

## **Department of Physical Education & Sport**

### *Peer Review Group*

Professor F. O’Gara, Departments of Microbiology & Medicine, UCC (Chair)  
Professor M. Ó Fathaigh, Department of Adult Continuing Education  
Mr. B. Mullins, Director of Sport, University College Dublin, Ireland  
Ms. L. Goodliffe, Consultant, UK

### *Brief Description of conduct of site visit*

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2003 and included meetings with

- i) Head and staff of the department as a group and individually
- ii) Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- iii) Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- iv) Professor M. Aidan Moran, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- v) Mr. Michael O’Sullivan, Vice-President for Planning, Communications & Development
- vi) Mr. Michael Farrell, Administrative Secretary
- vii) Mr. Michael Kelleher, Secretary & Bursar/Vice-President for Administration & Finance
- viii) Mr. Mark Poland, Director, Buildings & Estates

and visits to departmental and sport facilities in UCC.

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 Department of Physical Education & Sport**

*Head of Department:* Mr. Kieran Dowd

*No. of Staff:* 13.5 staff: 1 Director, 5.5 professional staff, 2 administrative support staff, 5 departmental operatives (grounds)

*Location of Department:* Mardyke Arena Sports Complex

### *Mission Statement*

“To actively encourage and provide for participation in sport, physical recreation and a healthy life-style in the University.”

### *Aims & Objectives*

- To encourage participation in sport and physical recreation by providing a welcoming, accessible and fun environment.
- To provide a comprehensive, professional and customer focused, quality service in a team-based culture.
- To treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- To support and encourage excellence in sport

### *Functions*

- Promotion amongst all students of an active interest and participation in sport and recreation activities

- Advising the College on the promotion and development of sport and physical recreation including sports facilities
- The co-ordination of a programme of sport including coaching and training for fifty College Clubs.
- Advising and assisting the Athletic Union in the organisation of its affairs, including the organisation of domestic competition and intervarsity sport
- Organising and co-ordinating coaching in a variety of sports and recreational activities
- Providing a service for individual clubs and the Athletic Union including managing Club Funds and Athletic Union Capitation Allocations
- The allocation of sports facilities to College students, staff, non-College authorised users and organisations
- Co-ordinating and managing Bank of Ireland Sports Clubs Sponsorship Scheme
- Organising and managing Sports Scholarship Scheme
- Organising Annual Sports Star Awards
- Maintaining contact with students, clubs, colleagues in other College departments and outside agencies, including sports organisations, governing bodies and the media
- Management of a Human Performance Laboratory
- Management of outdoor sports facilities including the maintenance and upkeep of synthetic grass playing pitch and a synthetic athletics track, the preparation of work schedules, planned maintenance programmes and overtime rosters for ground staff

### **General Comment on Quality Review**

The reviewers found the Self-Assessment Report to be comprehensive and very well prepared. All areas of activity were covered in the report and provided the review panel with an excellent insight into the department as it currently operates. The Department had undertaken a SWOT analysis and a benchmarking exercise and these are commented on below in the detailed text of this report.

The SWOT analysis was inclusive of all members of the department and the panel considered it provided an honest view. The PRG congratulated the Department in taking the initiative in bringing in an external facilitator. This provided a comprehensive analysis and gave the PRG valuable information and aides in conducting their review of the department.

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken and included in the Self-Assessment Report. The PRG recognised the difficulty experienced by the department in establishing relevant criteria and information, based on the well-known problems of obtaining appropriate comparators for analysis.

The SAR and the appendices were extremely helpful to the PRG and provided comprehensive data in giving an honest and full account of the current activities of the Department. The PRG thanked the members of the Department for their time and efforts and participation in the review.

### **Progress on Implementation of Recommendations for Improvement**

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of the Department of Physical Education & Sport was held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

Present: Ms. Christine O'Donovan, Acting Head, Department of Physical Education & Sport  
 Mr. Michael Farrell, Administrative Secretary  
 Mr. Robin Graham, Secretary/Chief Legal Officer  
 Dr. Norma Ryan, Director of Quality Promotion

#### General Comment

It is evident from the review and the follow-up review that a critical issue regarding the implementation of the quality improvement recommendations is the filling of the post of Director of Sport & Recreation. Many recommendations listed below as 'Not implemented' have not been implemented purposely so as not to pre-empt the position of the new Director when appointed.

