

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, CORK**

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT/QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN**

**ACADEMIC YEAR 2007/08**

**13 May 2008**

## PEER REVIEW GROUP MEMBERS

Peer Review Group
Professor Liliane Weissberg Professor of German and Comparative Literature, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Professor Eoin Bourke, Emeritus Professor of German, NUI Galway <i>(Chair)</i>
Ms. Maria Lorigan Senior Inspector, Department of Education & Science, Dublin
Professor Fan Hong, Department of Chinese Studies, UCC
Dr. Sean Hammond Department of Applied Psychology, UCC <i>(Rapporteur)</i>

## TIMETABLE OF THE SITE VISIT

The timetable for the site visit is attached as Appendix A.

The Peer Review Group noted the difficulty in fitting such a full timetable into the allotted two days. It was necessary on some occasions to split the group in order to get through the information collection process. The University might therefore consider extending quality assurance visits to three days to enable selected interviews on specific problems.

## PEER REVIEW

### Methodology

The Peer Review Group met on the evening before the two day review process to receive a briefing from the Director of the Quality Review Unit, discuss the Self-Evaluation Report, and to select a chairperson. Professor Eoin Bourke was duly elected as the chair. For the most part, the interviews were conducted by all members of the Peer Review Group sitting as a panel. However, on the second day of

information gathering the group found it necessary to divide into two parallel teams in order to accommodate the full timetable. Discussion and evaluation of information received occurred on the evening of the first day and the afternoon of the second day prior to the delivery of the verbal report to the assembled Department of German. Dr. Sean Hammond was chosen as the Rapporteur on the evening of the second day.

The information informing this report came from the Self-Evaluation Report of the German Department as well as interviews with staff and students of the Department as well as other stakeholders and members of the University Executive.

### **Site Visit**

Not all members of the Peer Review Group were involved in the site visit to the German Department because it was felt necessary to divide into teams to get through the workload on the review timetable. Professors Bourke and Weissberg visited the Department and reviewed the facilities available. The Department was most helpful and accommodating during this visit. Professor Weissberg was then tasked with viewing the library resources and holdings and the librarian was also most accommodating and helpful.

### **Peer Review Group Report**

All members of the Peer Review Group worked on the drafting of the report and all agreed the final recommendations.

## **OVERALL ANALYSIS**

### **Self-Evaluation Report**

The Peer Review Group was impressed by the obvious effort and energy expended on the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report. It was comprehensive and well-presented. Additional materials such as the promotions video were very well received. It was clear to the Peer Review Group that all members of the Department had been involved in the production of the report.

The University has expressly stated that it values the Department of German and that it is committed to supporting the Department for the next ten years. Two new permanent academic positions have been approved by the University Management Group, thus indicating its support for the Department. These are in addition to the

two permanent academic staff and the four College Language Teachers, already in post. There are two Executive Assistants based in the Department and it was clear that the Department could not operate smoothly without their hard work.

### **SWOT Analysis**

The Peer Review Group reviewed the SWOT analysis and agreed with much of what was stated in the Self-Evaluation Report. In particular, on the basis of the visit, the Peer Review Group endorsed the following statements taken directly from the SWOT analysis report:-

#### **Strengths**

- In the analysis, the fact that a mission statement is in place, as well as a newly developed MA-programme were identified as strong points.
- In general work is carried out smoothly and cooperatively, in particular the coordination of the language programmes functions very well due to very efficient and productive work by the language staff. There are a variety of communication channels within the Department as well as regular staff and committee meetings. The Department is perceived by staff as a safe environment due to a generally positive attitude, and good collegiality.
- There was widespread consensus that there is a high level of commitment and dedication among the Department's well qualified staff. A further strong point is that the Department allows staff the freedom to expand their teaching and research beyond their immediate area of expertise. However, although staff-members have a wide range of skills, there is not enough time to develop them.
- One of the greatest strengths of the Department is its friendly, approachable, helpful and respectful staff. As students' questionnaires state, there is a very positive interaction between students and staff. A generally good, collegial atmosphere and a strong sense of identity among staff prevail within the department. Staff members are cooperative and supportive of each other, in particular of new staff. The Academic Staff questionnaire in Appendix L of the Self-Evaluation Report indicates a high rate of commitment and provides an excellent discussion document for building a vibrant future.

