

UCC LIBRARY

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor C. O'Driscoll, School of Pharmacy, UCC (Chair)
- Professor D. Cox, Dean of Arts, UCC
- Ms A. Neligan, Librarian, NUI Maynooth, Ireland
- Mr H. Nicholson, Librarian, University of Bath, UK

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 17-19 November 2005. It included visits to library facilities in UCC and at Pouladuff, and meetings with

- Head and staff of the Unit as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Deans of Faculties
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Gerard Wrixon, President
- Mr. Michael Kelleher, Secretary & Bursar
- Professor Áine Hyland, Vice-President
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Acting Registrar
- Mr. Noel Keeley, Vice-President for Human Resources
- Mr. Mark Poland, Director, Office of Buildings & Estates
- Mr. Michael O'Halloran, Head, User Services, Computer Centre
- Ms. Carmel Cotter, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

DESCRIPTION OF UCC LIBRARY

Note: Data given is for the academic year 2004/05

Head of Unit: Mr. John Fitzgerald, Librarian
Staff: 112 staff
Location of Unit: Boole, Cork University Hospital, store at Pouladuff

MISSION STATEMENT

“The Library’s declared mission is to support and develop scholarship, teaching and research at University College Cork through identifying and providing efficient access to appropriate information resources and services.”

AIMS OF UNIT

- To satisfy undergraduate scholarship needs by providing access to library services and facilities and by developing life long skills in the retrieval and exploitation of information.
- To support teaching at all levels through direct liaison with academic departments, both in planning for and servicing the information needs thereof.
- To support research and consultancy activities sponsored by UCC by anticipating and satisfying the need for prompt information access and delivery.
- To keep abreast of new developments and innovations in information provision and to exploit these on behalf of the staff and students of UCC.
- To assist in the advancement of knowledge and ideas by stimulating the development of resource provision and by establishing and sustaining national and international links with strategic information resources.
- To provide facilities and support for the professional development of library and other UCC staff.
- To provide a healthy and pleasant environment for staff and users of the library.
- To play an active role in recording the social and cultural activities of the Munster region.

FUNCTIONS OF UNIT

The University's learning and research information resource for students and staff.

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

The reviewers found the documentation provided was thorough and comprehensive. Many of the issues raised by the PRG were anticipated by the self-assessment report. The benchmarking exercises carried out by the unit were of value in providing a comparison with similar libraries in the UK. Comparative figures with other Irish libraries would have been useful.

The UCC Library is the library of University College Cork, the third largest university in the state. It is the learning and research information resource for over 15,000 students and 1,200 staff. It is the principal source of information for a wide range of disciplines in the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Law, Science, Medicine and Engineering. It has a stock of 800,000 volumes and provides access to some 8,500 periodical titles.

The PRG conducted a thorough review of the activities of the library. It noted a disparity between the level of service provided by library staff and the level of resources offered by the library stock. The library's stakeholders (students, staff and external users) were unanimous in their opinion that the quality of service offered by the members of staff they dealt with in the library was of a very high standard but equally united in their criticism of the lack of basic research materials (books and periodicals). The PRG would endorse this view. The current expenditure on books and periodicals is not sufficient to justify the claim that the library is a research library.

These figures are part of a developing trend that has been evident in UCC for some years; since, in the past, the amount allocated to pay and non-pay used to be equal. The trend can be explained by rises in salaries and the retention of an experienced workforce at the top of their salary scales.

At the same time, the purchase power of the non-pay budget has had to cope with considerable increases in the prices of journal subscriptions necessitating a reduction in the amount allocated for the purchase of books and the cancellation of some journal subscriptions.

The interface between the library and the academic community is an issue for the university as a whole. The PRG were of the opinion that the members of the library staff should be more involved at many different levels, from the central decision making bodies of the university to more effective consultation with faculties and departments. There should be frequent and meaningful contact between departmental staff and subject librarians appointed to take responsibility for overseeing the development of the collection.

PROGRESS MADE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRG RECOMMENDATIONS

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the quality review of the Library was held on 12 October 2006.

