

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

**Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance**

**Peer Review Group Report**

**Department of Government**

**Academic Year 2003/04**

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2004.**

### **Members of the Peer Review Group:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Role</b>
Professor Caroline Fennell	Dean of the Faculty of Law, UCC.	Chairperson
Ms. Michele Power	Access Officer, UCC.	Internal member
Professor Edward Moxon-Brown	Jean Monnet Chair of European Integration, University of Limerick.	External member
Professor Ian Forbes	University of Nottingham, England.	External member

### **Timetable**

The timetable for the conduct of the review visit is attached as Appendix A.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Methodology and Division of Workload by the Peer Review Group**

The Peer Review Group approach to its report was to divide the work thematically in accordance with well-established criteria used to assess academic departments, and to assign particular members responsibility for those areas, with all areas being signed off by each member of the group. Within these thematic divisions, all matters presented in the department's documentation (particularly the Self Assessment Report), and all matters alluded to in guidance notes provided by the UCC Quality Committee were addressed. Since this is a developing department cognisance was paid to the past, present, and future of the department and the development of its discipline within UCC. The expertise of the externals was of course crucial and central to this assessment, to advice about the future of the discipline, and to reportage on the research, scholarly standing, and curricula of the department.

The thematic areas identified and addressed are:

1. Research & Scholarly Standing

2. Teaching & Curriculum Development
3. Situation of the Department with regard to structure, organisation, administration, and management of relations:
  - a. within the department;
  - b. within the University; and
  - c. externally within the community.

### **Acknowledgments and Exit Presentation**

The Peer Review Group (hereinafter PRG) is grateful for the time and efforts of the staff of the Department of Government, the Deans of the Faculties of Arts and Commerce, the Vice-Presidents for Academic Affairs and Research Policy and Support, the Finance Office, the Boole Library Head of Information Services, and the Subject Librarian for the social sciences, researchers and students in the Department of Government, workplace employers and the Director of the Quality Promotion Unit and her staff. Our work was greatly facilitated by the openness of individuals and their willingness to provide information and to give us the benefit of their judgements in a timely and cordial manner.

The Department of Government provided comprehensive and clear documentation, and brought to our attention issues that proved crucial to our assessment. The principal findings of the group as presented to them at the Exit presentation underscored the wisdom of the University's decision to support the development of the Department of Government that is delivering a range of new, successful and highly popular courses. The PRG was of the opinion that the Department is to be congratulated in having within a short period of time produced a successful undergraduate programme with a high degree of self-recognition and confidence in its students. It has successful postgraduate Masters and PhD programmes of research, is a research active department with considerable success in attracting research funding, and maintains good relations with outside bodies inter alia through its successful placement programme. It was evident to the PRG that this is an extremely student friendly department with a very cohesive staff unit. As a fledgling department, however, it also faces challenges. It is inevitable that there would be some growing pains, and the PRG addresses these in a manner intended to help the department best meet these challenges, and so foster its

future development. The issues here identified relate to that of the identity of the department and location of its discipline within UCC, and the self-confidence of the department, which to some extent had been affected by difficulties relating to its identity. The department has also encountered problems regarding funding, specifically 'locating and following the money'; and perhaps requires additional administrative structures and support to address these. In order to organise staff research time most effectively, the department might have to reassess their open door policy for students, and consider that a collegial atmosphere devoid of structured meetings might not be best, given the steady increase in staff numbers. There is also a need to foster and develop necessary linkages with relevant college bodies and offices, as well as other departments, Commerce Faculty office and other Faculties.

**The Self Assessment Report** and the content thereof are addressed throughout this report under the relevant section headings where appropriate. Specific commentary requested in the 'Guidelines for drafting of Peer Review Group Report' which may not appear elsewhere, includes the following:

**a. Comment on the overall analysis (SWOT)**

The PRG felt this to be an accurate assessment of the department.

**b. Benchmarking Exercise**

The PRG felt that the department rather missed the opportunity here to locate themselves in terms of their own identity within the discipline i.e. how they would characterise their particular research direction and identity in relation to departments in Ireland and further afield. However, the Head of Department did have a clear and strategic sense of the position of Cork's Department of Government in relation to equivalent departments at UCD and TCD.