## **Weaknesses**

- It was agreed that there is a need for the establishment of a committee to develop a strategy. Furthermore, the mission statement needs to be opened up for discussion and a written plan, incorporating common goals, should be drafted and mechanisms put in place for monitoring the success of the strategy.
- There appears to be a need for a clearer definition of the different roles (e.g. coordinator) and the responsibilities allocated to those roles to avoid varying understandings of who is expected to deal with which tasks and questions.
- The non-permanent status of many members of staff was identified as a problem as it may influence commitment and morale and furthermore creates a lack of continuity. This situation creates, in many part-time staff, the sense of being exploited. There is also a shortage of permanent lecturing staff, especially in areas of specialisation such as Law and Commerce. This places heavy demands on those staff-members teaching the courses in these areas, and it is felt by staff that students should have the right to accredited experts. It is regretted that there are insufficient resources for desired staff development courses.

## **Opportunities**

- Change of President and University structures (schoolification), role of Department within University
- EU developments: EU policy and funding (incl. Socrates and Erasmus), Bologna agreement
- Government policy on education (modern languages, Irish)
- Technological innovation – Blackboard, PowerPoint, e-mail, multi-media, 2012 digital TV and therefore more learning opportunities

## **Threats**

- Sociocultural factors such as image / perception of foreign languages / German / Germany in Irish society, values, expectations and approach of students changing (commodification of education, “performance culture”, culture of work)

- Economic factors such as languages not perceived in the current economic climate as money/income generators and uncertain job prospects for German students
- University factors such as the HR ‘metastructure’ (mushrooming at the expense of academic side; bureaucracy, inefficiency → consequences for local administration) and the lack of UCC support for humanities research (library) and academic travel, especially for College Language Teachers and postgraduate students
- Environmental Factors such as space and lack of it: offices (staff / postgraduate / administration); storage of books, equipment, multi-media, magazines, newspapers; room for meetings, scheduling of teaching in distant venues, parking
- Finding time / resources to up-skill, inadequate training and backup, inadequate supply for technological resources (hardware and software vital for teaching development), stress levels, workloads

The Peer Review Group endorsed the conclusions of the SWOT that the following elements should be part of future strategic thinking:

- PR/ image of German Department
- Raising the profile of the subject
- Space and resources
- Improving the departmental infrastructure
- Generating funding for staff development, postgraduates, research, materials / resources
- Student recruitment (undergraduate / postgraduate)

### **Benchmarking**

The German Department benchmarked itself against the German Department at the University of Bristol in the UK. The decision to use Bristol was based upon comparable size in terms of student numbers and study programmes being offered as well as personal knowledge of the Department through the activities of one of the UCC staff. The UCC German Department was clearly less well resourced than its

Bristol equivalent although language teaching capacity appears on a par. In terms of the programmes on offer UCC outperforms Bristol. Student numbers were lower in UCC and this is a matter of some concern that appears as a leitmotiv of the report. The Peer Review Group agreed that the choice of Bristol as a benchmark was fair and reasonable.

#### **FINDINGS OF THE PEER REVIEW GROUP**

The Peer Review Group was very impressed by the German Department. Its productivity is of a very high standard. All three members of full-time lecturing staff are to be commended for their obvious diligence and involvement in research and course development. The college language teachers clearly add to the intellectual rigour of the department and many are research active above and beyond the requirements of their contracts. Together with highly productive lektorinnen, part-funded by the German and Austrian governments, the members of the department clearly evince enthusiasm for their discipline and a high measure of collegiality, all of which adds immeasurably to the intellectual life of the University. The Head of Department in particular must be commended on his role in fostering the team spirit displayed by the Department under challenging circumstances.

