

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

**Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance**

**Peer Review Group Report**

**UCC Library**

**Academic Year 2004/05**

**20<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

## **MEMBERS OF THE PEER REVIEW GROUP**

1. Ms. Agnes Neligan, Librarian, NUI Maynooth Extern
2. Mr. Howard Nicholson, Librarian, University of Bath Extern
3. Professor Caitriona O’Driscoll, School of Pharmacy, UCC Intern Chair
4. Professor David Cox, Dean of Arts, UCC Intern Rapporteur

## **PEER REVIEW**

### **Timetable of the Site Visit**

A detailed timetable is attached as Appendix A.

The UCC Library is one of the largest units in UCC to be reviewed. It has 112 members of staff. The structure of the timetable appeared to be determined by criteria that were more suitable for the review of much smaller units. For example, there are a number of levels of management in an organisation of the size of the Boole Library. The PRG would have welcomed the chance to meet with each one of them in turn in order to explore the relationships between the different levels of management.

The PRG asked to see a representative from the Disability Support Unit. This meeting was informative and produced one of the PRG’s recommendations. The PRG suggests that it should be standard practice to include a meeting with a representative from the Disability Support Unit whenever a unit that provides a service to UCC students is being reviewed.

### **Methodology**

Apart from dividing into two groups in order to allow part of the PRG to visit the library store at Pouladuff, the PRG worked as a team. The two externs provided the team with a national and international understanding of the organisational and structural norms of university libraries, the two interns offered the team an understanding of the local environment which the library served.

### **Site Visit**

After working for two days in the airless and claustrophobic atmosphere of the Seminar Room in the Q-1 level of the Boole Library, the PRG fully appreciated the concerns expressed by library staff about the conditions in which they have to work.

## **Peer Group Report**

The PRG report was drafted during the site visit, written from notes taken by the rapporteur, and revised in consultation with members of the review team.

## **OVERALL ANALYSIS**

### **Self-Assessment Report**

The documentation provided was thorough and comprehensive. Many of the issues raised by the PRG were anticipated by the self-assessment report. The bench-marking 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 and it is unfortunate that up to date figures are not available.

The following error should be corrected. The figures in the table for Q22, page 10, appendix B (All UCC Students (Library Services Survey 2004)) in Appendix G (volume 3) have been reversed between columns 1 and 3.

## **FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW GROUP**

The Boole 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.

About 4.25% of the overall University budget is currently allocated to the library budget. The last comparative figures available for CHIU libraries are for 1999/00. In that year the % for UCC was 3.4%, the average (excluding TCD) was 4.7%.

One problem is the imbalance in the distribution of the library budget between pay and non-pay. The pay element in the library budget for UCC is a much higher proportion of the total budget than in other Irish universities.

Pay as % of total expenditure (2002/2003):

UCC	64.7%	
NUIG	56.8%	
UL	51.2%	Data source: Secretary and Bursar, UCC

In 1999/00 the UCC staff % was 53% as against the average (excluding TCD) of 55%.

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 rate of VAT is much higher in Ireland, 21% on electronic products, 13.5% + on print periodicals and also higher rates on equipment and services than the UK. The cost of material, services and staff is more expensive in Ireland.

The acquisition of modern material for the collection has not kept pace with either supply or demand. The university has added new disciplines and new subject areas within existing disciplines without due regard for the impact of this expansion upon the library budget.

The PRG believes that this analysis of the pressures upon the library budget would be generally accepted within the university. The issue for UCC is what to do about the present situation in the context of maintaining and enhancing the quality of the library

service. The PRG is aware that there are staffing pressures within the library, many of them caused by the shedding of contract staff and student help in order to reduce the library pay budget. Many members of staff expressed concern about the reduction of services such as shelving that had been dependent upon the employment of such staff. Even so, the PRG is not willing to endorse any of the appointments proposed in the SAR until more fundamental issues concerning the balance between the pay and non-pay budgets have been addressed by the University. The PRG believes that there should be a thorough review of the organisational structures in the library in order to make more effective use of existing staffing resources. This review should also address issues of improving communication between staff, empowering and giving more responsibility for leadership to middle management (such as the section heads), and staff development and training. Initiative and responsibility should be encouraged at all levels.