**c. Comment on final analysis - Projections and future recommendations.**

The PRG felt that it lacked in terms of direction, and other than looking for adequate resources and core funding, was too minimal and lacked either appropriate direction or specificity in terms of the future.

# **1. Research and Scholarly Standing**

## **1.1 The Identity of the Department of Government**

By all the standard measures, the Department of Government is a high achiever. Since 1998, it has developed successful new degrees, attracted significant research income, and established a track record of publication, consultancy and public engagement. Teaching programmes are, by common consent, very well administered. Student feedback is exceptionally positive. On this basis, it would not have been a surprise to find that the Department of Government was held in high esteem, widely validated and strongly supported in its development and in its day-to-day activities.

It is of some concern, therefore, to find that the Department's members identify issues of recognition, status and standing within UCC as a major problem. This is more than a preoccupation: it relates to the professional self-image and confidence of the members of staff, and to their perception of the reaction of key sectors of the University to the Department and its activities.

The most pressing issue appears to be the identity of the Department. Does 'Government' mean 'Politics'? Is Public Administration a 'core' activity, and quite distinct from politics? In the view of the PRG, these are not matters of controversy outside UCC. This assessment is based on the Subject Benchmark Statement for Politics and International Relations (developed by a panel composed of representatives of the Political Studies Association of the UK and the British International Studies Association) published by the Quality Assurance Agency. It offers authoritative and clear statements on nomenclature, location and the nature of politics as an area of study. As a first principle, it points out that:

The scope of Politics and International Relations is broad.... Thus, departments have a variety of names. They may be called Departments of Government, Politics, Political Science, International Politics, International Relations, International Studies, or some combination of these.

Furthermore:

Politics and International Relations may be taught in a variety of settings. Examples...include: public administration taught in Schools of Management under the title of Public Sector Management; political philosophy in Philosophy departments; and the history of political thought in History departments.

The document goes on to define the nature and extent of the subject:

Politics is concerned with developing a knowledge and understanding of government and society. The interaction of people, ideas and institutions provides the focus to understand how values are allocated and resources are distributed at many levels, from the local through to the sectoral, national, regional and global. Thus analyses of who gets what, when, how, why and where are central, and pertain to related questions of power, justice, order, conflict, legitimacy, accountability, sovereignty and decision-making. Politics encompasses philosophical, theoretical, institutional and issue-based concerns relating to governance.<sup>1</sup>

The Faculty of Commerce regards itself as highly supportive of the Department's development, and has backed successive changes to the teaching programmes. However, the Department is severely under-resourced in key areas, despite its performance and needs. Although there is evidence of support from the Faculty since 1998, there is no resource allocation model in operation, and some evidence that the Department is unfairly held to be responsible for costs associated with the School of Business and Government. It also appears that income raised by the innovative Certificate in Political Issues in Ireland Today has not reached the Department for any of the 3 years of its successful operation. This financial environment makes it very difficult to see how the Department can plan effectively, let alone establish that it is making a positive contribution to the Faculty and the University.

Despite a broadly supportive Faculty, the existence of such a clear basis for its identity, and its strong track record, the Department as a whole is clearly of the view that elements of the research, teaching and administrative activities in the Department are

---

<sup>1</sup> The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, *Subject benchmark statements, Politics and International Relations*, sections 1.1, 1.3, 2.1(1).

adversely affected, in principle and in practice, by problems that emanate from a number of institutional sources.

