch” web chat on Library and IT mergers, and several webinars for Academic Impressions on effective organisations.

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

List of Scheduled Interviewees on 19 May 2010

| Time | Interviewee | Role |
|-------|---|---|
| 08.30 | Mr. John FitzGerald | Librarian & Director of Information Services |
| 09.15 | Prof. Paul Giller | Registrar & Senior VP Academic |
| 10.00 | Mr. Denis O’Sullivan – Head of Operations, Mr. Michael O’Halloran – User Services Manager, Mr. Henry O’Keeffe – Head of Systems & Network Engineering, Mr. John F Murphy – Senior Technical Officer, Mr. Jerry Buckley – Head of Enterprise Applications, Mr. Peter Flynn – Head of Electronic Publishing. | Computer Centre Managers |
| 11.00 | Prof. Patrick Fitzpatrick | Head of College of Science, Engineering & Food Science |
| 11.30 | Mr. Seamus McMahon | Deputy Librarian |
| 12.30 | Mr. Diarmuid Collins | Bursar & Chief Financial Officer |
| 1.00 | Tour of Library with Mr. John Fitzgerald | |
| 1.45 | Lunch with Mr. John FitzGerald & Ms. Mary Ward | Librarian & Director of Information Services & HR Partner |
| 2.30 | Mr. Adrian Grey | Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development |
| 3.15 | Mr. Con O’Brien | VP for the Student Experience |
| 4.00 | Mr. Ian Power, Deputy President Mr. Eoin Hayes, President Ms. Shelly Conroy, Education Officer Ms. Rebecca Murphy, Welfare Officer Mr. Ian Murphy, Postgraduate Officer | Student’s Union |

List of Scheduled Interviewees on 20 May 2010

| Time | Interviewee | Role |
|-------------|--|---|
| 08.45 | Prof. Grace Neville | VP for Teaching & Learning |
| 09.15 | Tour of Computer Centre with Denis O'Sullivan | |
| 10.00 | Dr. Michael Murphy | President |
| 10.45 | Mr. Maurice Ryder, Mr. Arthur Shinnick, Mr. Barry Foley, Ms. Deirdre O'Keeffe, Mr. Patrick Nagle, Mr. Barry O'Sullivan, Mr. Anthony Crotty, Mr. Sean Power, Mr. Michael Field, Mr. Mark Delahunty, Mr. Pat O'Driscoll, Mr. John Meade, Ms. Ruth Butler, Mr. Jerry Lehane, Mr. Tim O'Donovan, Mr. Sean O'Mahony, Mr. Myles Corcoran, Ms. Sinead Horgan, Ms. Lorraine McLoughlin, Ms. Lorna O'Callaghan, Ms. Marion Twomey | Computer Centre Focus Group |
| 12.10 | Professor David Cox | Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences |
| 12.40 | Lunch with Mr. John FitzGerald | |
| 1.30 | Tour of AVMS with Mr. Brian Bugler | |
| 2.00 | Mr. Brian Bugler, Mr. Aidan O'Donovan | Audio Visual Media Services (Interim Managers) |
| 3.15 | Professor Paddy O'Donovan | Professor, Department of French |
| 4.30 | Ms. Sharon Jones | Academic Secretary |
| 5.00 | Exit Interview with Mr. John FitzGerald | |

