

**University College Cork
National University of Ireland, Cork**

Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance

Peer Review Group Report

Information Services

Academic Year 2011/2012

12 January 2012

Peer Review Group Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Ms. Sheila Cannell	Director of Library Services	University of Edinburgh
Mr. David Dodd	Vice President & CIO, Information Resources	Xavier University, USA
Dr. John B. Howard	University Librarian	UCD James Joyce Library
Ms. Caitriona O'Driscoll	Education Officer, Student Union	University College Cork
Mr. Mark Poland	Director of Buildings & Estates	University College Cork
Ms. Maureen Sullivan	Organisation Development Consultant for Information Services	Maryland, USA

Timetable of the site visit

The timetable for the site visit was suitable for the purpose. The detailed timetable is attached as Appendix A. The timetable included meetings with staff, with students and with internal and external stakeholders.

PEER REVIEW

Methodology

The members of the Peer Review Group (PRG) convened on the afternoon of the first day to consider the timetable, the purposes of the site visit and the review itself. The members of the group exchanged comments and opinions following each meeting. Ms. Sheila Cannell was appointed as Chair of the Peer Review Group. The members of the PRG divided for some of the elements of the site visit, as indicated in detail in the timetable (Appendix A). All members of the PRG engaged with all aspects of the review.

Site Visit

The site visit was very informative and the various meetings were particularly valuable and assisted the PRG in forming views and recommendations for improvement. The PRG met with representatives of staff of Information Services, with students and with senior officers of the University, in addition to meeting with staff from UCC who expressed a wish to meet with the review team and some external stakeholders.

The site visit included a tour of the facilities used by Information Services, including the Boole Library, the Computer Centre and the Audio Visual Unit in Áras na Laoi.

The members of the Panel were conscious that in the two and a half days on site it was not possible to review all parts of Information Services in great detail. The PRG visited many parts of IS and heard from many people in the University, but did not have the opportunity to speak to all IS staff within the time allowed for the visit.

Peer Review Group Report

The PRG commenced drafting the report on the morning and afternoon of the second full day of the site visit. In particular, the members of the Group considered their key findings and recommendations for improvement whilst in UCC and presented a summary of their findings to the staff of Information Services in the exit presentation. The report was finalised subsequent to the site visit via email communications. It was agreed and approved by all members of the Group.

OVERALL ANALYSIS

Self-Assessment Report

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was comprehensive and well-thought through with good evidence provided of the analysis made. Many of the recommendations for improvement made in the SAR are incorporated into this report together with additional recommendations made by the PRG following its reflections and discussions with stakeholders.

The PRG considered that the SAR provides an excellent foundation for future developments in IS and recognised the talent of staff within IS and the potential for improvement and enhancement of the services offered. The PRG noted and welcomed the level of enthusiasm for change, for implementing the new agenda and for moving on to create the future integrated Information Services organisation. This was supported in the meetings held with the leadership of IS and the staff.

SWOT Analysis

The PRG were very grateful for the SWOT analysis, and spent much time in consideration of it. The analysis of the PRG appears in the “Findings” section below.

Benchmarking

The PRG found the benchmarking exercise which had been carried out to be very useful in providing measures of performance at peer organisations that may provide a context for understanding that of IS. An initial challenge in benchmarking is identifying peer universities, and UCC has met this challenge appropriately; the more difficult aspect of benchmarking is the nature of the IS organisation at UCC, which will evolve in coming years. The PRG encourages IS

in UCC to carefully monitor key trends across the Irish HE sector, as well as further afield, and for senior management to engage actively in key professional organisations internationally as part of a strategy for maintaining currency and competitiveness.

FINDINGS OF THE PEER REVIEW GROUP

Overview

The Panel brought their experience and knowledge of global changes in higher education, e-learning, information technology and library domains. As the higher education environment becomes increasingly digital, user expectations rise, and there is an expectation that everything will be available “anytime and anywhere”. During the site visit, the Panel listened to many voices describe the challenges that meeting these expectations presents in the current economic environment in Ireland. In particular the Panel noted the difficult workforce management and industrial relations frameworks within which University College Cork (UCC) has to operate, due in part to current policies toward austerity in the public sector in Ireland. The Panel, however, noted the huge loyalty of the Information Services (IS) staff to UCC and their commitment to providing excellent service to all users. The Panel members saw evidence of innovation and the leadership capacity within IS to enhance the existing resources, services and infrastructure to address the University’s agenda and to accomplish its goals.

The PRG also identified risks - some of them critical - if the University does not take action to address issues within Information Services. Risks include the serious possibility of service stagnation; structures that are not fit for purpose and may lead to duplication; and issues with infrastructure.

A strong message that came through in the conversation the PRG had with the President and others is that UCC has high aspirations. Amongst them are:

- UCC is increasing its focus on research and is aspirational in this area
- UCC is pulling together its strategy on teaching and learning and aspires to develop a strong online distance learning program
- UCC requires robust administrative functions to underpin the functions of the university
- UCC engages with a growing range of external customers, partners and industry in the local community, and with national and international partners.

In all of these areas IS has an essential part to play and needs to be as aspirational as the University: it needs to create confidence in its ability to achieve change and innovation, even in difficult times.

Everything which IS does is in partnership with, and should start from the needs of, its users which include the academic community, students and other support services and the local community. It is important that the University does not think that anything which IS does exists in a “bubble” to the side, but instead the University must recognise that Information Services must be integral to the University strategy. These synergies need to be more clearly articulated.

The PRG heard anticipation, energy and excitement from members of staff across the University and beyond about the way a cohesive IS organisation could better serve the University.