- Faculty of Arts: Arts Faculty reactions in relation to the existence, expertise, name and teaching activity of the Department are as evident as they are surprising to the external observer. The Arts responses are perceived and described in terms of hostility and resistance to anything proposed by the Department of Government that has the term ‘politics’ in it. This seems to be the case, in practice. In our attempts to understand the Arts position, from the point of view of definitions of politics, we have asked for Arts Faculty statements and documents that deal with the nature of politics and the teaching of politics. Relevant text appears in the Prospectus and the Arts Faculty 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Guide. The entry in this document reflects the extent of the problem. It claims that politics is a ‘new subject (from 2003) in the BA degree’. While that may be technically correct in a limited way, the statement that it politics is ‘a recent arrival’ in Cork, is misleading. It then produces a unique definition of politics – unique in the sense that it bears no resemblance to anything that will be encountered in standard accounts elsewhere. For example, having asserted that social structures require rules, it states that the ‘fundamental questions’ are: ‘Which rules? Who formulates them? Who enforces compliance? Who benefits from the observance of rules? How should we deal with relations between different societies?’ The absence of the term *power* is especially revealing given that politics is quintessentially about power.
- Research Governance: The lack of recognition of politics as a substantive and foundational research activity with defined and distinctive modes and methods of analysis appears to have a negative impact on work that would be highly valued in other Universities. While it has not been uncommon for a science model of research funding and activity to dominate research governance routines in the past, most universities that value research across all departments recognise that social science-based research has significant differences that need to be acknowledged. This is particularly the case with the continuing developments within the EU Framework Programme, where the social science dimension has been steadily increased, and is being incorporated into all aspects of research. For subjects like Politics, cutting edge research may be on a very small scale, it may involve only

one or two scholars, and may have a short duration. Political developments and changes may require quick responses rather than large and elaborate programmes. Accordingly, it was disappointing to hear that generalizations about the incapacity of humanities researchers in relation to form filling, for example, were informing the view of research support at the highest level. Research support must be sensitive to the kind of short deadlines that are typical of much government-sponsored and funded research tasks, and familiar with the different practices associated with social science research. Developing specialist support for social science research brings major benefits in terms of increased research income, national and international recognition for the University, and greater staff satisfaction and commitment to the institution. It is also possible that there is social science research expertise that could effectively be marshalled and exploited to train younger members of staff.

- Finance: The Department appears to have grievances about a lack of cooperation from the Finance Department. There have been instances where it has been forced to take decisions that are detrimental to the research interests of the Department, and are even financially detrimental to the University. It appears that the needs of the Government Department, in the pursuit of its research objectives, can only be met if they are consistent with existing Finance Department practices, regardless of the practices of funding agencies.

## **1.2 Staffing**

The non-professorial members of staff come across as a highly committed, enthusiastic, and idealistic collection of individuals. There is a very strong sense of purpose and dedication to the Department and the University. Respect for the leadership of the Department is exceptionally strong, and a very strong ethos has developed, which supports the progressive policies of research and curriculum development. The group has high levels of energy and great confidence in the potential of the Department.

There is a sense that the formative years of the Department are now over, but there is less agreement about the next steps. Consolidation, converting current temporary and part-time to full-time members, and some additional appointments in political



economy, research methods and international relations are all mentioned as desirable outcomes.

These discussions, and the rather scant section on benchmarking in the self-assessment document, suggest that the department's predominantly young and relatively inexperienced staff cohort require substantial guidance from a senior cohort that can spread the load which, at present, falls almost entirely on the Head of Department.

The successful tactic of attracting Fulbright Scholars has highlighted the role that a senior colleague can play. Such scholars bring experience, vision, leadership, commitment, strategic sense, and a track record in research applications and publications. With their input, there will be good opportunities for promoting and sponsoring staff development.

Additionally, such senior scholars can respond to the diversity of academic profiles in the department by adopting a synergistic approach, where some of the activities of individuals are clustered in bespoke research projects. This is an effective remedy to the problem of an apparent lack of critical mass in a small department. There is a strong case for establishing a Professorial Research Fellow or a senior appointment to fulfil this role.

These are the prerequisites for a department that will create and secure a distinctive identity and develop the national and international profile to a high degree.

### **1.3 Sabbatical leave**

The external reviewers were not aware of a research active University where sabbatical leave was not a central element in the overall research strategy. It is the norm to support a departmentally based system of entitlement to apply for sabbatical leave. The frequency of leave is left up to the individual department. As a department becomes more successful (partly as a result of the leave scheme), schemes often become more permissive. Some departments manage the system to ensure that new entrants to the profession get an 'early' sabbatical to maximize their output, and help with staff retention. Applicants must present clear plans, and are expected to provide a report on the leave period. Recently, leading universities in the UK have introduced an

additional – and fully funded - study leave scheme in relation to areas of strategic importance.