#### Abbreviations

*PRG: Peer Review Group*

*GB: Governing Body*

*QPC: Quality Promotion Committee*

*HR: Human Resources*

*UMG: University Management Group*

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report January '06</b>
The post of Director is safeguarded	Recommendation endorsed.  The post has not yet been advertised because of the current financial situation the University is in.	Not implemented.  The post has been approved by UMG. The job description has not yet been approved by the GB Committee on Sport & Recreation. This Committee was established in June 2005 by GB. The Committee has met once since it was established and progression on the advertising and filling of the post awaits action by the Committee.
A partnership at both the policy and operational levels be established to deliver a quality service to all stakeholders.	Strongly endorsed.  The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education & Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the	Not Implemented.  Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director. The apparent lack of action is due to the intention and desire to allow the Director of Physical Education & Sport, when appointed, full opportunity

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report January '06
	<p>recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations</p>	<p>to be involved in the development of strategies and policies in the establishment of UCC's vision and strategy for sport.</p>
<p>A partnership model involving all relevant stakeholders is the obvious necessity to move to the next phase.</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education &amp; Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations</p>	<p>Not Implemented.</p> <p>Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director. See comment on recommendation above</p>
<p>A process needs to be initiated by senior management to consider and decide what appropriate structures should be put in place.</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education &amp; Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations</p>	<p>Not Implemented.</p> <p>Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director. See comment on recommendation above</p>
<p>The management and organization structures within the Department be reviewed and modified.</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education &amp; Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations</p>	<p>Not Implemented.</p> <p>Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director. See comment on recommendation above</p>
<p>The formation of a UCC</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p>	<p>Implemented.</p>

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report January '06</b>
Sports and Recreation Council/Committee representative of all relevant stakeholders. This should be implemented as a matter of urgency.	The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education & Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations	The GB established the Committee in June 2005.
The development of a strategic plan for Sport & Recreation within the University to include policy development, best practice and financial generation and management.	Strongly endorsed.  The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education & Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations	Not Implemented.  Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director. See comment on recommendation above re appointment of Director.
The creation of a functional working group representative of the Department of Physical Education & Sport and the Mardyke Arena to develop and deliver a coherent operational system for UCC sport and recreation beneficial to all user groups and individual students. One specific issue needing attention is access and operation of the front foyer. Based on patterns of use it should be possible to formulate a more efficient system.	Strongly endorsed.  The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education & Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations	Implemented in part.  Ad hoc meetings have taken place between the Acting Head of the Department of Physical Education & Sport, the Administrative Secretary and senior staff of the Mardyke Arena to discuss issues as they arise. Some issues have improved. Plans are in place to upgrade the building and this will result in improved access to the building by UCC Clubs.
A co-ordinated approach to all aspects of communication and the mechanisms to disseminate	Strongly endorsed.  The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the	Implemented in part.  Anticipated changes in structures following on the appointment of

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report January '06
<p>information to all members of the department and associated parties be established.</p>	<p>next Director of Physical Education &amp; Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations</p>	<p>the Director will enable further improvements to be made.</p>
<p>The working group, as outlined above, should address as a matter of urgency the working conditions for all staff concerned in a collaborative way.</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education &amp; Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations</p> <p>Action on this recommendation should be considered immediately and also after the management issues have been resolved.</p>	<p>Not Implemented.</p> <p>Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director. See comment on earlier recommendation above</p>
<p>Future coaches must be suitably qualified.</p>	<p>The QPC recognised the expertise of the coaches presently involved and the value of the current situation to UCC. The QPC felt that the present situation is working very well, while recognising the concerns of the PRG in terms of the situation that may possibly arise in the future.</p>	<p>Implementation of this recommendation is primarily an issue of resourcing. The Department is preparing to issue contracts to coaches. Coaches will require payment pro rata. There are 40 clubs and 80 – 100 coaches. The issue awaits consideration by the Sports and Recreation Committee of GB. Presently UCC is very dependent on volunteer coaches for the majority of its coaching requirements and this policy needs a re-consideration and decisions as to the future policy. There is an inherent tension between the 'sport' and 'recreation' agendas and the future emphasis of the University in this regard needs to be decided.</p>