In order to deliver to this aspirational agenda, the PRG is of the view that the most important first stage is to implement, as soon as possible, the recommendations in the 2010 Spencer Report (Review of Information Services by Gene Spencer, July 2010) (Appendix B). The members of the Peer Review Group unanimously affirm all its recommendations. The PRG noted that conditions that prevailed last summer when the report was written have become even more important. While adoption of all the recommendations in the Spencer Report is recommended, the PRG has provided a gloss on certain of the recommendations and these are incorporated into the text of this report in sections as relevant and appropriate.

The PRG noted that one of the most important determinants of the treatment of information resources and technology in colleges and universities, and hence a significant measure of its ultimate value to an institution, is whether it is viewed as operational or strategic in nature. To its great credit, University College Cork clearly recognizes the strategic value of Information Services in addressing some of its most pressing challenges including globalization and distance education programs, support for local public / private partnerships and economic growth, incorporation of e-resources in teaching and learning, research support and many others. The positioning of Information Services as a direct report to the President, establishment of an external advisory council, formation of the Information Services and Educational Resources Committee, and improving alignment of institutional and divisional strategic planning, all point to the potential of Information Services to make substantial contributions to the future of UCC and the neighboring region.

The formation of an integrated Information Services organization presents very significant opportunities for serving 21st-century learners and researchers in a stronger and more seamless manner. For example, for learners, the combination of help desk, library public services (including circulation and research assistance), and instructional media support in a single organizational structure allows for a user-centric focus rather than one constrained by legacy organizational boundaries. It does remain important, however, that all users understand the model, and that UCC works out the appropriate model of integration and the retention of domain specific expertise to support its own learners and researchers.

An important opportunity for Information Services relates to improved setting of expectations related to support services. Units of the organization are clearly well respected by member of the campus community, as consistently revealed in interviews and discussion groups conducted by the visiting team. However, it was pointed out that the establishment of an inventory or “catalog” of services could be very helpful in setting and communicating expectations for both service providers and users. The collection and publishing of metrics such as analytics and key performance indicators (KPIs) concerning service delivery would be a positive and necessary step in assuring quality improvement, as well as possible justification of additional or reallocated support resources as the University continues to grow and change.

The PRG was concerned by the serious state of UCC’s enterprise network and systems infrastructure, including both hardware and software. The visiting team saw clear evidence that mission-critical components of the institution’s technology hardware and software platforms were obsolete, and therefore present significant potential risk to continuation of operations across all areas of the institution. It became apparent that much of this stemmed from resource constraints.

A combined library and information resources and technology organization, such as Information Services at UCC, will be well positioned to capitalize on both existing synergies and expertises as well as on emerging, strategic opportunities. Professional expertises and domains will remain important, and UCC will need to work out how far and how fast it wishes to take the integration of the domains which make up Information Services. However, the combination of these units under one ‘umbrella’ organization will help with that process and will be only the first step in this process. Vision, combined with leadership – and specifically the ability to lead organizational change – will be required to realize the opportunities presented by the formation of Information Services. As a first step, we encourage institutional leaders to establish a set of high-level, prioritized goals for Information Services that can serve as a compass for the leadership team as they make required decisions. Clearly defined goals, and the advocacy of senior institutional leaders, are both vital in such significant change initiatives. We encourage the Director of Information Services and the leadership team to seek out resources, advice, assistance, and similar support from the professional community in order to help UCC realize the tremendous opportunities presented by the formation of Information Services.

Unit Details

The work of IS continues to be organised and accomplished in separate units. A critical step to ensure an effective future organisation is to examine this work from the perspective of what work makes a difference in student learning, faculty teaching and research. This examination will yield a set of key work activities and professional affinities that can then be the basis for creating the new, integrated organisation called for in the Spencer Report.

The PRG identified the Director of Information Services to be the kind of effective leader required to bring about the necessary transformation in IS. The PRG also concluded that there

are varying levels of commitment and readiness for the kind of changes required to accomplish this transformation.

Unit Planning and Organisation

Spencer Report

The Spencer Report identifies the need to explore new, holistic approaches to deployment of resources, ranging from consolidation of service points to consortial resource sharing to outsourcing. The PRG believe that achieving this objective will be facilitated by an exercise to identify the core business of IS—distinctive services that are germane to the University's mission and that can be uniquely provided by staff who operate from within the University and who share UCC's values. Such services are distinct from those that are contextual and that can be provided most effectively and efficiently by service providers external to the University. This approach may assist staff in differentiating ways in which they uniquely add value to the services they provide, and how they might best take advantage of cooperative, collaborative and vendor-provided services in raising overall quality of service to a new level.

Recommendation: UCC should adopt the full set of recommendations in the Spencer Report with immediate effect, and work to implement its full set of recommendations.

Need for clear priorities and links to University strategic directions

The establishment by the Academic Council of the Information Services and Educational Resources Committee, which has yet to meet, will help to address the linkages between Information Services and academic (teaching, learning and research) agendas of the University. The PRG was impressed by the ambition of its Chairman, Professor John Morrison, in this regard.

The University, using the goals and initiatives set forth by UCC in the current strategic plan (2009-2012) and the one in development (2013-2017), should identify the current set of priorities for IS as a whole, and for each of the existing three areas and for units within each area, as appropriate. These are likely to be short-term priorities. Once the new integrated IS organisation is implemented, the Director of Information Services and the IS leadership team should identify a revised set of priorities. It is likely that this will be done as part of the process to create the new IS Strategic Plan, which itself should feed into the University's new Strategic Plan. At all stages, this work should be done in consultation with IS staff. This plan should focus on the work activities and processes that directly meet the learning, teaching and research needs of the University – the core business of IS. It should include emerging needs as well as current needs

Recommendation: The PRG strongly recommends that there be greater linkage between the University strategy and the developing IS strategy. The mission, vision and strategic directions of Information Services must be developed to support the University's strategy.

Recommendation: Information Services should work immediately on a short term set of IS priorities, which should then be developed into a fully integrated IS Strategic Plan.