UCC's current scheme seems to be based on erroneous assumptions and stereotypes about the nature and role of sabbatical leave in a social science setting, and seems calculated to create dissatisfaction among staff. The PRG was not persuaded that the experience in some science-based departments should be the basis for decisions in the very different research environment pertaining to the social sciences.

#### **1.4 Research, Performance and Publications**

Despite their heavy administrative burdens, members of the Department are actively engaged in research, and their publication output is impressive. The small size of the Department and heavy teaching loads make it difficult for any one member of staff to be absent for any length of time, and equally difficult for staff to cover for each other on sabbaticals or short periods of study leave. The PRG endorses the Department's feeling that the University should recognise the problems of small Departments in enabling staff to benefit from periods of study leave.

Research in the Department is broadly focused on themes of governance and democracy at the national, local, European, and international levels. The Department has also developed some expertise in EU consultancy work. Within this broad context, individual staff interests include: clientelism, political corruption, politics of both parts of Ireland, local democracy, citizenship and human rights, the EU, ethnic conflict and questions of European security. The PRG welcomes the high degree of policy-relevant research which covers such issues as the environment, political corruption, gender parity, technology and citizenship, civil-military relations in central Europe, and regional government in Northern Ireland.

The publication record of the Department appears to be among the strongest in the Faculty of Commerce including books by prominent social science publishers (e.g. Palgrave, Routledge, Longmans, Sage, and Yale University Press) and articles in the discipline's leading journals (e.g. *Political Studies*, *Irish Political Studies*, *West European Politics*, *Regional and Federal Studies*, *Contemporary Politics*, and the *Journal of Strategic Studies*).

There is a welcome integration of research and teaching in the Dept. GV2303 taps into research on ethnically divided societies. GV4200 draws on research into Irish Politics; and the research module GV4202 provides a valuable interface between final year undergraduates and members of academic staff. Among younger members of the Department there is great potential for future research and publication; and the PRG expresses the hope that the University will provide a facilitative environment wherein this potential can be fully realised.

## **1.5 Deficiencies**

### *1.5.1 Strategic Deficiencies*

- a. The Department's current status as an effective and productive unit, researching and teaching in the area of Government/Political Science needs to be confirmed by senior management.
- b. The longstanding dispute between Government and its opponents in the Arts Faculty needs to be brought to an end.
- c. Research support and finance department procedures should enhance rather than restrict the Department's developing research profile.
- d. Sabbatical leave arrangements should be adopted in line with standard best practice in other Universities.

### *1.5.2 Deficiencies rectifiable with current resources*

- a. The development of formal administrative structures for the management of resources, teaching and research within the Department.
- b. Better communication between the Finance Officer and the Department, and better awareness of finance routines by the Department.

## **1.6 Research & Scholarly Standing Recommendations**

1. The status of Government/Political Science research and teaching in UCC needs to be accepted and affirmed.

2. Consider the proper location of the Department of Government. The options are:

- Move Government into the Faculty of Arts
- Give Government Primary Member status in the Faculty of Arts while retaining its status in the Faculty of Commerce.
- Move Government to a newly created Faculty of Social Sciences
- Support the position of Government in the Faculty of Commerce

Responsibility for decisions about, and the implementation of, any of the first three options should be located at a senior University level.

3. Establish a sound and transparent financial basis for the Department, to facilitate planning, entrepreneurial developments and support research activities.

4. Fund a Professorial Research Fellowship or senior post to provide a better balance between senior and junior staff.

5. Appoint a Departmental Manager.

6. Provide adequate space and facilities for academic staff and postgraduate researchers.

7. Formalise the administrative mechanisms of the Department, to include:

- a. Regular departmental meetings
- b. Student-Staff Consultative Committee
- c. Research Committee
- d. Appoint a member of staff to liaise with the Faculty of Arts.

## **2. Teaching and Curriculum Development**

### **2.1 Teaching**

The 2002 – 2003 academic year was the first occasion in which the department had students in all four years of the BSc Government and Public Policy (GPP) degree. The evidence of undergraduate evaluation questionnaire data, supplemented by oral evidence from students themselves, suggests that there is a high degree of satisfaction with the learning experience. In particular, students reported interactive teaching methods in most lectures and felt that relatively small numbers (average 50 – 60) created a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom that facilitated learning.