There is no doubt that the German Department is facing challenges. There has been a decline in students taking the subject over the last few years and this has adversely affected the full-time equivalents available to the Department. It should be made clear that this is consistent with other such Departments in Ireland and the UK, and is not a reflection of the excellent standing and quality of the staff in German at UCC. The Peer Review Group were gratified to note that the University recognises the necessity of maintaining a good German Department and has undertaken a ten-year programme of support starting with the allocation of two new lecturing posts. Both the Head of College of ACSSS and the Registrar of the University expressed their interest in supporting the Department. Nevertheless, members of the Department do feel under threat because it has been made clear to them that they must keep the student numbers at a sustainable level. The Peer Review Group noted a sense of anxiety and defensiveness in staff but it was also clear that they are prepared to view the challenges facing them as opportunities for development.

## **Department Details**

The Department of German is currently comprised of three full-time academic staff, one senior lecturer (Head of Department) and two lecturers (one senior lecturer on a temporary contract that terminates in the summer of 2008 and one permanent lecturer). In addition the Department has two Lektorinnen posts funded in part by the German and Austrian government and four permanent College Language Teachers. In the academic year 2007-08 one of these College Language Teacher posts was shared between four part-time teachers.

The Peer Review Group noted some discrepancy over estimates of the Departments student fulltime equivalents and were pleased to receive clarification on these as an addendum following the visit. The total student fulltime equivalents for the department are at 74.79 (61.37 from undergraduate and 13.42 from postgraduate sources). Of these the Peer Review Group noted that 25.58 (34%) of the student fulltime equivalents are due to inter-faculty collaboration with the Faculty of Commerce (12.83) and the Faculty of Law (12.75).

The Department has an involvement in three Masters level programmes (one being its own MA in German Studies) and one Higher Diploma. Currently, the Department is responsible for two full-time PhD students one of whom is pursuing his/her degree in Drama and Theatre Studies.

## **Department Organisation & Planning**

The Department is small at present and as a result its organisation is fairly simple. It is clearly functioning at the moment under a benign and relaxed leadership style. However, the challenges the Department now face require a clear strategic vision and the Peer Review Group noted that there was not a well developed strategic plan.

One of the key issues for such a plan would be student retention and expansion. This will inevitably require an analysis of the different balance required between Language and Culture for students from a Commerce background and those undertaking BA in General Arts or German Studies since this is the current student constituency.

Another pressing issue requiring a strategic view is the schoolification process as this may present new opportunities for expanding the student base and rationalising

resources. It was gratifying to hear from staff a positive and constructive view of this particular challenge.

### **Teaching & Learning**

The Department is to be commended for the number and range of courses on offer that include a number of interdisciplinary programmes and evening courses. The Peer Review Group was also impressed with the Department's efforts to introduce greater self-directed learning.

That said, a number of concerns were raised and the most compelling concerned the teaching of German on the BComm (International) programme. Students as well as stakeholders expressed the need for more 'business' type courses in German with an emphasis on language and commercial culture. The Peer Review Group noted that developments have been made to fill this need and that these efforts have been well received. Nevertheless, they do not appear to have gone far enough and there was a clear sense of dissatisfaction with the paucity of 'commerce relevant' material. Given the relatively high proportion of student fulltime equivalents that currently come from commerce students (estimated around 20% of undergraduate fulltime equivalents) this is an urgent challenge to the Department. It should also be noted that approximately the same number of student fulltime equivalents come from programmes in the Faculty of Law.

The Peer Review Group also noted that there did not appear to be a clear policy for teaching through the target language and a number of concerns were raised concerning language skill. It was noted that the number of language teaching hours was on the low side and it was felt that an expansion to a minimum of four hours per week (and preferably five) might be considered with added supervised language laboratory as compulsory, particularly at First Year Beginner's level. The Peer Review Group also observed that this issue had been raised fairly consistently in external examiners reports and advised the Department to take due cognisance of these comments. It may also be necessary to review credit assignments to allow for an increase in language skills especially for first year students.