Organisational Development

The leadership and organisational culture and organisational development sections in the Spencer report are enormously important. Once the work design is completed, a new organisational structure, one that is designed to coordinate work across IS, will become evident. The PRG recommends that this new organisational structure be one that will leverage professional expertise for the benefit of service delivery for teaching, learning and research. The PRG fully anticipates the organisation will continue to evolve and adapt over time, in response to the University strategy and the dynamic external environment. It is important to ensure that the organisational structure supports the people doing the work.

Recommendation: That IS should develop a new organisational structure, based on recommendations in the Spencer report and on its Strategic Plan.

Staff issues: culture of collaboration and innovation

The PRG considers that IS should identify steps to create a culture of collaboration and innovation. A critical success factor for this work is the early and meaningful engagement of staff throughout IS. One approach would be to convene an all-staff meeting and invite everyone to imagine a future organization in which everyone works together by identifying innovative solutions and developing programs and services that meet the needs and expectations of users. One very effective approach to this is the application of SOAR, an appreciative approach that calls for the identification of strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results (www.innovationpartners.com). A small project team can be charged to develop a plan for moving forward.

The new executive team will need to reinforce the expectation that everyone in IS adopts an attitude and approach of collaboration. Regular coaching sessions with staff could focus on development of the talents and competencies needed for effective performance. Staff training sessions can be held to prepare staff. Among the topics to consider are: skills for collaboration, working together in a team, creativity and innovation in problem solving, managing differences, and effective meetings.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends that staff development should be given a high priority with the development of a plan which fosters collaboration and innovation throughout IS, using a variety of techniques and approaches.

Unit Budget

The PRG did not examine the Unit budget in detail, but was aware of the difficulties facing all universities in Ireland at the moment. It is clear that funding is much more difficult than it has been, and Information Services has to work within University constraints. For some areas of

Information Services there has been good investment, in others there has been less good investment, leading to problems which must now be addressed.

All IS activity will be subject to financial scrutiny. Members of IS must become adept at demonstrating value for money through metrics in all of their strands of work. This will enable making cases for resources needed.

UCC would be well advised to create a dedicated fund to be used solely for the lifecycle replacement of technology components on a schedule related directly to their expected useful lifespans. The University is clearly in a position where deferred maintenance and replacement of technology infrastructure now places a substantial financial burden on the institution.

Recommendation: IS should develop a programme to demonstrate value for money across the range of its activities.

Recommendation: IS should undertake a study to identify financial and human resource requirements of a programme to manage network and data centre infrastructures on a lifecycle basis; a dedicated fund for lifecycle replacement of technology components should be established.

UNIT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE & METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The PRG appreciates the work of the IS Steering Coordinating Group and found the Self-Assessment Report it produced to be comprehensive and well-thought through. Many of the recommendations for improvement made in the SAR are incorporated into this report together with additional recommendations made by the PRG following its reflections and discussions with stakeholders.

The PRG also expressed its thanks to all those IS staff with whom it met during the review. Their input was very valuable to the discussions. The PRG noted the level of enthusiasm for change, for implementing the new agenda and for moving on to create the future integrated Information Services organization.

Governance

Report: UCC – Review of Information Services July 2010

This report was commissioned by UCC from Gene Spencer Consulting and the executive summary is attached as Appendix B for information. The recommendations made by Gene Spencer in his report of July 2010 provide an excellent foundation for the improvement of work performance and service delivery. The PRG believes that a critical, initial step to the implementation of the report's recommendations is the appointment of the two director

positions. As an addition to the recommendations in the Spencer Report, the PRG recommends the establishment of an external advisory board to advise the Director of Information Services to ensure that service in UCC remains aware of global challenges and the ways in which other services are addressing these.

Recommendation: That a plan for implementing the recommendations in the Spencer Report be established and agreed as soon as possible.

Recommendation: Once the leadership team is in place, the PRG recommends the following steps, based on the Spencer Report.

- Create a new work design for IS, one in which the work that can be brought together in a single, cohesive process is aligned and integrated. The new design must be developed with careful attention to the changes occurring in higher education and to the goals and initiatives set forth by UCC. Every effort should be made to reduce redundancy, streamline workflow, leverage technology, make effective use of student employees, and outsourcing. The result should be a work design that provides meaningful assignments for staff, assures efficiencies, and leads to work satisfaction.
- Identify a new organisational structure, including reporting relationships, to ensure effective coordination and communication within the new IS.
- Consider a nomenclature for the organisational subunits that describes the work area in language easily understood by students and academic staff.
- Create the shared leadership model called for on page 3 of the Spencer Report (Appendix B). Clearly define the performance expectations for all managerial leaders. Prepare a “deliberate program to develop leadership skills...throughout the organisation.”
- Conduct a training and learning needs assessment for the staff. Create a staff development plan based upon the findings of this needs assessment. Include consideration of emerging competencies and identification of those competencies everyone in IS should have, e.g., interpersonal skills, managing conflict, problem solving in groups, technical proficiency, etc.
- Create a new integrated Information Services Strategic Plan, one that is based upon a careful assessment and understanding of the UCC Strategic Plan, aligns with the goals and initiatives outlined in the UCC Strategic Plan and integrates the goals and initiatives of the new IS organisational units. Design a process to accomplish this that involves IS and engages them in meaningful ways.
- Identify two or three initiatives for which project teams could be formed to carry out the recommendation to pilot collaborative efforts in key areas. Staff these project teams with individuals from across IS. Expect these teams to work together to develop a project plan for accomplishment of an important activity.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends the establishment of an external advisory board to the Director of Information Services.

SERVICES

Introduction

The Peer Review Group heard that the services are very well regarded and that there is great appreciation for the expertise which members of the University receive from IS.