Present: Professor Gerard T. Wrixon, President
 Mr John Fitzgerald, Librarian
 Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit
 Ms Deirdre O’Brien, Administrator, Quality Promotion Unit

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group

VP: Vice-President

QPC: Quality Promotion Committee

QIP: Quality Improvement Plan

HR: Human Resources

RAM: Resource Allocation Model

LDO: Library Departmental Operative

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of the QPC	Follow-up Report October 06
<p>Improve the Library’s financial position.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC referred the matter to the Budget Review Group and to the VP for Planning, Communications & Development for active consideration and a request that the resourcing of the Library be included in the development of the new RAM.</p> <p>The QPC also noted the central location of the Boole Library as a focus on the campus.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Library’s allocation of the university budget has not increased. The new RAM model is being reviewed by the Librarian.</p> <p>Significant external funding has been obtained from philanthropic and government sources.</p>

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of the QPC	Follow-up Report October 06
<p>Opening hours should be increased during the Summer Recess and during weekends.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC suggested that the Librarian seek to fill the additional LDO positions immediately on the foot of a written undertaking that the next two retirements will fund the posts. The Librarian, in making the application to the University via the Chair of the Finance Committee, should specify precisely the two retirements/resignations so designated.</p> <p>The QPC noted that provision of library services and the information desk are required by students in the evenings as well as at weekends. This is an issue, particularly, for mature, part-time and all continuing learners who may not be able to access the Library during normal working hours.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Significant extensions to opening hours have been achieved. Formal negotiations to extend library opening to a 7 day week are ongoing and have recently been sent to the Labour Relations Court for adjudication. The two additional LDO positions will be filled once these negotiations have been completed.</p>
<p>Develop a comprehensive policy framework for all core library activities, in particular the area of collection development</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC noted that imaginative concepts are needed to attract external donor funding. Welcomed proposed actions.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>A Collection Development Policy is being finalised and will be published in March 2007.</p>
<p>Subject Librarians should become the key points of liaison with academic departments and research units</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC recommended that Subject Librarians should be invited to become members of the new 'College' Boards when these are established as part of the new restructuring process.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Each subject librarian has been assigned both to specific Departments and to one of the four Colleges.</p> <p>The Librarian is now included in the circulation of papers for Academic Board which facilitates the circulation of relevant material to subject librarians.</p>

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of the QPC	Follow-up Report October 06
Acquisition processes should be improved in order to increase the rate of acquisition of material proposed by academic staff	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ongoing A major project has commenced, designed to eliminate existing backlogs and improve the acquisition processes. To date the backlog has been eliminated and a preferred supplier selected which will allow the library to purchase and source material more efficiently. The target completion date for the project is April 2008
Cataloguing of unrecorded material should continue until all holdings are accessible.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. The QPC would strongly encourage the cataloguing process to continue as rapidly as possible, noting that this project is underway now for some time. The QPC would like a report on the timescale for completion of this project, and suggested that the Library seek additional resources, if necessary.	Ongoing The cataloguing has been successful to date with an expected completion rate of 75% by the end of 2006. The target date for full completion is December 2007.
Refurbish Q+1, Q+2, Q+3 floors of the Boole Library along with the lower floors as part of the postgraduate research library extension and refurbishment project (inclusive of upgrade of HVAC system).	Recommendation endorsed and supported.	Not implemented. Funding is currently being sought for this refurbishment; a submission for €5.6m has been made to the HEA.

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of the QPC	Follow-up Report October 06
<p>The department should develop and implement a staff development plan</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC suggested that the Library liaise with the Training & Development section of the Department of HR, and that money is not unnecessarily spent on an external consultant. The QPC also suggested that a joint project in his regards with the other Irish Universities should be considered, in particular with respect to development of staff in areas specific to Library activities.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>The library has not expended money on external advice and is liaising with the HR Department on this matter. Work will commence on the development of this plan once the Library has completed the Collection Development Plan, agreed by the Library the QPC and the PRG as higher priority. Accordingly, the target date for completion of the staff development plan is December 2007.</p>
<p>The Librarian should be included in the academic representation on the executive committee structure of the University.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly supported by QPC</p>	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>University restructuring has hampered the implementation of this recommendation.</p>