The Peer Review Group was made very aware of the mixed language abilities, particularly in 1<sup>st</sup> Year and the burden this places on language teachers. Unless

managed carefully, this situation can lead to attrition and loss of motivation among students at each end of the skills continuum. The Peer Review Group heard some suggestions that this may indeed be happening.

In summary, the teaching and course provision on German Studies and culture is excellent and wide ranging. However, the language teaching may need some review and a particular area of concern is around the provision of German to the students from the Faculty of Commerce.

### **Postgraduate Studies**

Like all departments at UCC, the German Department has been asked to increase its post-graduate student numbers. Because of its strong research capability, it is well situated to attract such students. To advertise for the programme, and to attract both internal and external research funding, the staff of the Department needs to draw up a strategic plan that would include a research profile for the near future.

The establishment of an interdisciplinary Centre of Literary Studies and Media Research would provide an appropriate entity through which to apply for funding. It would also help to institutionalize the already existing reading group in literary theory, and serve as a clearing house for lectures, symposia, and workshops. The Peer Review Group suggests that the Centre would be housed in a room that would offer media access for film screenings and satellite television reception (which is important for the teaching of German as well). The Centre could become the “home” for the postgraduates in German.

Right now, the Peer Review Group sees five areas of particular strength that could be developed to attract graduate students nationwide and internationally. All of these areas would link with other programs and departments, and built on their strength as well.

#### (1) Theatre and Drama

This area would include performance studies in general, and the German faculty has already begun a fruitful cooperation with the drama program at UCC. Projects here could also include more connections to the local theatres in Cork and environs.

## (2) Film and Media

The research by staff in the Department in this area is already very promising, and the German Department can work on closer links with the English and other foreign language departments, as well as with the Cork film festival. The German Department may consider participating in the film festival by selecting German movies for screening, and this providing a unique event for Ireland. The Department could also explore possibilities of cooperation with the TV programming initiated by UCC's program in computing.

## (3) German and English/Irish Literature and Culture

Research that combines German and English or Irish literature may be especially attractive for German students who are considering PhD studies abroad. The German Department can build on the strength of UCC's English Department and the attentive supervision in German here.

## (4) Language Acquisition and Cultural Studies

This is an area in which the German Department can cooperate more closely with the program in Education. MA degrees in this field may be particularly useful to teachers, and should be advertised to them directly.

## (5) Classical Studies and German: Ancient and Modern World

The UCC library owns a collection of classical literature that is unique to Ireland, and would be very attractive to graduate students. As staff of the Department are interested in Greek and German drama, theories of tragedy, etc., such topics should be attractive for future graduate students as well.

Right now, the Department does not have sufficient funding for graduate students, but it can encourage students to apply for funding themselves, or design research projects that would include student funding. These projects should also be developed and submitted both to internal and external funding sources, in close cooperation with the Office for Research. Further, the Department is advised to design a plan for the Centre, affiliated lecture series, workshops, and student and library support for discussion with the Development Office.

## **Research & Scholarly Activity**

It is clear that there exists something of a divide between what the University Research Office deems research active and what would be seen as such in most German Departments. There does not appear to have been a proper contextualisation of the nature of research in the humanities by the University. Use of a scientific standard for research is bound to result in poor benchmarking for humanities subjects such as German Studies. It is hoped that the University is able to evolve a strategy for properly evaluating the quality of their Humanities Departments' output.

In comparison with other German Departments nationally it is obvious that UCC has a vibrant research department with a large amount of scholarly output of various forms. The Peer Review Group particularly wish to commend the College Language Teachers, many of whom manage to be research active despite the fact that it is not part of their job description.

Nevertheless, despite their impressive research output there is not much evidence of success in receiving external research funding. The Peer Review Group encourages the staff to engage with external funding opportunities and to seek support of the Research Office with regard to possible IRCHSS and EU funds as well as internal College awards.