The other major issue that the PRG would wish to highlight concerns the interface between the library and the academic community. This is an issue for the university as a whole. The PRG suggests 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.

The PRG will also make recommendations on a number of other issues including the quality of the library accommodation, its storage facility at Pouladuff, the library catalogue, the opening hours of the library, and the facilities provided for students, including the disabled.

The work of the PRG in producing its recommendations for improving the quality of the service provided by the library has been considerably enhanced by the thoroughness of the preparatory work undertaken by the unit itself and the honesty and integrity shown in the responses of staff both written and verbal. The PRG also appreciated the respect for, and commitment shown to, the process of quality review that it encountered in everyone that it met, from both inside and outside the library. The library is a vital resource for the academic community and it is crucial for the well-being of the university that the recommendations arising out of this review are implemented with consideration and understanding.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

### **Recommendations made by the Library in the Self-Assessment Report**

In general, the recommendations of the Unit concerning the issues of structure, teamwork and staff development are endorsed by the PRG.

The order in which the recommendations are listed is slightly different to that in the SAR document.

#### ***1. Strategic planning and policy development***

##### **1.1 Develop a comprehensive policy framework for all core library activities, in particular the area of collection development.**

Endorsed. Any policy framework adopted must be appropriate for UCC.

##### **1.2 Generate a Strategic Plan for 2005-2010 that will incorporate the approved recommendations of the 2004 Quality Review.**

The proposed course of action is essential but the timetable must follow the planning process for the development of the overall University Strategic Plan.

##### **1.3 Strengthen the Library's financial position.**

A range of methods should be considered for improving the Library's financial position. The issue of overall funding is primarily related to questions concerning the balance between the pay and non-pay elements in the expenditure.

#### ***2. Services development***

##### **2.1 Improve library opening hours in the Boole Library and branch libraries.**

The recommendation is strongly supported. The opening hours should be extended at weekends and after 4 p.m. during the summer vacation.

##### **2.3 Improve consistency and reliability of staffed services, particularly at evening and weekend.**

The recommendation is endorsed in the context of recommendation 2.1. The issue of opening hours and the level of service are related. The hours at which service is

available should also be extended. All library staff, including those from technical departments, should share in providing a reliable public service.

**2.2 Converge responsibilities for handling, acquisition of and access to electronic resources.**

The recommendation is endorsed. The proposed course of action is not endorsed. The existing staffing resources should be restructured to create an Electronic Services Team. The leader of this team should have responsibility for servicing the existing processes for materials such as database subscriptions and E-journals, responsibility for which is currently spread inefficiently over several divisions, and for the development of the digital library, including electronic projects such as E-prints.

**2.4 Provide improved support for e-learning, including web-based and multimedia teaching and learning resources.**

Refer to recommendation 2.2. The PRG suggest that consideration should be given to giving subject-librarians responsibility for the development of e-resources in their subject area.

**2.5 Seek to introduce information literacy training into teaching modules.**

Endorsed.

**2.6 Increase the number of photocopiers and IT workstations available to library users.**

Endorsed. See PRG recommendation 4.3.

**2.7 Improve stock availability.**

Endorsed. The current level of performance in the reshelving of books needs improving. The area for sorting books is inadequate. See PRG recommendation 3.4.

**2.8 Improve technical support for library IT and multimedia equipment.**

Endorsed.

### ***3. Collection access development***

#### **3.1 Increase book and journal acquisition.**

A higher proportion of the budget should be allocated to the acquisition of books and journals. There are issues about the balance between book and journal expenditure in different disciplines. The PRG recognises the importance of the recent SFI/HEA E-journals initiative (IReL).

#### **3.2 Improve acquisition and accessioning procedures to ensure speedy availability of ordered library materials (books, serials, inter-library loans, databases).**

Endorsed. See PRG recommendation 2.4d.

The possibility of improving the efficiency of the acquisitions process by outsourcing to book suppliers more of the processing of materials in readiness for the shelf should be investigated.

#### **3.3 Improve access to materials held in the Library Depository**

Strongly supported. The present situation in which large parts of the collections are not catalogued is unsatisfactory.

The objective should be to develop a collection level description first.