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report January '06
Provision for future coaches should be made in the strategic plan.	QPC accepted this recommendation	Not implemented.  Awaits development of the strategy by the Sports & Recreation Committee. See comment on earlier recommendation above
Immediate attention be devoted to the provision of modern changing room facilities at Curraheen and the Mardyke.	<p>Endorsed by the QPC.</p> <p>The QPC noted that the Buildings Committee will be considering the improvement of facilities at Curraheen in the immediate future with monies received from Cork County Council for land bought for Ballincollig By-pass.</p> <p>With respect to the facilities at the Mardyke Sports Grounds, the QPC would encourage all relevant parties, including the Rugby Club, to cooperate in finding a way to raise the necessary funds for the required renovations.</p>	Some renovation of the facilities at the Mardyke has taken place. No action has been taken on the facilities at Curraheen. The standard is very poor and requires immediate attention, the Department is recommending that refurbishment of the changing facilities be a part of the Capital Investment Plan of the University, with a priority listing.
A supervisor/foreman be appointed to ensure best practice in the delivery of outdoor facilities.	Endorsed by QPC.	In process of implementation  The post has been approved and was allowed for in the budget allocation to the Department. to progress the filling of the post the signature of the Secretary is required and has not yet been appended.
A review of car parking arrangements at the Mardyke Arena is undertaken and, in particular, that match officials (including coaches, medical support staff, referees, umpires, etc.) be accommodated with reference to car parking.	QPC noted the departmental response. QPC did not recommend further action at this time.	A number of review meetings have been held. However there is as yet no resolution. The electronic gates have been removed, but significant issues remain.
Urgent attention be given to the appropriate barriers between the hockey pitch	QPC noted and welcomed departmental response and looked forward to rapid action on this	Implemented.

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report January '06
and the track.	point.	
The strategic plan for sport at UCC should contain appropriate measures for staff training and development at all levels.	<p>QPC recommended that the Department consult with the Department of HR with respect to the requirements.</p> <p>QPC noted that a review of the strategic plan for Physical Education &amp; Sport is needed as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>The Department has no strategic plan, staff training needs to be considered seriously with a view to provision of appropriate courses. Some staff have commenced attending some courses.</p>
Consideration should be given to the funding mechanisms for the sustainability of the existing development officers and the creation of additional similar posts.	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education &amp; Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations</p>	<p>The Department has three development officers (one each for rugby, GAA and hockey). Two of the three are funded externally. Soccer and indoor sports need development officers but funding is lacking for their support.</p>
Arrangements and practices leading to more efficient time management should be developed and implemented to enable students to participate in sport and recreation.	<p>QPC noted the concerns of the PRG.</p> <p>QPC appreciated the concerns of the PRG but acknowledged the difficulties of timetabling of lectures, practicals and other academic activities, and that it is not always possible for departments to be as flexible as students might wish.</p>	<p>The Department is fully in support of the recommendation and also noted the comment by the QPC.</p>
Consideration should be given to the introduction of formal procedures to facilitate the development of the potential of elite athletes.	<p>QPC asked for a detailed response from the Department of Physical Education &amp; Sport with considered proposals as to how this recommendation might be implemented. QPC suggested that practice elsewhere should be examined.</p>	<p>A review of the scholarship scheme has taken place, improvements made and approximately eighty students are benefiting n 05/06. the structures now allow elite athlete to benefit from external funding/grants. The development of a formal policy in this regard is the remit of the Sports &amp; recreation Committee and has not yet been carried out.</p>

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Factors underpinning the sustainability of the schemes are addressed and integrated into the financial plan for sport at UCC.	QPC recommended that the Department develop a strategic plan as a matter of urgency which would incorporate addressing this recommendation. The QPC felt that the Department is best positioned to develop the strategic plan. See note at beginning of this table.	Not Implemented.  Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director. See comment on earlier recommendation above
More multidisciplinary training and support programmes appropriate for the development and mentoring of talented sports persons in academy structures needs to be explored and implemented.	Strongly endorsed.  The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education & Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations	Not Implemented.  Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director and action by the Sports & Recreation Committee.  There is a rugby academy funded by the Rugby Club. Additional resources are needed to fund further development of academies.
That a benchmarking exercise should be undertaken involving other institutions to examine models of good/best practice.	Strongly endorsed. The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education & Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations	Not implemented.  The Department is in contact with other similar units in other institutions and is continuing to inform itself in an informal way about practices in other institutions.
In the development of the strategic plan particular attention should be paid to financial and budgeting issues and the potential for increased income generation.	Strongly endorsed. The issue will be addressed before the appointment of the next Director of Physical Education & Sport. The QPC requested the Department to consider the possibilities for implementation of the recommendation for the guidance of the University. The QPC asked for very detailed responses to the following recommendations	Not Implemented.  Action on this recommendation is awaiting the appointment of the Director and action by the Sports & Recreation Committee.  There are plans to open a UCC Merchandising Shop on the web site by the end of January 2006.