Given the substantial amount of multidisciplinary work manifest in the Self-Evaluation Report, the Peer Review Group suggest that the Department might consider a multidisciplinary centre for media studies and media research (French, Philosophy, Computer Sciences, etc.) to serve as a focus for research efforts and as a centre of gravity for potential post-graduate students and external funding.

## **Staff Development**

Staffing in the German Department has been minimal for the past few years. This situation has led to obvious strain in both teaching provision and departmental administration. This situation led to a temporary lecturer having to fill the role of acting Head of Department for a period. The Peer Review Group welcomes the fact that new appointments are now promised and this should mitigate the strain.

However, the Peer Review Group was particularly concerned with the staff development of the College Language Teachers in the German Department. It was

very clear that these individuals perform a vital role in the Department and are very well regarded by students. In the German Department many are research active and this adds to the quality of the student experience of German. It is clear to the Peer Review Group that the role of the College Language Teachers will need to be re-evaluated and this may require action at the level of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences. Their classification as “administration” seems anomalous, particularly as some of them are clearly research-active and feel they have to improve their research profile for career advancement. Also, the fact that they cannot apply for sabbatical leave, as well as the lack of a promotional structure, can be very demotivating.

### **External Relations**

The German Department is very much part of the cultural life of the university with both drama and media involvement. More connections external to the university are certainly possible and hopefully, with the influx of more staff these might be explored. For example there would seem to be ample possibilities to develop relations with the Cork Film Festival and other community based opportunities. This may be facilitated by connecting with the University Development Office.

The Peer Review Group met with representatives of secondary schools in Cork and formed the impression that the German Department could make better links through open days for teachers and pupils. There was a great deal of willingness from the schools to liaise with the German Department but a sense that more could be done in this area.

In particular a number of teachers expressed an interest in the MA in German Studies but regretted the fact that it was not available in the evenings to accommodate their full-time employment. This may be a consideration for the Department to take on board.

### **Support Services**

The Peer Review Group noted that library resources were limited and could offer little support for the kind of research undertaken by the German Department, where books, rather than journal articles, are the primary sources required. This is a general

problem and might be ameliorated by the German Department seeking external research funding for book purchase.

It was also noted that software accessibility on the language laboratory computers was sometimes a problem. It was unclear where the responsibility for correcting this lay but it led to some sub-optimality in the provision of language teaching.

### **Staffing**

Staffing is minimal and this has led to considerable strain. The personnel base is especially narrow when sabbatical leave and sick leave are taken into account. The new posts that are promised should ameliorate the situation somewhat but it is clear that there will be a great deal of competition within the department from temporary and part-time members of staff for the positions. It is hoped that this will not impair the good working relationships that are currently apparent.

One major issue that the Peer Review Group noted was the absence of a Chair of German. The lack of a Professor of German to promote the interests of the Department and the discipline at a high level in the University is particularly problematic in this time of challenge. However, the Peer Review Group was sympathetic with the University's position on the funding of such a post. We would strongly suggest that, as soon as resources are available, a Chair of German should be a priority.

### **Accommodation**

The Department functions in sub-optimal accommodation. The Peer Review Group noted that a room within the department, identified as ideal for a multi-media room, had been designated as general seminar room that does not serve the specific needs of the German Department. The Peer Review Group hopes that this decision could be reversed. Additionally, a chronic lack of space is hindering the College Language Teachers in the execution of their tasks. The Peer Review Group realises that space is a major problem for the university and it is incumbent on the Department to make a strong case for space to fulfil teaching needs. It is hoped that the University will look favourably on such a case given the impact the lack of accommodation appears to be having on teaching provision. Certainly, accommodation needs should be a central element of a Departmental strategic plan.

## **Financing**

The financing of the Department's activities is almost entirely through student fulltime equivalents. The University holds a position that there are currently not enough financial resources to support a Chair but nevertheless two new posts at college lecturer level are being financed from the central allocation. The Peer Review Group were told that the German Department is presently in deficit financially although it was not possible for the Peer Review Group to substantiate to what degree. It has been suggested that if the student fulltime equivalents fall below fifty the Department would lose viability.