The university should explore the possibility of obtaining private funding that could be used to assist the costs of cataloguing the collection. The process of cataloguing should be used to review the range of stock held in the depository. See PRG recommendations 5.4a and 5.4b.

### ***4. Staff development and administration***

#### **4.1 Devise a staff development policy with the aim of providing improved training, development and mobility opportunities for all staff.**

Endorsed. A staff development policy is crucial. There is a need for upskilling, training and personnel development at all levels. Performance Management will help identify training needs. The policy should be developed and implemented by a task force with cross-divisional staff membership. See PRG recommendations 3.1d-f.

#### **4.2 Assign responsibility for staff development and administration to a human resources professional to be employed within the Library.**

The issue needs to be addressed in the context of university-wide proposals for structural reorganisation that include the allocation of staff from HR and Finance to separate units.

Issues that concern general university policies (such as disciplinary matters) are best dealt with by staff from the HR office. Issues that are specifically related to staff in the library (such as the provision of specialist training) should be dealt with by a senior member of the library staff (outsourced as necessary) with specific responsibilities for such development.

### ***5. Management and decision-making structures***

#### **5.1 Review the library management structure to include a review and clarification of roles and responsibilities, and a review of decision-making structures.**

The PRG were aware of issues arising out of a recent labour court judgement. It did not affect their response to the recommendation. The recommendation is endorsed. Some change is essential because of some loss of trust in the present structure. The proposed course of action is endorsed. The issue of two-way communication needs to be addressed. In addition to improving channels of communication between different levels of management, consideration should be given to creating better cross-divisional links. There is a need to improve both vertical and horizontal lines of communication.

#### **5.4 Make greater use of cross-functional, cross-grade working groups.**

Strongly supported (see response to 5.1). The PRG would give this a higher priority than that allocated.

#### **5.2 Measure and evaluate more frequently the Library's performance in all key areas, particularly customer satisfaction.**

Endorsed. This is good management practice.

#### **5.3 Increase the frequency of customer satisfaction information gathering.**

Strongly supported. The PRG suggest that a general library customer satisfaction survey should be carried out every two years.

## ***6. Public relations and communication***

### **6.1 Ensure that the Library is informed of all new course developments and participates in new course resource planning.**

Strongly supported. It is apparent that course proposals are being approved without reference to the consequences for the library. See PRG recommendation 2.1.

There should be designated responsibilities for subject librarians. They should work in consultation with departmental staff to develop subject collections. They should be informed of proposals for acquisitions. See PRG recommendation 2.4e.

### **6.2 Improve communication between the Library and academic departments.**

The subject librarians in the relevant discipline should attend departmental meetings once a year. See PRG recommendation 2.4b.

### **6.3 Raise general awareness of the value of library resources to learners, teachers and research staff.**

This recommendation is unnecessary. The PRG are of the opinion that learners, teachers and research staff are fully aware of the value of library resources.

### **6.4 Increase Library involvement within the University and utilise library staff expertise on relevant University committees.**

Endorsed. The Librarian should be more involved with the policy-making committees of the University. See PRG recommendation 2.3. The involvement of subject librarians with Faculty business should also be increased.

## ***7. Physical Infrastructure***

### **7.1 Refurbish the Boole Library upper floors.**

This recommendation should be reconsidered as part of the construction of the extension.

### **7.2 Improve the air quality of the Boole Library.**

Endorsed.

### **7.3 Address maintenance and deferred maintenance issues such as carpet replacement in the Library.**

Strongly supported. The PRG perceives the future Boole Library as premium highly visible space symbolising the commitment of the university to a high quality of education.

### **7.4 Improve the cleaning of the Boole Library interior.**

The situation is unsatisfactory and should be remedied.

### **7.5 Improve access control systems for library users to ensure better security of materials.**

A swipe control access system is essential. It would be a deterrent to theft and the abuse of resources. See PRG recommendation 4.6.

The PRG also reviewed recommendations in Appendix H, Library Staff Perspective. These recommendations are mostly subsumed into the above recommendations from the SAR. They are not commented on individually in this document

## **Recommendations made by the Peer Review Group**

### ***1. Resources and Budgets***

#### **1.1a. The library budget for information resources such as books and periodicals should be increased.**

Everyone in the university, students and staff, is frustrated by the funding situation.