Members of staff generally appear to be committed to their teaching and none felt that they were being asked to teach for an excessive number of hours each semester. While there is a healthy diversity in the modules being offered by the department, it was felt that the programme represents a coherent whole, and is particularly attuned to the vocational and policy-oriented character of the entire curriculum. However, it was suggested that political economy and research methods were two areas that might be added. The vocational characteristic of the programme is reinforced by the work placement scheme which exposes students to a real work situation to which theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom is helpfully, and constructively transferred.

During the first four-year cycle of the degree, tutorials have been phased out due to lack of resources. The PRG feels that, although the “open door” policy of the Department which was widely commended by students goes some way towards compensating for the lack of small group teaching, it might be worth considering a reintroduction of tutorials if resources permitted. This would mirror the practice in other UCC departments, and it would enable postgraduates to gain valuable teaching experience, not to mention some financial remuneration. The use of postgraduates as tutors in other Irish politics departments is almost universal and it might help to mitigate the effects of excessive demands being made on lecturers’ time which could otherwise be more usefully spent on research. In this context, it is also worth pointing out that the staff feel generally that the administrative burdens placed on them have a deleterious effect on research output. Having said that, the PRG was impressed by the

involvement of staff in externally funded projects despite heavy, and in at least one case, absurdly heavy, administrative duties.

There is no doubt that staff members, among whom there is a great deal of energy, talent and initiative, could realise their potential more effectively, if the administrative/managerial functions of the Department could be delegated to, or performed by, a non-academic specially appointed or seconded for the purpose. In particular, the amount of clerical work required in the context of the work placements annually could be usefully performed by someone other than a full-time member of academic staff.

The teaching and research aspirations of staff are in some cases thwarted by the temporary nature of their contracts. The viability of the Department, and the enhancement of skills possessed by staff, would be greatly assisted by the adoption of more permanent posts. If the FTE model of UK universities, for example, was adopted, the Department would merit 10 full-time posts.

## **2.1 Undergraduate Experience**

There is a significant departmental emphasis on the quality of the undergraduate student experience. This is not merely lip service paid by the Head of Department, but appears to be the rationale underpinning the actions of all staff from the most senior to junior.

This manifests itself in the following department policies:

1. An entirely open-door policy in terms of student access to administrative and academic staff with almost no exceptions.
2. A formal, systematic process of student mentoring across all four years of the programme in parallel with year co-coordinators.
3. A well-organized system of student email contact lists to ensure frequent and efficient flow of information.

This has resulted in an obviously respectful two-way relationship between staff and students in a receptive and friendly atmosphere allowing room and consideration for personal development as well as academic progression.

Feedback from both students and employers alike was also very positive in terms of the third year placement programme. This is testament not only to the calibre of the individual student concerned, but also to the quality of the entire placement experience for initial contact through to the evaluation. This sentiment was also echoed by other work-experience employers and students.

Some dissatisfaction was voiced, however, by students, concerning the number and variety of modules in the first year of the programme. It was felt by many students that some of the compulsory modules were difficult to equate with a degree in Government, while other seemingly more obvious modules were notable by their absence. A module in EU Law was given as an example of the latter. A view was also expressed that there was an element of repetition in the fourth year which was difficult for them to understand.

In general, however, the group were impressed at the loyalty of students to the degree itself and the staff. They were unilaterally praised for their enthusiasm, friendliness and capacity for hard work, which, along with a strong emphasis on frequent communication, contributes to a very high quality undergraduate student experience.

## **2.2 Postgraduate experience**

The postgraduates in the Department echoed the view of undergraduates that the staff were especially supportive and facilitative in the Department. Also commended was the emphasis on attending conferences, and participating in research projects. The number of PhD completions so far is understandably low given the recent establishment of the Department, but there has been an impressive increase in PhD enrolments over the past three years.