The Department has limited funding for its research activities and this may be addressed by greater engagement in research grant applications. The Peer Review Group noted however, that with such a small staff contingent and heavy teaching commitments this is difficult to prescribe. Also, the fact that, contractually, the College Language Teachers are not deemed research active makes applications from this source difficult.

## **Communications**

The Peer Review Group noted that while most students were voluble in support of the Department there appears to be a need for enhanced staff student communications. It was clear that there is much informal communication between students and staff but we were not able to ascertain the existence of a formal procedure for such communication.

## **Departmental Co-ordinating Committee & Methodology employed in the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report**

The Peer Review Group would like to commend those in the German Department who coordinated the compilation of the Self-Evaluation Report. The report was full, readable and well-structured with very few omissions. In particular the additional materials such as the promotions DVD were excellent and much appreciated by the Peer Review Group.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

The Peer Review Group carefully considered all the recommendations made by the Departmental Self Evaluation Report. The recommendations made here incorporate those of the Department with the deliberations of the Peer Review Group.

### **Recommendations to the University**

The Peer Review Group urges the University to take cognizance of the fact that (a) student numbers have been falling not only in the German Department of UCC but rather in all German Departments of Ireland (and Britain), and that (b) there is a similar drop in numbers happening in other major foreign languages (French and Italian). If anyone is to be faulted for this, then it is surely a general and hopefully temporary shortsightedness brought about by the Celtic Tiger. The Peer Review Group is of the opinion, therefore, that the UCC drop in German student numbers should be seen in a larger context and not be ascribed to the Department's history. We have the distinct impression that the new Head and present staff are forward-looking and are already having a regenerative effect. This should soften the relative harshness of the University's attitude towards the Department and make it more supportive of its new efforts to adapt and modernize. We would like to point out that it is difficult to build up a more optimistic and upbeat atmosphere in any Department which is being given ultimata as regards student fulltime equivalent numbers and a refilling of the Chair. Economic trends often change and or go into reverse, and the Peer Review Group would find it foolhardy to do away with a discipline which has such close ties with a country that is of such significance in terms of Central European civilization and culture, is still the motor of the EU and a great economic benefactor to Ireland, and donates one staff member to each German Department in Ireland. Austria's helpfulness in this regard should also be taken into account. With regard to the Chair the Peer Review Group feels that it should be refilled at the earliest possible opportunity, as a department without a professorial head is relatively voiceless in university structures. If the Department takes on the recommendation of gearing the German course for commerce students towards the students' express needs and designing it as a "Language for Specific Purposes" course, we feel that the University should also respond with an expressly positive and favourable attitude.

### **Specific recommendations to the University are:-**

- The Peer Review Group strongly endorses the recommendation in the Self-Evaluation Report regarding the need for a media room. The media room should have a facility for German satellite TV programmes and film screenings. These media are essential for language learning as well as being fully commensurate with the research orientation of the department.
- The Chair of German should be replaced when resources permit.
- The Language Laboratory facilities should be reviewed and upgraded.
- That there is a review and re-evaluation of the role of the College Language Teachers in the University with particular reference to career development and retention.
- The University would be well advised to look closely at the criteria applied to the research status of Humanities departments in general. The simple transparency of a science based model does not apply in the context of most humanities departments.

### **Recommendations to the German Department**

#### ***Strategic Plan***

- The Department should develop a clear strategic plan that will include reference to:
  - Schoolification
  - The identity of the Department (e.g. the tension between applied (i.e. language, commerce) and academic (i.e. literature, critical analysis)).
  - Funding opportunities
  - Space needs and requirements
  - Staffing
  - Identification of research areas that are attractive to postgraduate students.

### *Staffing*

- The Department should build its team around its strategy and recruit the two new permanent staff accordingly.