It should be possible to make more efficient use of the existing budget to ensure that this recommendation is achieved.

#### **1.1b. The methodology by which the Library budget is determined should be more open. The policy on virement should be reviewed.**

In assessing the effectiveness with which the Library budget is used, it is necessary to distinguish between the balance between pay and non-pay (which is a percentage) and the amount spent on books and periodicals (which is a specific amount). The PRG

believes that the amount spent on library materials should be increased and that the balance between pay and non-pay elements in the budget should be brought into line with national norms. The PRG noted the university's current policy on virement between pay and non-pay elements and suggests that this should be reviewed in the context of the objectives described above.

**1.1c. The Budget Review Group should determine the level of the library budget after consultation with the Librarian.**

The Library Policy Committee is ineffective. It reports too late to influence the budget allocation for the following year. It is not sufficiently proactive in advocating the case for increasing the library budget. The timing of the budget allocation must be reviewed; the library should ideally know in the summer what their allocation will be so that books and journals can be purchased in advance of the coming academic year.

**1.2. A higher proportion of the overall budget should be allocated to developing the collection. The % spent on non-pay elements should be increased to match the proportions of other university libraries in the state.**

Special characteristics affecting the Boole Library, it employs two archivists to deal with a collection of national significance, for example, should be taken into account in implementing this recommendation.

**1.3. The individual departmental budgets for the purchase of library material should be determined by an equitable allocation mechanism.**

The PRG noted that work was in progress on this issue.

**1.4. The balance between expenditure on books and journals should be determined by a collection development policy for each discipline.**

An active research community in the Sciences, for example, needs to maintain its journal subscriptions. The library should be pro-active in journal acquisition, keeping the journals that are being used.

Journal Expenditure in 2002/2003 in Euro per student FTE

UCD	160
UL	130
QUB	118

TCD	111
Maynooth	109
UCG	100
UCC	091

Source of data: Secretary and Bursar, UCC

The PRG noted the substantial increase in journals provided by IReL and the long- term impact of this service on library resources.

**1.5. There should be a review of the staffing structure of the library before any new appointments are made.**

The need to make cost-efficiencies is often a catalyst for change.

It was noted that some members of staff feel overwhelmed by the volume of work. It should be possible to make more effective use of resources such as student help by adopting a teamwork approach to tasks such as the shelving of returned books.

Technical service procedures should be evaluated to determine areas where staff savings could be made.

The PRG questions the need for the present number of service points and for an information desk when the issue desk deals with many queries. It is probable that the staffing requirements of the Inter-Library Loan service will continue to decline if present trends continue.

***2. The relationship between the Boole Library and the University.***

The PRG believes that it is important to strengthen the relationship between the library and the university. The library can and should play a more effective and visibly more active role in the life of the academic community.

The PRG believes that new degree programmes are being introduced without due regard for the consequences for the library budget. The relevant section on the implications for library resources (Part B Question 5) of the “Proposal Form for New Programmes and Major Changes in Existing Programmes” is being ignored when proposals are put forward and considered. The librarian must be consulted when proposals are made.

**2.1. The section on library resources in the course proposal form for new programmes and major changes should include a requirement to consult the librarian in order to obtain an assessment of the current holdings in the area and an estimate of the probable library resources that will be required to implement the proposal. The proposal should not be approved until the librarian has signed to indicate that consultation has taken place.**

**2.2. The present committee structure of a Library Policy Committee and a Library Users Committee should be reviewed. Both committees should be established as committees of, and report to, Academic Council. Reports on the previous year should be received in time for them to be referred to faculties for comment during the first six months of the next academic year in order to facilitate a meaningful discussion about the service given by the library to the academic community.**

**2.3. The Librarian should be included in the academic representation on the executive committee structure of the University. Consideration should be given to whether it would be appropriate to invite the Librarian to become a full member of the Council of Deans or whether the Council of Deans should establish a sub-committee with a remit to oversee the performance of all units providing academic services to the university.**

**2.4. The relationship between subject librarians and faculties and departments should be enhanced.**

**2.4a. The relevant subject librarians should attend meetings of faculty library committees.**

The contributions they could make include advice on how the Faculty's special funding (for inter-disciplinary programmes) should be spent.