There were, however, a number of reservations expressed by postgraduates. It is worth noting at least five issues:

1. Lack of physical space for postgraduates
2. Lack of photocopying provision free of charge
3. A very low and tardy allocation of inter-library loans
4. A rather undeveloped sense of group identity among postgraduates
5. A feeling that some postgraduates were treated better than others regarding basic facilities e.g. desk space and/or computers

### **2.3 Teaching & Curriculum Development Recommendations**

1. Provision of designated space for postgraduate students
2. Provision of photocopying cards and Inter library loan vouchers to postgraduates.
3. Equity of treatment of postgraduates with regard to facilities.
4. Re-introduction of tutorials and utilisation as source of funding for postgraduates as well as integrating postgraduates into work of Department.
5. Postgraduate/research committee to develop postgraduate identity within department and to avoid isolation.
6. More permanent instead of temporary posts for Academic staff.



### **3. Department's structures, management and external relations.**

#### **3.1 Internal Management- within department**

##### *3.1.1 Departmental meetings*

Staff commented on an absence of a structured departmental meeting arrangement. Although some expressed a preference for such a system on the basis that the department was small and collegial and hence a meeting could be held at any juncture very speedily, others pointed out its ad hoc nature which could lead to a sense of fire-fighting. It appeared to the PRG that the absence of structured departmental meetings might work well currently but be vulnerable over time to changes in personnel etc., which might not accommodate such a system so readily. It was felt that process was important to safeguard staff interests, communication, and the quality of decision-making.

##### *3.1.2 Administrative responsibilities of academic staff*

Within the department there is a very supportive atmosphere. An absence of a model for allocation of administrative tasks and support, however, may lead to certain – perhaps younger- members of staff being overburdened, with older more established staff making strategic decisions to focus on research and avoid committee work. The latter, while understandable, could have long-term implications for the equity of the treatment of staff and their relative ability to progress within the department and the University. In particular, the visibility of more senior figures aside from the professor across college in the undertaking of administrative roles on college committees etc., would have a beneficial effect on college perception of the department, lend strength to the voice of the discipline, and release more junior staff of undue burdens.

##### *3.1.3 Management style*

A highly personal management style when combined with good interpersonal relations can provide a wonderful personally and socially rewarding work atmosphere, and clearly does in this case. Over time, however, it may be vulnerable to change in

personnel and the implications for the department and work environment. A more focused and pragmatic approach might better harness staff resources. A strategic division of tasks among staff might also ensure better contribution and monitoring of departmental contribution to college debate and decisions. Within the department a research strategy group and a postgraduate committee could help focus on funding support, and an external committee could liaise with outside government bodies. The chairs of these committees could then interface with similar college wide committees. In this way development would be managed more strategically and staff skills and CVs for promotion purposes enhanced.

#### *3.1.4 Departmental culture*

The department was acknowledged by all to be very 'student friendly'. In particular this was linked to the 'open door' policy. The view was expressed at the level of staff, although it appeared to be a minority one, that an office hour's policy would be preferable but would not work. Better management of staff time to enable them to enhance in particular their research profiles would seem to be essential in this department. 'Student friendly' practices such as open-door policy come at a price, which in a fledgling department with staff at a crucial stage of their career might be too high. This might be better managed through for example a departmental student staff committee with members from the constituencies: mature, undergrad postgrad etc.

#### *3.1.5 Administrative structure within the Department*

Administrative support has not increased commensurate with the department's growth. Great administrative resources are needed in the department particularly with regard to placements. With regard to the latter, either the staff member (academic) should continue to be the co-ordinator (though this task could be rotated) and a clerical assistance structure put in place to assist that person, or a departmental manager should be appointed to remove this non-academic burden from staff. Some staff preferred the latter, on the grounds that the professor could then be correspondingly released from management of budgetary and senior administrative issues to the benefit of the department.

Administrative support or at least clarity with regard to availability of same generally seemed also to be requested by some members of staff and postgraduates.

## **3.2 External Relations of the department within the University**

### *3.2.1 Vice President for Research*

There appeared to be a good appreciation of the funded research activity of the department. However the importance of sabbatical leave to young staff in order to facilitate the development of their research profile and output cannot be overestimated, and should be facilitated.