The evidence from the surveys revealed that that the level of service is good. Levels of satisfaction were good, but inevitably the PRG heard of expressions that people need and want “more”. The following requests were made to the PRG during interviews: more library opening hours, more e-resources, more e-books, more software platforms, more hours of support for Information Technology, more WiFi, more help, more innovation in programs and services to match the expectations of the users and of the University. The Panel acknowledged that good business cases must be made for each of these, since it is not usually possible to reduce demand sufficiently in order to meet the additional requests from reallocating existing resources.

However, the Panel also noted that it may not be possible or desirable for IS to continue to deliver the range of services currently provided without changing the method of delivery. In the context of significant resource constraints, IS are recommended to review on a regular basis the delivery methods chosen. A flexible approach is required which could involve use of student help, shared services, collaborative sector-wide projects or outsourcing of services where appropriate. It is recognised that the outsourcing of services is controversial in a public sector environment and that IR discussions will be necessary prior to implementation.

Service expectations and Service Catalogue

Establishing and then publishing a guide to the services that are provided, products supported, service level agreements (SLAs), and processes for ensuring the quality of service delivery, would go a long way in helping Information Services understand the services they are asked to provide, and similarly the university community in understanding what services can reasonably be expected with the resources available to do so.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends the establishment of a Service Catalogue of IS services, and the collection and publishing of metrics associated with each service.

E Resources

Students and academic staff consistently expressed a desire for improved access to electronic resources, citing both the desire for access to a broader range of materials and, in one instance, for additional training materials to raise awareness of what is currently available. Students in particular voiced a desire for increased access to e-books, citing both convenience and competition for access to reading list materials. The PRG recognises the constraints with regard

to both funding and to the publishers' business models for e-publishing in general. It recommends, however, that these concerns be understood as significant priorities in the allocation of existing funding for resources, and that approaches and mechanisms be sought to extend the reach and impact of the Library's existing instructional programme, leveraging where possible the use of e-learning technologies.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends that, as possible, priority is given to funding for resources, and that the proportion of funding devoted to e-resources is increased as possible.

Research Support Services

Given UCC's ambitions with regard to research, it is recommended that IS builds a suite of services to support research—most of these services exist already, but could be organised and marketed in a coordinated manner. This should be based on close linkages to researchers in the University, and to the Research Support Office. Services should be jointly promoted and may include: managing research outputs on behalf of the University for both research management and research visibility purposes; research data management and storage; advice on bibliometrics; a dedicated help and support service for researchers; ensuring that the library collections address the needs of researchers; dedicated study space for postgraduates.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends that IS better coordinate services for researchers.

Need for business continuity/disaster recovery planning

Given the vulnerabilities of the data and network operations centre noted elsewhere, the PRG strongly recommends development of a business continuity plan for the Computer Centre. The plan should identify and address scenarios ranging from disruption of power to total loss of the data centre facility and identify strategies for recovery and return to business operations.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends development of a business continuity plan for the Computer Centre.

IT administration

The PRG were struck by the very small number of FTE staff within the Computer Centre. The PRG heard consistently that this was due to a distributed model of IT support; in some cases this model has evolved simply because of the unavailability of expertise and computing resources in a local context, while in other contexts the need for some additional domain or research expertise was cited.

The PRG are concerned that some potentially significant risks and liabilities arise in connection with the distributed IT model, particularly with regard to data protection and the ability to assure appropriate security in an environment where IT staff accountability is devolved to the unit level. This specific concern was, indeed, voiced by several individuals interviewed. There is an important opportunity in hiring a new Director of the Computer Centre to define a leadership

responsibility for developing campus policies and guides to best practice for IT administration, as well as for establishing mechanisms to assure a shared understanding of these policies throughout the University.

Recommendation: UCC should reassess the distributed model for IT administration across the institution with regard to considerations including operational efficiencies, economies of scale, the sustainability of satellite IT operations, cyber security etc. This is particularly important given the staffing and resourcing challenges facing the University's core systems and networks.

Campus middleware

Campus middleware refers to infrastructure that manages security, access and the exchange of data and information in support of applications that provide services on a network. Basic middleware services consist of identity management, authentication and authorisation, and information lookup. These functions are essential enablers of secure services provided on a network.

Observations were presented that provided indicators of an insufficiently robust campus middleware framework. These indicators included: the existence of multiple authentication and authorisation mechanisms for access to services on the network; absence of ubiquitous web single sign-on support; absence of support for guest access to the campus network; absence of guest access via eduroam or edugate—services supported internationally or nationally to facilitate inter-campus, inter-agency, and international collaboration. Given the high levels of collaborative activity at UCC and the diversity of its stakeholders, upgrading campus middleware services is essential for assuring security while facilitating access to essential services on the network.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends that a planning process is established that reviews campus middleware, identifying both current capabilities and near- and longer-term needs.

Records and document management

The PRG perceives a need for expertise in records management to assure appropriate scheduling and retention of university records in compliance with Irish and European requirements. This role might be appropriately located within IS or within another University office with regulatory or legal responsibilities. Testimony also suggested that the University remains bound to many manually and paper-bound workflows.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends that opportunities for improved efficiency and record-keeping through deployment of enterprise-scale document management systems should be explored, perhaps initially in a limited pilot programme and potentially with the assistance of an industrial consultant.

The Library as asset for University

Information Services has services and collections which should be celebrated as an asset for the University in building links with the community, and in connecting the regional to the global. These include the following: the exceptional cultural and heritage assets in Special Collections, the usage of the library by external users, service delivery to local industry. It has been specifically suggested that the University's crest of an "open book" could represent the open nature of the service provided by Information Services, particular by the Library.