**2.4b. Subject librarians should be invited to attend a departmental meeting in each of their subject areas at least once a year.**

The subject librarian should report on the expenditure during the previous year. A collection development policy should be agreed, established and reviewed. Priorities would be established by a process of consultation. The subject librarian should advise the department on how to make full use of their budget.

They could also remind staff of the importance of using facilities provided for students such as desk reserve. Other student problems that staff should be made aware of include providing a reading list that contains books that aren't in the library or setting essays based on one book that then immediately goes missing.

**2.4c. Subject librarians should be given more responsibility for the development of the collection.**

Under present arrangements, the development of the collection is heavily dependent on the interests of members of staff. This has produced an unplanned and haphazard collection in some areas. The development of subject collections should be carried out in a more considered and carefully planned manner and with a view to the collection as a whole.

**2.4d. Subject librarians should be informed of proposals sent to Acquisitions.**

At the moment subject librarians only find out what books have been purchased when they arrive on the shelves. There should be a system that enables staff to review the progress of their book orders and facilitates the transfer of information about collection development from Acquisitions to Subject librarians.

**2.4e. Subject librarians should be able to develop the collections by the purchase of second-hand material.**

The development of the library collection need not be confined to the acquisition of material that is currently in print. Subject librarians should keep themselves informed of the specialist dealers in their disciplines.

Appropriate methods should be developed for the purchase of material such as DVDs and out of print books available on the Internet by the use of credit card facilities or a university purchase card.

**2.4f. Subject librarians should be consulted about the implications of module changes on the library budget.**

A change in module content, though treated as a minor change by the university, can have quite significant effects on the demand for library resources.

***3. Management Structures***

**3.1. There should be a review of the management structure in the library.**

The current management structure appears to be too top-down and inflexible. The structure does little to empower middle management. There is a lack of ownership in line management. A set of management policies need to be developed that create a greater sense of direction and ownership in the different levels of library staff.

The current management structures are not ineffective but they are too simple to cater adequately for a staffing structure as complex as that in the library. The result is that many members of staff feel isolated, undervalued, and part of a structure in which initiative is not encouraged.

Some of these problems are caused by the effect of university policies on the library staff. Members of staff believe that there is no recognition of commitment and service, few promotional opportunities and poor career incentives. Some members of the library staff feel that they have been left in the same post for years. The current procedures for facilitating the transfer of staff between posts should be reviewed.

There should be effective communication with HR on matters relating to contracts, probationary procedures etc.

**3.1a. Measures should be taken to improve communication between different levels of staff in the library. Minutes of all meetings should be circulated (perhaps via the intranet) to ensure that staff are informed of policy decisions and are informed of activities in other sections of the library.**

**3.1b. Measures should be taken to improve communication between different areas of the library by cross sectional working and matrix management.**

**3.1c. Measures should be taken to introduce job rotation.**

**3.1d. A staff development policy should be devised and implemented.**

The staff development policy should incorporate the following two recommendations.

**3.1e. Measures should be taken to provide induction and training courses for staff at all levels.**

The PRG believes that performance management, shortly to be implemented by the University, will help identify training needs.

The training provided should include the development of relevant technological skills.

**3.1f. Specific training should be provided for departmental operatives.**

Departmental operatives are often the first point of contact for students in need of assistance. They deal with the problems of entry and egress and with the implementation of library policies in relation to theft (needing knowledge of the relevant legislation concerning the right of search). The opening hours of the library mean that they sometimes have to work without the support of other staff.

The current structure is obviously a pyramid. Such a hierarchical structure is not untypical of a university library but a more modern management approach can produce improved teamwork and greater commitment.

The PRG would make the following observations in respect of the management function of the leadership.