### *Teaching Provision*

- To ensure the retention of the BComm Degree with German, the German Department should develop modules that meet the needs of Commerce students more closely in acquiring business German and developing a knowledge of the German business environment. The Department might benefit from an investigation of what has been set up in NUI Galway in this area. There the Applied Language German courses for students of (a) Commerce and Economics, (b) Law, (c) Biotechnology and Sciences and (c) Engineering are geared strictly to the students' needs as "language for specific purposes". Only in German for Law students is there a literary element due to an express wish on the part of the students themselves, and takes the form of discussing literary texts with a legal dimension. Otherwise the courses are strictly applied and have no literary element. The First, Second, Third (Year Abroad) and Fourth Year courses in German for Commerce in NUI Galway can be downloaded from the webpage <http://www.nuigalway.ie/german/bcomm.html>. The designer and lecturer of this highly successful and popular course, Ms. Doris Devilly M.A., would be willing to act in an advisory capacity to the German Department UCC, if required to do so.
- In First Year BComm (International with German) particularly there should be an increase in language teaching contact hours from three hours per week to five hours per week, where this is not already provided. The additional hours should be used for the development of the students' oral skills. One contact hour should be supervised in the language laboratory.
- The Department should develop a clear policy on teaching through the target language.
- Where there is a clear demand for existing modules the Department should find ways to increase student fulltime equivalents by extending the provision of these modules to other students (e.g. Holocaust Studies).

- The Department should consider making the newly designed MA programme in German Studies accessible to evening students and so widening the pool of potential students.
- The University should consider changing the name of Language and Cultural Studies to BA International, a degree course with a built-in Third Year abroad.
- The Department should utilise the Erasmus mechanisms to ensure that all students go abroad – this is recommended very strongly.
- The Department should ensure that students are aware of library facilities and take part in library tours at the beginning of their courses.
- The Department should review its HDip programme and ensure the quality of the structure and of the teaching of the programme.

### *Collaborative Work*

- That the Department, in developing its future strategy, continues to actively pursue links with larger, student full-time equivalent-rich departments/schools in UCC in order to extend their range of interdisciplinary modules and in so doing increase the student full-time equivalent allocation to the Department.
- To attract students specialising in all fields of German, the Peer Review Group strongly suggests that the Department forges tighter bonds with the secondary schools in the area. Information visits to schools are useful, as well as summer sessions at UCC for secondary school students who are considering a career in German. The Peer Review Group suggests that these educational “university preview” sessions should be given free of charge; indeed, the DAAD would probably be very willing to support such ventures. This may work at the undergraduate level but also at the postgraduate level, as many teachers of German see the professional and financial benefit of pursuing a higher degree.
- In the context of the new appointments at Lecturer level, the Department should seriously consider including representatives on the interview panel from stakeholders with an interest in the applied side of the Department’s activities such as Commerce and Law.

- The Department should actively consider the formation of an interdisciplinary centre for literary and media research which might attract research funding and appeal to postgraduate students.
- That the Department consider the further expansion of their outreach activities to include other national and international institutions.

### ***Funding***

- The Peer Review Group recommends that staff apply for external research funding and seek the support of the Research Office in doing so. These applications should be for both individual and group projects and include linkages with other departments.
- That the Department should seek research funding for library acquisition funds.
- That the Department pursue funding options for national and international students as outlined in the body of the text of this report.
- That the Department should actively seek opportunities for funding via the UCC Development Office.
- Put together list of alumni in consultation with Alumni Office for professional development.

## Appendix A

### DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN

#### PEER REVIEW GROUP SITE VISIT TIMETABLE

##### In Summary

- Wednesday 12 March: The Peer Review Group arrives at the Kingsley Hotel for a briefing from the Director of the Quality Promotion Unit, followed by a meal with the Departmental Co-ordinating Committee.
- Thursday 13 March: The Peer Review Group considers the Self-Evaluation Report and meets with departmental staff and student and stakeholder representatives. A working private dinner is held that evening for the Peer Review Group.
- Friday 14 March: The Peer Review Group meets with relevant officers of UCC. An exit presentation is given by the Peer Review Group to all members of the department. A working private dinner is held that evening for the Peer Review Group in order to finalise the report. This is the final evening of the review.
- Saturday 15 March: External Peer Review Group members depart.