List of Scheduled Interviewees on 15 June 2010

| Time | Interviewees | Role |
|-------------|---|---|
| 08.00 | Breakfast with Mr. John FitzGerald | Librarian & Director of Information Services |
| 9.00 | Mr. Henry O’Keeffe | Head of Systems & Network Engineering |
| 9.30 | Mr. John Murphy | Senior Technical Officer |
| 10.00 | Mr. Peter Flynn | Head of Electronic Publishing |
| 10.30 | Self Tour of Library Public Spaces | |
| 11.30 | Mr. Anthony Crotty, Mr. Mark Delahunty, Ms. Marian Hayden, Mr. Alan Sobey | Systems & Network Engineering |
| 12.15 | Ms. Grace O’Leary, Ms. Maria Sobey, Mr. Tim O’Donovan, Ms. Kathryn McLaughlin, Mr. Maurice Ryder, Ms. Nora McElhinney, Mr. Roy Cummins | Learning Technologies Unit Electronic Publishing |
| 1.00 | Lunch with Mr. John FitzGerald | |
| 2.15 | Mr. Brian Bugler, Ms. Brid Crowley, Mr. Kilian Murphy, Mr. Aidan O’Donovan, Mr. Frank O’Donovan, Mr. Tomas Tyner, Mr. Charles Ruxton, Mr. Pasi Kettunen | Audio Visual Media Services Group |
| 3.00 | Mr. Myles Corcoran, Mr. Liam Cotter, Ms. Catherine Malone, Mr. Kevin McGuire, Mr. Barry O’Connor, Ms. Brenda Trinder | Systems & Network Operations |
| 4.00 | Mr. Seamus McMahon, Ms. Valerie King, Ms. Catherine Sanborn, Ms. Maire Domhnat Kirakowska, Mr. Crónán O Doibhlin, Ms. Margot Conrick | Library Strategy Group |

List of Scheduled Interviewees on 16 June 2010

| Time | Interviewees | Role |
|---------------|---|--|
| 9.00 – 9.45 | Ms. Carol Desmond, Ms. Sandra Hackett, Ms. Sandra Mulcahy, Mr. Patrick Nagle, Ms. Sinead O’Geran, Mr. Barry O’Sullivan, Mr. Paul Sheehan, Mr. Michael Walsh | Enterprise Applications |
| 10.00 – 11.00 | Dr. Bettie Higgs, Ms. Marian McCarthy, Ms. Jennifer Murphy | Academic Development (staff who work on teaching & learning, academic dev, etc) |
| 11.00 – 11.30 | Professor Ciaran Murphy | Head of Department of Accounting, Finance & Information Systems |
| 11.30 – 12.15 | Various Library Staff | From the Library Media & Publications Group, Collection Development Committee, Training & Development Team |
| 12.15 – 1.00 | Ms. Ruth Butler, Mr. Jim Calnan, Mr. Michael Field, Mr. Barry Foley, Ms. Sinead Horgan, Ms. Noelette Hurley, Mr. Donal Kingston, Mr. Jerry Lehane, Ms. Mary McCarthy, Ms. Lorraine McLoughlin, Mr. John Meade, Ms. Lorna O’Callaghan, Mr. Denis O’Connell, Mr. Patrick O’Driscoll, Ms. Deirdre O’Keeffe, Mr. Sean O’ Mahony, Mr. Sean Power, Mr. Arthur Shinnick, Ms. Marian Twomey | User Services |
| 1.00 | Lunch with Ms. Mary Ward | HR Partner |
| 2.00 | Mr. Denis O’Sullivan | Head of Operations |
| 2.30 | Professor Grace Neville | VP for Teaching & Learning |
| 3.00 | Professor Alan Kelly | Dean of Graduate Studies |
| 3.30 | Dr. Rónán O’Dubhghaill | Director of Planning & Institutional Research |
| 4.00 | Mr. Jerry Buckley | Head of Enterprise Applications |
| 4.30 | Mr. Michael O’Halloran | User Services Manager |
| 5.00 | Ms. Catherine Sanborn | Library IT Services |
| 5.30 | Exit Interview with Mr. John FitzGerald | |

Appendix D: Distributed IT Staff at UCC

There are approximately 25 additional full-time equivalent positions providing some form of local IT support to various areas of the campus (the list was provided by Michael O'Halloran, User Services Manager). These individuals are not directly associated with the Computing Centre and provide different local IT support for their host organisation which varies based on need. These individuals might provide support for computing devices (including mobile technologies), may administer servers providing local services, and may provide support of teaching, learning and research in their areas of responsibility:

- Department of Computer Science (6)
- Engineering Faculty (1)
- Department of Business Information Systems (4)
- Department of Chemistry (1)
- Department of Geography (1)
- Library (7)
- School Nursing and Midwifery (1)
- School of Medicine (1)
- Dental School and hospital (1)
- School of Law (1)
- School of Mathematical Sciences (1)