**3.2a. The Librarian should have sufficient freedom from the day-to-day affairs of the library to permit the fulfilment of a representational role that would give greater involvement with the determination of university policy.**

**3.2b. The two Deputy Librarians have a vital role in the management structure. They should be concerned with the ongoing operation of the library within existing policies. They should have clearly defined responsibilities and should be pro-active and visible in carrying out these duties with a daily routine that brings them into contact with operational issues on the library floors.**

**3.3c. The four/five (a 5<sup>th</sup> post has been advertised) Sub-Librarians should be given an enhanced leadership role with a meaningful input into the creation and implementation of policy. They should be given more autonomy in the execution of policy decisions.**

**3.3d. The PRG took the view that an executive group of seven/eight, rather than three was an appropriate structure for the governance of the library. The Librarian, Deputy Librarians and Sub-Librarians should form a Library Executive Group. Decisions of the Library Executive Group should be circulated to all staff.**

**3.4. The Library Executive Group should consider adapting the existing staffing resources to create dedicated teams in the following areas:**

An electronic resources team to develop access to resources and to develop new policies for and resources in the exploitation of new technology.

A dedicated shelving team with a supervisor. Resources could then be targeted at the area of greatest need.

The current pressure on the shelving of returned books could be alleviated by extending the permitted period of loan and the number of books allowed out on loan.

#### ***4. The Delivery of Services for Students.***

**4.1. The conditions of service of library staff should be amended to permit the provision of staffed services during longer opening hours.**

**4.1a. Consideration should be given to extending the library opening hours on a Saturday. Opening hours during the summer vacation should be extended.**

**4.1b. Consideration should be given to improving the level of service offered to students taking university courses in the evenings.**

The PRG noted figures for occupancy of reading places on Q+3 between 15/11/04 and 18/11/04:

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	245	253	161
Tuesday	189	381	144
Wednesday	164	232	134
Thursday	172	302	112

Source of data: Boole Library

Usage peaks in the afternoon. There is significant usage in the evening, however.

**4.2. As an interim measure, before the additional places in the extension become available, the number of user places should be increased if possible.**

The PRG noted comments from students about the excessive demand for places in the two months before examinations take place. There is queuing outside the library before

it opens at 8.00 a.m. Joining the queue for Internet access to the library catalogue or the photocopier can result in students losing their seats.

**4.3. The provision of library computers and photocopiers should be increased. The maintenance of equipment should be improved.**

The PRG noted comments from the Dean of Law about the lack of computers in the Law Library.

Access to the public PCs on Q-1 should be available from the library and at times when the library is open. The possibility of introducing wireless areas should be explored. Greater formal liaison with the Computer Centre is recommended.

The PRG noted that the photocopiers provided did not permit copying on A3 paper or double-sided copying.

**4.4. Consideration should be given to further improving facilities for the self-issue/return of books.**

The library should consider offering a facility that would allow the return of books after hours while the building is shut.

The PRG congratulate the library staff on the success of the library tours offered as induction training for new students in the first weeks of term.

The library should consider offering these tours later in the year as part of refresher training for students.

The PRG suggest that these tours should be used more effectively to discourage anti-social behaviour in the library such as theft, damage and concealment of material.

The PRG were surprised to learn that the fine for using a mobile phone in the library is more than three times the fine for attempted theft of library material.

**4.5a. The rules for serious incidents should be enforced by library management to maximise the deterrent to offend.**

**4.5b. A record of incidents should be kept and repeat offenders reported for action under the university's disciplinary procedures.**

**4.6. The security of the library should be improved by means of swipe card access.**

The system used should be compatible with university-wide procedures.

**4.7. The security of valuable holdings should be improved.**

The PRG were concerned to hear reports of valuable material held in insecure conditions.

The PRG considered but rejected suggestions from students under the following headings.

- The provision of group study rooms. This facility is available elsewhere. Six group study rooms will be provided in the expanded Boole Library.
- The facility to borrow journals. This should be resisted.
- The provision of multiple copies for core texts. This is only appropriate in specific instances where core text books are not available for purchase. It would be advantageous to conclude negotiations to allow reproduction of copyright material as soon as possible.

## ***5. The Physical Infrastructure of the Boole Library***

**5.1a. The current attempt to improve the air quality should be monitored for its effectiveness.**

**5.1b. The carpet should not be replaced before the extension has been completed.**

Recommendation 7.3 in the SAR report gives a delivery date of June 2005

**5.1c. The library environment could be upgraded for relatively little cost by replacing the current plastic chairs with a better product.**

**5.2. A floor announcement facility must be provided in the lifts for use by blind students.**

The PRG considered that the absence of this facility in the lifts in the Boole Library is a serious omission in an otherwise excellent record of the provision of facilities for the disabled by the University. The PRG commends the library on the provision of assisted technology for blind students on every level and the effective liaison on this and related issues between the deputy librarian and the disability support office.