The University's cultural assets can also raise awareness of the value of the University to the local community. They can be used to attract potential donors - both to support the collections, but also to support the wider development agenda of UCC. They may also provide opportunities for internships to support the University's employability agenda.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends that the links the Library has, through its services and collections with the community, are worked up as case studies for the next University strategy.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends that the Development and Alumni Office develops a fundraising strategy for UCC's heritage collections, with the aim of seeking external and philanthropic funding to open up (or reveal) any hidden collections through metadata, digitisation and physical and virtual exhibitions.

Support Hours (AV/IT)

The PRG noted that IT and AV support is not available during full University opening hours.

Recommendation: the PRG recommends that IS provide enhanced support to users through 'simple fix' training of security personnel for front line AV support and other creative collaborative solutions to meet user needs in an effective manner.

STAFFING

Staffing profile

Given the restrictions on HR practices, the University should be aware that in bringing the IS services together, there will be imbalances in age profile, gender profile and grade profiles.

Recommendation: While it may not be possible to amend these immediately, the PRG recommends that a strategy is developed to address these issues; and that any changes due to imminent retirements are used as an opportunity.

Changing the culture

In order to achieve the ambitious programme which the University expects, it will also be necessary to introduce a culture of innovation, collaboration and functional integration amongst all IS staff.

Recommendation: University HR should provide support to IS leadership and be prepared to adopt new practices and programs to support the creation of a culture of collaboration and innovation.

Leadership

The two leadership roles of Director of Library Services and Director of Information Technology must be filled as soon as possible. Appointing qualified individuals to these two positions will ensure that the administrative leadership necessary to accomplish the goals and aspirations described in the Spencer Report, the Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance Self-Assessment Report and this report.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends that the leadership positions are filled as soon as possible. Soon after these two positions are filled, the Director of Information services should engage these directors and any other appropriate IS managers in a leadership team development process. The purpose of this effort would be to create a cohesive and highly committed senior administrative team in IS, a group that would be ready to provide the leadership necessary to develop the strategy to move forward and to gain the commitment of IS staff to implement this strategy.

Succession planning and talent development

Once the new IS organisation is fully implemented, the executive team should turn its attention to the preparation of a plan to develop the talents of the IS staff. Identification of staff talents is an early and important step in succession planning. A successful approach includes:

- determination of current talents and capabilities in each of the core business areas;
- a means to cross train and cross share staff across the organisation;
- focused attention to the recruitment, development and retention of competent and committed staff who embrace learning.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends the creation of a means to identify and assess the talents of IS staff, to identify areas for talent development and prepare a comprehensive staff development plan.

Development of the senior management team

The PRG believe that it is imperative that the individuals who will be hired to fill the two director vacancies be persons who are competent managers and effective leaders, who complement the strengths of the Director of Information Services, and who are committed to working together

to provide the necessary leadership to ensure that the fully integrated IS organization provides high-quality academic and management information services to UCC. The members of this team should undertake an executive leadership development program that would include:

- Preparation of a shared philosophy of management and leadership – articulation of the shared beliefs, values and aspirations for IS
- Identification of individual and team strengths and areas for development
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities
- Identification of ways to engage staff and build an IS culture of high performance and work satisfaction
- Preparation of an initial plan to move forward to create the integrated IS organization including subunits that functionally integrate responsibilities from both areas.
- Commitment to work together as a team and identification of a set of agreements to support this
- Preparation of individual performance and developments

Recommendation: Once appointed, the leadership team should undertake a leadership development programme.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Introduction

The PRG also wishes to highlight the recommendation in the Spencer Report that IS should assess all spaces within its facilities and develop a plan for co-locating the most appropriate integrated services and functions. The PRG noted in particular the poor condition of the data centre, and strongly recommends works for this key facility are fast-tracked.

The PRG became aware of several areas of risk - some of them substantial - which pose liabilities to the University with respect to a range of issues, including vulnerabilities in the physical technology infrastructure and related technology administration/services best practices. As these issues became clearly apparent in a relatively brief period of exposure to the UCC technology environment, it is recommended that a fuller assessment of the issues be made and more detailed recommendations for improvements proposed. A range of particular issues is identified below:

The PRG was offered a brief tour of the Computer Centre facilities, including the data centre/network operations centre. Even this cursory visit identified serious issues that relate to both technology and technology administration best practices. These include the absence of any uninterruptible power supplies, aging or obsolete hardware in general, absence of identifying tags on patch cables, the presence of debris (such as packing material) throughout the server room, etc. Space for staff who monitor and manage the systems is inadequate.

The PRG was subsequently made aware of a recent study that makes recommendations for improvements to this space, with a longer-term view toward establishment of remote facilities to provide hardware and software redundancy, etc. The PRG endorses the recommendations of this report and flags them as of great urgency. Some recommendations concern technology administration best practices and can be implemented immediately at little or no cost; others require substantial monetary investment.

Wifi Access

In recent years, UCC has provided increased broadband access to UCC students and staff in common areas (e.g. restaurants, foyers, etc.). Provision of campus-wide broadband access to students, staff and visitors is critical given the wider-spread and growing demand for mobile services.

Recommendation: Implement a full roll out of wireless access to all campus buildings.

Sustainability & Development of Campus: Infrastructure

The PRG noted that the facilities available in the Library are of a very high quality. The PRG welcome the development of the recent upgraded TV Studio in Audio Visual. The PRG were particularly concerned at the condition of the data centre which lacks modern ventilation, power back-up, fire protection, etc.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends that UCC completes the planned upgrade project for the Data Centre as a matter of priority.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends that a review of the infrastructure is undertaken to ensure that sufficient redundancy is provided to protect all critical services.