<b>Wednesday 12 March 2008</b>	
16.00 – 18.00	Meeting of members of the Peer Review Group Briefing by Director of Quality Promotion Unit, Dr. N. Ryan. Appointment of Chair and Rapporteur. 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.
19.00	Dinner for members of the Peer Review Group and Head of Department and Departmental Co-ordinating Committee.  Departmental Co-ordinating Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Ruth Bell</li> <li>• Ms. Christine Bremer</li> <li>• Dr. Kerstin Fest</li> <li>• Ms. Melanie Henry</li> <li>• Dr. Gert Hofmann</li> <li>• Ms. Anna Maria Mullally</li> <li>• Dr. Claire O'Reilly</li> <li>• Dr. Manfred Schewe (Head)</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday 13 March 2008</b>	
<b>Venue: Bearra Room, Áras na Mac Léinn</b>	
08.30 – 09.00	Convening of Peer Review Group and consideration of Self-Evaluation Report
09.00 – 09.30	Dr. Manfred Schewe, Head of Department

09.30 – 10.30	<u>All staff of the Department</u>		
	Ms. Sabine Amann Ms. Ditte Bellettre Ms. Bernadette Cronin Ms. Deborah Fitzgibbon Dr. Gert Hofmann Ms. Anna Maria Mullally Dr. Manfred Schewe	Ms. Ruth Bell Ms. Christine Bremer Dr. Kerstin Fest Ms. Melanie Henry Ms. Siobhan Mortell Dr. Claire O'Reilly Ms. Barbara Siller	
10.30 – 11.00	Tea/coffee		
11.00 – 13.00	<u>Private meetings of members of staff</u>		
	11.00 Ms. Siobhan Mortell 11.30 Dr. Kerstin Fest 12.00 Dr. Gert Hofmann 12.30 Ms. Sabine Amann	11.15 Ms. Christine Bremer 11.45 Ms. Barbara Siller 12.15 Dr. Claire O'Reilly	
13.00 – 14.00	Working private lunch for members of Peer Review Group		
14.00 – 14.30	Visit by Professors Burke and Weissberg to core facilities of Department, escorted by Dr. Manfred Schewe, Head and Dr. Gert Hoffman		
14.30 – 15.00	<u>Representatives of 1<sup>st</sup> Year BA Students</u>		
	Pavla Cervinkova Robert Fehily Gergana Todorowa	Laura Cuesta Maira Hasenfuß Sarah Whyte	Philip Day Sinead O'Connor
15.00 – 15.30	<u>Representatives of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final Year BA Students</u>		
	Aislinn Barry Mary Groarke Gemma Slattery	Gosia Blachinska Boybay Emily Kennedy	Caroline Fox Danielle O'Donovan
15.30 – 15.45	Tea/coffee break		
15.45 – 16.15	<u>Representatives of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final Year BComm (International) Students and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final Year BCL Law &amp; German Students</u>		
	Michelle Dalton Louise Heenan Frank Ryan	Conn Donovan Jayne O'Connell	Mark Hastings Sarah Quinn
16.15 – 16.45	Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President		
17.00 – 18.30	<u>Representatives of recent graduates and employers</u>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Mary Bayer – School Teacher</li> <li>• Mr. John Burns – Past Graduate</li> <li>• Ms. Alison Dennehy – Past Graduate</li> <li>• Ms. Kara Gibbons – Past Graduate</li> <li>• Ms. Sharon Gillane – School Teacher</li> <li>• Ms. Aine Higgins – School Teacher</li> <li>• Ms. Fenella Murphy – Past Graduate</li> <li>• Ms. Sinead Ring – Past Graduate</li> </ul>		