The PRG were seriously concerned about some aspects of the storage facility at Pouladuff.

**5.3. One area of the Pouladuff store must be upgraded. Some of the collection is stacked on pallets in cardboard boxes.**

**5.4a. Measures must be taken to evaluate the collection at Pouladuff. Some material can be discarded such as multi-copies of out of date textbooks and old-fashioned performing editions of basic musical repertoire.**

**5.4b. Measures must be taken to catalogue the collection at Pouladuff. About 60% of the collection is uncatalogued and as a result usage is very low.**

The material at Pouladuff could form the basis of an important collection of historical documents. The PRG noted that 19<sup>th</sup> C parliamentary papers are still on open storage in some areas of the university and that 20<sup>th</sup> C material is stored in unsatisfactory conditions at Pouladuff. This material relates to the contemporary documentation now housed in the European Document Centre and could form the basis of a valuable research facility for historians and social scientists.

**5.5. The library should establish protocols for the acquisition of private collections through bequest, gift or purchase.**

Over the years the library has received a number of bequests from the estates of members of staff who have through their scholarship built up an important collection of research materials. The unavailability of this uncatalogued material is not conducive to the repetition of further acts of such generosity since the inevitable consequence seems to be that any such material is left to a slow and unusable decline. The cost of storing such a substantial collection can only be justified if it is catalogued and made available for use.

When accepting donations in the future, funds to catalogue the material should be provided.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Boole Library is on the brink of significant change. A new medical library is about to open. The extension to the Boole Library is also an opportunity for a different kind of restructuring, the creation of a more open management structure. It is also an opportunity to take maximum advantage of the funding available and create a superb research resource for students and staff. The PRG is confident that the management team is able to confront and resolve the issues that have been raised by this review. The PRG was impressed by the positive attitude of the staff to the challenges that confront them. These constructive characteristics were recognised in the favourable comments from the stakeholders on the quality of the service offered to them by the library staff. Much has already been done and done well. There is a general realisation of the need to build on past achievements, to improve performance and to reach out for a vision of a brighter future: a 21<sup>st</sup> century library for a 21<sup>st</sup> century university.

**Timetable for conduct of Peer Review Visit**

**UCC Library**

***Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2004***

- 18.00 Meeting of members of the Peer Review Group  
Briefing by Director of Quality Promotion Unit, Dr. N. 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.
- 20.00 Dinner for members of the Peer Review Group, Head of Department and Members of the Co-ordinating Committee.

***Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004***

- 08.30 Convening of Peer Review Group in the Seminar Room, Q-1, Boole Library
- Consideration of Self-Assessment Report
- 09.00 Mr. John Fitzgerald, Librarian
- 09.30 Members of the co-ordinating committee responsible for preparation of the Self-Assessment Report
- Margot Conrick (Chair)
  - Claire O'Brien (Editor/Secretary)
  - Richard Bradfield (Information Services)
  - Virginia Conrick (Customer Services)
  - John FitzGerald (Librarian)
  - Ned Fahy (Deputy Librarian)
  - Maire Domhnat Kirakowska (Support Services)
  - Valerie King (Customer Services)
  - Breda Long (Technical Services)
  - Seamus McMahon (Deputy Librarian)
  - Helen Mulcahy (Information Services)
  - Teresa O'Driscoll (Information Services)
  - Catherine Sanborn (IT Services)
  - Emer Twomey (Special Collections)
  - Anita Wilcox (South Infirmary/Victoria Hospital)
- 10.15 Meetings with members of staff.
- |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 10.15 – 10.35 | Seamus McMahon     |
| 10.35 - 10.45 | Pat Downing        |
| 10.45 - 10.55 | Jerry Sheehan      |
| 10.55 - 11.05 | Rosarii Buttimer   |
| 11.05 - 11.15 | Jane Crowley       |
| 11.15 – 11.25 | Olivia Fitzpatrick |
| 11.25 – 11.35 | Max McCarthy       |
| 11.35 – 11.45 | Clare Goggin       |
| 11.45 – 11.55 | Peadar Cranitch    |
| 11.55 – 12.05 | Liam Walsh         |