Study Space: Libraries and Open Access Labs

The PRG recognises the key role that study space and open access computers play in supporting the student experience. The Boole Library and other library buildings are an asset and, like libraries throughout the HE sector, are seeing an increase in use, as students find a place in which there is a community of learning, where they can study in quiet and where they can learn in a variety of ways. Other study space is available in open access computer laboratories, and this is of much lesser quality than the Library space. The PRG recognises that the current configuration of open access computers is likely to be required in the short-term but that the provision and configuration of open access laboratories should be reviewed annually as student laptop and wireless devices use grows. The PRG also noted that UCC intends to develop an new Integrated Teaching & Learning and Student Support Building (the Hub) and it will be important to articulate the relationship between the Library and the Hub to ensure that all study spaces are used maximally. The PRG was concerned at some of the negative messaging in the Library.

Recommendation: It is recommended that UCC develops a strategy to optimise all its study space in libraries, computer labs and study hubs, in a coordinated fashion, ensuring that there is a variety of types of space, and that it is consistently of as high a quality as possible, with some spaces open for as long as possible. All of the spaces should be promoted in a uniform fashion to users regardless of location or support unit for the area,

Recommendation: The PRG recommends that a watching brief is kept on open access labs and study space.

Recommendation: It is recommended that consideration is given to using positive messaging to students in the Library (eg “No to noise” should be replaced by “Yes to quiet”).

Financing

The PRG was aware throughout its interviews and discussions of the constraints presented by the economic environment which is currently different from the issues in other jurisdictions. The PRG also heard about the possibilities which can be addressed by bringing in income through external funding, e.g. philanthropic giving, externally funded research projects, and links to the corporate world. Shared services—working in collaboration with other universities to deliver services is also becoming increasingly important. The collection and publishing of metrics such as analytics and key performance indicators (KPIs) concerning service delivery would be a positive step in assuring quality improvement, as well as possible justification of additional or reallocated support resources as the University continues to grow and change.

Resource Allocation:

The allocation of University budget to support IS activities must be sufficient to allow IS to meet the service needs identified in the newly developed Strategic Plan for IS. The development of Key Performance Indicators and service metrics will ensure that those involved in resource allocation understand the needs in IS. The allocation should be benchmarked to national and international norms. It is also recommended that IS exploit fully all external funding opportunities in conjunction with academic partners and other institutional partners.

Recommendation: The allocation to IS should be benchmarked to national and international norms.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends the development of Key Performance Indicators and metrics about IS services to ensure transparency of the use of the allocated resource.

Recommendation: IS is also recommended to explore improvements through collaboration and funding opportunities through CONUL and IUALG.

Communications, internal and external

The PRG recommends that IS should develop a marketing and communications plan, which makes clear to all user groups what they can expect from the services. This should include the “Service Catalogue” referred to above. It should also ensure that users know where to go for help, ensure alerts about service disruption are well notified to the community, and ensure that users and University administrators understand Key Performance Indicators, and metrics about IS services. The communications plan may need to include information about what cannot be achieved as well as what can be achieved to set expectations correctly.

An IS internal communication system should be designed to enable staff to retrieve information as needed. Such a system would reinforce individual accountability, transparency and shared understanding. Keeping people abreast of what is happening in domains and distinctive professional areas within IS is essential for everyone working in information organisations today. Staff must be kept abreast of the many complex changes that are occurring in the information ecosystem: higher education, learning and education, technology, demographics, economics and society. A small project team might be formed to develop a plan for how to help staff learn about key trends, developments and events in the external environment.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends that IS should develop a marketing and communications plan that reflects the identity and mission of the new, integrated IS organisation.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends the implementation of good internal communications system within IS.

Recommendation: The PRG recommends that the formation of a small project team to work on communications within IS, to ensure that staff are aware of issues in IS, the University and wider HE and professional domains.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Implementation of recommendations for improvement made in Peer Review Group Report arising from last quality review

The PRG noted the reports from previous quality reviews of the elements of IS as presented in the SAR. The PRG commended the efforts made to implement the recommendations and the progress made in all areas. However the PRG was of the opinion that, given the restructuring of the areas of activity into an integrated whole since the last reviews, that it would be more valuable to concentrate on the developments since the last reviews and to look forward

Recommendations for improvement made by the unit.

The recommendations set forth in the Unit's Self-Assessment Report are on target and specific. They are based upon the evidence gathered in the self-assessment process and align with the Spencer Report recommendations. The Panel has added further - perhaps more strategic - recommendations. These recommendations have been detailed in the text of this report and are summarized below.

Recommendations for improvement made by the Peer Review Group

The following is a summary of the recommendations made by the PRG, having considered the evidence put before it, the Self-Assessment Report and the comments made by various stakeholders during the site visit.

The PRG recommends that:

1. UCC should adopt the full set of recommendations in the Spencer Report with immediate effect, and work to implement its full set of recommendations.
2. There be greater linkage between the University strategy and the developing IS strategy. The mission, vision and strategic directions of Information Services must be developed to support the University's strategy.
3. Information Services should work immediately on a short term set of IS priorities, which should then be developed into a fully integrated IS Strategic Plan.
4. IS should develop a new organisational structure, based on recommendations in the Spencer report and on its Strategic Plan.
5. Staff development should be given a high priority with the development of a plan which fosters collaboration and innovation throughout IS, using a variety of techniques and approaches.
6. IS should develop a programme to demonstrate value for money across the range of its activities.
7. IS should undertake a study to identify financial and human resource requirements of a programme to manage network and data centre infrastructures on a lifecycle basis; a dedicated fund for lifecycle replacement of technology components should be established.
8. A plan for implementing the recommendations in the Spencer Report be established and agreed as soon as possible.