### *3.2.2 Vice President for Academic Affairs*

The importance of the location and development of the discipline in an appropriate and effective manner in the UCC context can best be facilitated and will receive greater support if there is an improvement in the visibility of the department across the broader academic community. An attention to appropriate procedure and process and employment of consultation in as broad a manner as possible would improve the image and trust of the department. It would also ensure that substantive proposals get considered on their merits and are not deflected in procedural wrangling.

### *3.2.3 Faculty of Commerce Office*

This office is crucial to the development of the department, and important strategically in fostering relations within Arts through the office of the Dean of Arts. It is also crucial that budget line and resource allocation models employed by the Dean of Commerce are used to the benefit of a developing department. It is also essential that for its part the department engages with that office in a strategic manner, which emanates from its own identified initiatives and priorities in terms of income generation. The resultant resources must then flow to the department in a transparent and effective way.

### *3.2.4 College Officers; Cross-Disciplinary activities*

All officers of the College should acknowledge where appropriate the activities - particularly when they are high profile- of the department. For its part the department needs to promulgate its activities and maintain confidence by building links across the university in a strategic manner not limited only to course provision and design. In that light the *Conference on Science, Complexity, and the Ethics of Global Governance* is a

very positive initiative which should lead to synergies with other areas-law, music, medicine etc.

### *3.2.5 Finance Office; Department of Human Resources*

In the Self Assessment report the department defines its relationships with the Finance office and also with Department of Human Resources as “poor”. In particular the PRG was of the opinion that the former is crucial to the management of the department and accessing its appropriate resources. In particular the saga of the funding from the Certificate in Political Issues in Ireland Today is reflective of a lack of training/resources being invested by the department in the maintenance of relations and understanding of the remits of various offices within UCC dealing with Finance. A leadership role in this has to be taken by the Professor, but senior staff could also be an asset in this regard. Proper financial management of the department must be a priority, and if courses are not profitable they should be reassessed in that light, strategic decisions made and, if necessary, harsh options communicated to the college generally.

With regard to staffing, it is obviously desirable that there should be clarity with regard to the length of temporary posts when being advertised/appointed to avoid staff experiencing unnecessary uncertainty.

### **3.3 External Community Relations**

The Department is strategically well positioned given the nature of the discipline to expand on contacts already established with public bodies, local authorities and central Government Departments in terms of research, consultancy and professional/executive development. This could prove not only financially lucrative, but also lead to a heightening of the Department’s profile outside of the academic environment given its stated goal of research, which is timely, relevant and helpful to the understanding and resolution of social problems. It was indicated to the PRG that work already carried out in this area has been highly regarded. There should be expansion of the Department’s role in this area, as the PRG was of the view that the external networking opportunities, which exist for the Department, may result in the easing of the burden in terms of student work placement at the end of third year, and also contribute to income generating opportunities and a heightened external profile.

### **3.4 Structure, Management & External Relations Recommendations**

1. Structure Departmental Meetings.
2. Model for allocation of administrative tasks to staff; more responsibility taken across the university by senior staff.
3. Research Strategy group; postgraduate committee, External Committee, liaising with College wide similar committees.
4. Office hours; Student/Staff Committee.
5. Departmental Manager/ clerical assistance with placements.
6. Sabbatical leave policy support.
7. Investment in training with regard to financial management of the department and effective liaison with College offices. Attention to process.
8. Expansion of highly regarded consultancy work with central and local government.

## **4. Summary of Recommendations**

### **4.1 Action at University level**

1. The status of Government/Political Science research and teaching in UCC needs to be accepted and affirmed.
2. Consider the proper location of the Department of Government. The options are:
  - Move Government into the Faculty of Arts
  - Give Government Primary Member status in the Faculty of Arts while retaining its status in the Faculty of Commerce.
  - Move Government to a newly created Faculty of Social Sciences
  - Support the position of Government in the Faculty of Commerce

Decisions about, and the implementation of, any of the first three options will need to be taken at a senior University level.