12.05 – 12.15 Helen Davis  
12.15 – 12.25 Teresa O’Driscoll  
12.25 – 12.35 Valerie Fletcher  
12.35 – 12.45 Mary Lombard  
12.45 – 13.00 Margot Conrick, Valerie King, Maire Domhnat  
Kirakowski, Catherine Sanborn

13.15 Working private lunch for members of the Peer Review Group

14.00 Professor Áine Hyland, Vice-President

14.30 Mr. Con O’Brien, Acting Registrar

Meetings with representative selections of students and staff of UCC

15.00 Representatives of undergraduate students

Una Casey, (Biological Sciences II)  
Ms. Jenna Collins, (Applied Psychology I)

*Plus additional students visiting Library at the time*

15.30 Representatives of postgraduate students

Elizabeth Burrows (Microbiology)  
Tom Cochrane (Science)  
Maeve Cullinane (Microbiology)  
Kevin Niall Elliot (International Relations)  
Brendan Palmer (Microbiology)  
Margaret Mary Steele (Philosophy)  
Cesar Vega (Food & Nutritional Science)

16.00 Members of academic staff

Dr. Gwenda Young, Department of English  
Dr. Oliver Ranner, Department of Philosophy  
Dr. Patrick McCarthy, Department of Physics  
Professor Martin Stynes, School of Mathematics, Applied  
Mathematics & Statistics  
Dr. Pádraigín Riggs, Department of Early & Medieval Irish  
Dr. Seamus Ó Tuama, Department of Government.

17.00 Representatives of recent graduates, employers and other stakeholders

Bookshops

Ms. Deborah O’Leary, Collins Library Supply Ltd.,

Corporate External Readers

Mr. Anthony Kelly

Individual External Readers

Mr. John Bogan

Evening Law Student

Ms. Amy Flahive

Southern Health Board

Ms. Sandra Daly, Business Manager, CUH Group

Ms. Helen McCarthy, Clinical Placement Co-ordinator, Mercy Hospital

Cork Archives Institute

Mr. Timmy O'Connor, Archivist, Cork Archives Institute

City/County Librarians

Mr. Tim Cadogan, Librarian, Cork County Library

Mr. Derry Delaney, Librarian, Cork Institute of Technology

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

***Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2004***

08.45 Convening of Peer Review Group in the Seminar Room, Q-1, Boole Library

09.00 Visit to Boole Library. Professor C. O'Driscoll and Mr. H. Nicholson escorted by Mr. J. Fitzgerald and Ms. M. Conrick.

Visit to store facilities at Pouladuff: Professor D. Cox and Ms. A. Neligan, escorted by Mr. S. McMahon and Mr. M. McCarthy.

10.00 Deans of Faculties

Professor Caroline Fennell, Dean of Law

Professor Peter Jones, Chair of Library Committee for Faculty of Science

Professor Peter Kennedy, Dean of Engineering

Professor Yrjö Roos, Dean of Food Science & Technology

Professor Keith Sidwell, Vice-Dean of Arts

10.30 Tea/Coffee

10.40 Mr. Noel Keeley, Vice-President for Human Resources

11.00 Mr. Michael Kelleher, Secretary & Bursar/Vice-President for Administration & Finance

11.20 Mr. Mark Poland, Director, Office of Buildings & Estates

11.40 Mr. Michael O'Halloran, Computer Centre

12.00 Ms. Carmel Cotter, Finance Office

12.15 Ms. Shirley Flanagan, Alternative Media Format Co-ordinator, Student Disability Support Services

12.30 Professor Gerard Wrixon, President, UCC

13.00 Working private lunch for members of the Peer Review Group

14.00 Mr. John Fitzgerald, Librarian

14.00 Preparation of first draft of final report

16.30 Exit presentation made to all staff of the Unit by the Peer Review Group, summarising the principal findings of the Peer Review Group

The presentation was not for discussion at this time.

The presentation was be followed by a reception for staff and members of the PRG.

19.00 Working private dinner for members of the Peer Review Group to complete drafting of report and finalisation of arrangements for speedy completion and submission of final report.

***Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2004***

Externs depart