9. Once the leadership team is in place, the PRG recommends the following steps, based on the Spencer Report.
 - Create a new work design for IS, one in which the work that can be brought together in a single, cohesive process is aligned and integrated. The new design must be developed with careful attention to the changes occurring in higher education and to the goals and initiatives set forth by UCC. Every effort should be made to reduce redundancy, streamline workflow, leverage technology, make effective use of student employees, and outsourcing. The result should be a work design that provides meaningful assignments for staff, assures efficiencies, and leads to work satisfaction.
 - Identify a new organisational structure, including reporting relationships, to ensure effective coordination and communication within the new IS.
 - Consider a nomenclature for the organisational subunits that describes the work area in language easily understood by students and academic staff.
 - Create the shared leadership model called for on page 3 of the Spencer Report (Appendix B). Clearly define the performance expectations for all managerial leaders. Prepare a “deliberate program to develop leadership skills...throughout the organisation.”
 - Conduct a training and learning needs assessment for the staff. Create a staff development plan based upon the findings of this needs assessment. Include consideration of emerging competencies and identification of those competencies everyone in IS should have, e.g., interpersonal skills, managing conflict, problem solving in groups, technical proficiency, etc.
 - Create a new integrated Information Services Strategic Plan, one that is based upon a careful assessment and understanding of the UCC Strategic Plan, aligns with the goals and initiatives outlined in the UCC Strategic Plan and integrates the goals and initiatives of the new IS organisational units. Design a process to accomplish this that involves IS and engages them in meaningful ways.
 - Identify two or three initiatives for which project teams could be formed to carry out the recommendation to pilot collaborative efforts in key areas. Staff these project teams with individuals from across IS. Expect these teams to work together to develop a project plan for accomplishment of an important activity.
10. The establishment of an external advisory board to the Director of Information Services.
11. The establishment of a Service Catalogue of IS services, and the collection and publishing of metrics associated with each service.

12. Priority is given to funding for resources, and that the proportion of funding devoted to e-resources is increased as possible.
13. IS better coordinates services for researchers.
14. Development of a business continuity plan for the Computer Centre.
15. UCC should reassess the distributed model for IT administration across the institution with regard to considerations including operational efficiencies, economies of scale, the sustainability of satellite IT operations, cyber security etc.
16. A planning process is established that reviews campus middleware, identifying both current capabilities and near- and longer-term needs.
17. Opportunities for improved efficiency and record-keeping through deployment of enterprise-scale document management systems should be explored, perhaps initially in a limited pilot programme and potentially with the assistance of an industrial consultant.
18. The links the Library has with the community, through its services and collections, are worked up as case studies for the next University strategy.
19. The Development and Alumni Office develops a fundraising strategy for UCC's heritage collections, with the aim of seeking external and philanthropic funding to open up (or reveal) any hidden collections through metadata, digitisation and physical and virtual exhibitions.
20. IS provide enhanced support to users through 'simple fix' training of security personnel for front line AV support and other creative collaborative solutions to meet user needs in an effective manner.
21. A strategy is developed to address staffing issues, including imbalances in age profile, gender profile and grade profiles; and that any changes due to imminent retirements are used as an opportunity.
22. University HR should provide support to IS leadership and be prepared to adopt new practices and programs to support the creation of a culture of collaboration and innovation.
23. The leadership positions are filled as soon as possible.

24. The creation of a means to identify and assess the talents of IS staff, to identify areas for talent development and prepare a comprehensive staff development plan.
25. Once appointed, the leadership team should undertake a leadership development programme.
26. Implement a full roll out of wireless access to all campus buildings.
27. UCC completes the planned upgrade project for the Data Centre as a matter of priority.
28. A review of the infrastructure is undertaken to ensure that sufficient redundancy is provided to protect all critical services.
29. UCC develops a strategy to optimise all its study space in libraries, computer labs and study hubs, in a coordinated fashion, ensuring that there is a variety of types of space, and that it is consistently of as high a quality as possible, with some spaces open for as long as possible.
30. A watching brief is kept on open access labs and study space.
31. Consideration is given to using positive messaging to students in the Library (eg “No to noise” should be replaced by “Yes to quiet”).
32. The allocation to IS should be benchmarked to national and international norms.
33. The development of Key Performance Indicators and metrics about IS services to ensure transparency of the use of the allocated resource.
34. IS explore improvements through collaboration and funding opportunities through CONUL and IUALG.
35. IS should develop a marketing and communications plan that reflects the identity and mission of the new, integrated IS organisation.
36. The implementation of good internal communications system within IS.
37. The formation of a small project team to work on communications within IS, to ensure that staff are aware of issues in IS, the University and wider HE and professional domains.

Appendix A

Information services

Peer Review Group Site Visit Timetable

In Summary

Monday 24 October:	The Peer Review Group (PRG) arrives at the River Lee Hotel for a briefing from the Director of the Quality Promotion Unit, followed by an informal meeting with staff from Information Services.
Tuesday 25 October:	The PRG considers the Self-Assessment Report and meet with Information Services staff and stakeholder representatives. A working private dinner is held that evening for the PRG.
Wednesday 26 October:	The PRG meets with relevant officers of UCC. An exit presentation is given by the PRG to all members of Information Services. A working private dinner is held that evening for the PRG in order to finalise the report. This is the final evening of the review.
Thursday 27 October:	External PRG members depart.