3. Establish a sound and transparent financial basis for the Department, to facilitate planning, entrepreneurial developments and support research activities.
4. Fund a Professorial Research Fellowship or senior post to provide a better balance between senior and junior staff.
5. More permanent instead of temporary posts for Academic staff.
6. Sabbatical leave policy support

### **4.2 Action at Departmental (staff) level**

7. Investment in training with regard to financial management of the department and effective liaison with College offices.
8. Attention to process.

9. Expansion of highly regarded consultancy work with central and local government.

10. Formalise the administrative mechanisms of the Department, to include:

- Appoint a Departmental Manager / clerical assistance with placements
- Structure Departmental Meetings
- Student-Staff Consultative Committee
- Office hours
- Research Committee
- External Committee
- Appoint a member of staff to liaise with the Faculty of Arts.

#### **4.3 Action at Departmental (staff & student) level**

11. Provide adequate space and facilities for academic staff and postgraduate researchers.

12. Provision of photocopying cards and Inter library loan vouchers to postgraduates.

13. Equity of treatment of postgraduates with regard to facilities.

14. Re-introduction of tutorials and utilisation as source of funding for postgraduates as well as integrating postgraduates into work of Department.

15. Postgraduate/research committee to develop postgraduate identity within department, avoid isolation.

16. Model for allocation of administrative tasks to staff; more responsibility taken across the university by senior staff.

**Timetable for conduct of Peer Review Visit**

**Department of Government**

***Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February 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.
- 20.00 Dinner for members of the Peer Review Group and members of department:

***Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2004***

- 08.30 Convening of Peer Review Group  
Consideration of Self-Assessment Report
- 09.00 Professor Neil Collins, Head of Department
- 09.30 Meeting with all staff of Department
- 10.30 Tea / coffee for PRG + all staff  
Meetings with individual members of staff
- 11:00 Fiona Buckley  
11:15 Clodagh Harris  
11:30 Andrew Cottey  
11:45 Linda Dennard  
12:00 Seamus O'Tuama  
12:15 Ann McCann  
12:30 Mary Murphy  
12:45 Aodh Quinlivan
- 13.00 Working private lunch for members of Peer Review Group
- 14.00 Visit to departmental facilities in O'Rahilly Building  
Meetings with representative selections of students, recent graduates, employers
- 14.30 Undergraduate Students  
David Coveney GPPI  
Brenda Keating GPPII  
Stephanie O'Sullivan GPPIII  
Eoin Weldon GPPIV  
Avril Mulcahy BComm IV  
Niamh Fitzgerald Auditor
- 15.00 Postgraduate Students  
James Murphy  
Noelle Desmond



Gylych Jorayev  
Theresa Reidy

- 15.30 Coffee/tea
- 16.00 Graduates and Employers  
Holly Hardwicke (Graduate)  
Damien O'Mahony (Cork City Council)  
\* Pat Fitzgerald (Courts Services)  
\* Theresa Swidorski (New York State Assembly, Albany, NY)
- \* Via Conference call
- 16.45 Researchers, Part-time staff and Mature Students  
Eluska Fernandez (Researcher)  
Tom O' Connor (Part-Time staff member)  
Tim McCarthy (Mature Student)  
Anne Wallace (Mature Student)  
Pearse Wall (Mature Student)
- 18.00 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

***Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004***

- 08.30 Convening of Peer Review Group
- 09.00 Professor Aidan Moran Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- 09.30 Professor Kevin Collins, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
- 10.00 Ms. Carmel Cotter, Finance Office
- 10.15 Professor Denis Lucey, Dean of Faculty of Commerce
- 10.30 Coffee/tea
- 11.00 Visit to Q floor, Boole Library, meeting with Ms. Valerie Fletcher & Mr. Cathal Kerrigan, Subject Librarians
- 12.00 Working Lunch for PRG
- 13.30 Professor Neil Collins, Head of Department
- 14.00 Professor David Cox, Dean of Faculty of Arts
- 14.30 Preparation of first draft of final report
- 17.00 Exit presentation, to be made to all staff of the Department by the Chair of the Peer Review Group or other member of Peer Review Group as agreed, summarising the principal findings of the Peer Review Group.
- 18.00 Working private dinner for members of the Peer Review Group and finalisation of arrangements for completion of drafting the review report.

*Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004*

Externs depart