Monday 24 October 2011	
16.00	Meeting of members of the Peer Review Group Briefing by Director of Quality Promotion Unit, Dr. Norma Ryan. Group agrees final work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following 2 days. Views are exchanged and areas to be clarified or explored are identified.
17.30	Meeting with the President, Dr. Micheal Murphy
19.00	Informal dinner for members of the Peer Review Group, Head of Information Services and members of the IS Co-ordinating Committee. Ms. Virginia Conrick, Library Mr. Roy Cummins, Computer Centre Mr. John FitzGerald, Librarian & Director of Information Systems Mr. Killian Murphy, Audio Visual Media Services Ms. Claire O'Brien, Library
Tuesday 25 October 2011	
Venue: Library Conference Room	
08.30	Convening of Peer Review Group
08.45	Mr. John FitzGerald, Librarian & Director of Information Services

09.30	Group meeting with all Information Services staff	
10.15	Tea/coffee	
10.45	<u>Co-ordinating Committee</u> Ms. Virginia Conrick, Library Mr. Roy Cummins, Computer Centre Mr. John FitzGerald, Librarian & Director of Information Systems Mr. Killian Murphy, Audio Visual Media Services Ms. Claire O'Brien, Library	
11.15	<u>Meetings with individual members of staff:</u> 11.15-11.25 Crónán O'Doibhlin (Library) 11.25-11.35 Sinead O'Geran (C. Centre) 11.35-11.45 Catherine Sanborn (Library) 11.45-11.55 Ronan Madden (Library) 11.55-12.05 Lorna O'Callaghan (C. Centre)	<u>Meetings with individual Members of staff:</u> 11.15-11.25 Virginia Conrick (Library) 11.25-11.35 Tim O'Donovan (C. Centre) 11.35-11.45 Valerie King (Library) 11.45-11.55 Maurice Ryder (C. Centre)
12.00	Tour of facilities in the Boole Library, escorted by Mr. John FitzGerald, Librarian & Director Information Services and Mr. Seamus McMahon, Deputy Librarian	
13.00	Working lunch	
14.00	Visit to Computer Centre and AVMS facilities. -Commencing in Boole Basement escorted by Mr. Michael O'Halloran, Manager, User Services. -Audio Visual facilities in Kane Building, G20, escorted by Mr. Aidan O'Donovan, Senior Technical Officer, AVMS. -Computer Centre facilities in Kane Building, 4 th Floor, escorted by Mr. Denis O'Sullivan, Manager, Systems and Network Operations. -Audio Visual offices and facilities in Aras na Laoi, escorted by Mr. Killian Murphy, Senior Technical Officer, AVMS.	
15.00	<u>Representatives of UCC Students</u> Ms. Ann Marie Harte, 3 rd yr, Arts (Geography & Sociology) Ms. Michelle McCarthy, 2 nd yr, Medicine Mr. Nevin Power, 1 st yr PhD, Arts (American Foreign Policy) Ms. Siobhan Power, 3 rd yr, Arts (Irish) Ms. Jenny Saunders, 1 st yr, Arts (Geography)	
15.30	<u>Representatives of UCC Staff</u> Ms. Linda Doran, Disability Support Services Dr. Olive McCarthy, Dept Food Business & Development Dr. Tanya Mulcahy, College Manager, SEFS (<i>can only attend after 3.50pm</i>)	

	Dr. Sinéad O'Neill, Health Services Research PhD student
16.00	Ms. Mary Ward, Human Resources Business Partner
16.15	Mr. Seamus McMahon, Deputy Librarian
16.30	Mr. Diarmuid Collins, Bursar & Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office
16.45	Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching & Learning
17.00	<u>Representatives of stakeholders</u> Ms. Ann Cummins, Mercy University Hospital & Boole Library user Ms. Frances O'Sullivan, External Reader for Boole Library Mr. Liam Ronayne, City Librarian Ms. Louise Tobin, Director of International Student Recruitment & Strategy, UCC Dr. Jean van Sinderen Law, Director of Development, UCC Mr. Eamon O Riain, Tyndall National Institute, UCC
19.00	Meeting of Peer Review Group to identify remaining aspects to be clarified and to finalise tasks for the following day followed by a working private dinner for members for the Peer Review Group
Wednesday 26 October 2011	
Venue: Library Conference Room, Library	
7.30	Meeting with Mr. John Fitzgerald, Director IS
08.30	Convening of Peer Review Group
08.45	Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President
09.30	<u>Heads of Colleges or nominee</u> Professor Pat Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science Ms. Kathryn Neville, College Manager, College of Medicine & Health
10.15	Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience
10.30	Tea/coffee
11.30	Professor John Morrison, Chair, Academic Council IS & Educational Resources Committee
11.45	Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research & Innovation
12.15	<u>Senior Management Groups:</u> <u>Audio Visual Media Services</u> Mr. Brian Bugler, Senior Technical Officer Mr. Aidan O'Donovan, Senior Technical Officer <u>Computer Centre:</u> Mr. Jerry Buckley, Manager, Enterprise Applications

	<p>Mr. Peter Flynn, Manager, Electronic Publishing / Learning Technologies</p> <p>Mr. Michael O'Halloran, Manager, User Services</p> <p>Dr. Henry O'Keeffe, Manager, Systems and Network Engineering</p> <p>Mr. Denis O'Sullivan, Manager, Systems and Network Operations</p> <p><u>Library:</u></p> <p>Ms. Margot Conrick, Head of Information Services</p> <p>Ms. Valerie King, Head of Customer Services</p> <p>Mr. Seamus McMahon, Deputy Librarian</p> <p>Mr. Crónán O'Doibhlin, Head of Special Collections Archives & Repository Service</p> <p>Ms. Catherine Sanborn, Head of Library IT Services</p>
13.00	Working lunch; Preparation of first draft of final report
14.30	Dr. Michael Murphy, President
14.45	Preparation of first draft of final report (continued)
16.30	Mr. John FitzGerald, Librarian & Director of Information Services
17.00	<p>Exit presentation to all staff made by the Chair of the Peer Review Group summarising the principal findings of the Peer Review Group.</p> <p>This presentation is <u>not</u> for discussion at this time.</p>
19.00	Working private dinner for members of the Peer Review Group to complete drafting of report and finalise arrangements for completion and submission of final report.

Appendix B

Extract from Spencer Report

UCC – Review of Information Services

14 July 2010

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:

- *The best design and configuration of the senior leadership team and the governance structures required to support and guide Information Services; and*
- *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 of the Report. 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.

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.