



University College Dublin

Periodic Quality Review

UCD Library

February 2015

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Table of Contents

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| Executive Summary | 3 |
| 1. Introduction and Context of the Library | 7 |
| 2. Planning, Organisation and Management | 13 |
| 3. Functions, Activities and Processes: Collections and Services | 17 |
| 4. Management of Resources | 22 |
| 5. User Communications and Perspectives | 26 |
| | |
| Appendix One: Summary Commendations and Recommendations | |
| Appendix Two: UCD Library Response to the Review Group Report | |
| Appendix Three: Schedule for Review Site Visit to UCD Library | |

Periodic Quality Review

UCD Library

Executive Summary

To support readers of this Report the Review Group has prepared this Executive Summary which highlights their key recommendations and findings. Reference is included to the relevant section/paragraph in the main section of this report and sets out in more detail all observations, commendations and recommendations of the Review Group. A summary of all commendations and recommendations is set out in Appendix 1.

A. Management and Planning

Overview

Overall the Review Group concluded that the UCD Library is delivering on a complex and diverse mission for the University under challenging financial circumstances, with a good self-understanding of the challenges it faces.

Planning Process

1. Planning, implementation and management processes have been established by the Library to identify and deliver on objectives consistent with the wider UCD Strategy. These actions have enabled the Library to maintain an impressive range of services, in very challenging financial circumstances, and to develop significant new areas of activity (para 2.9).
2. Consideration should be undertaken by the Library Executive to reviewing the structure and composition of the Library Senior Management Team to ensure optimum effectiveness of its operation. This should also include identifying opportunities for delegating operational activities (para 2.13).

Data Management

3. The Library collects a standard set of statistics through many of its systems. This enables the Library to submit data to the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL), allowing it to benchmark against other UK and Irish academic libraries. The Library participates in the widely used LibQUAL survey which provides both quantitative and qualitative data on the user community's assessment of many aspects of the library, including such things as collections, services, and facilities (para 4.2).
4. The Library has developed a plan for data management that has the intention of enabling the Library to collate, measure, evaluate and make decisions based on accurate and timely data. The Review Group recommends the establishment of a central repository of data collected by various library units, which would be beneficial to many staff in the University. In addition, the Library should consider whether it could use the University's InfoHub system for data storage and access, which might facilitate examining library data in

connection with other university operations and allow for some of the library data to be easily used by other units in their studies of topics such as learning analytics (paras 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18).

Communications and Outreach

5. The Library has developed multiple formal and informal communication, evaluation and feedback processes to ensure that communication with its users is effective, responsive and evaluative. Qualitative user perspectives are regularly obtained and inform both strategic and operational planning and enable an immediate response to practical issues. The use of social media is one means of more instant communications and responsiveness (para 5.2).
6. The customer/user driven approach by the Library is exemplary. Staff are recognised as being helpful, engaged, committed, motivated, professional, efficient, open and hard working. The Review Group commends the introduction of College Liaison Librarians to connect with Colleges, Schools and connected units, and the focus on the needs of academic programmes and the mix of communications channels it uses to communicate with Library users (Section 5: User Communications and Perspectives).
7. Within the resources available the Library is adept at using a variety of methods and strategies to promote its services and facilities. Given that communication relies on information being pushed out to users and being received, the Library can take pride in a number of solid achievements which have resulted from the outreach strategy. However, there are still categories of users including students and staff where communicating with users requires ongoing refinement and activity (para 5.7 and 5.16). The Review Group recommends, in addition to existing formal and information communication structures, the establishment of appropriate and regular consultative forums to formally engage with Library users (para 5.18).
8. Further development of its suite of communication provision to users should be undertaken by the Library Outreach team. This should also include consideration of the staffing provision required to meet these needs (para 5.16).

B. Staffing and Staff Development

Staff Engagement

9. There is strong and impressive evidence across the Library of a uniform level of commitment to the University; staff appear highly engaged, professional and motivated. Those in new roles demonstrate a particular energy for the development of new services, internal and external to the Library, and a strong desire to see their services understood and promoted (para 3.12).
10. Both the Library Annual Staff Training Day and the Library's participation as a key partner in the cross-university Working Smarter Together professional development day are excellent examples of mechanisms for increasing the engagement of all staff about current issues, motivating staff to explore innovations, and increasing morale (para 4.14).

Staff Management and Development

11. The University should implement an annual performance review system for all staff; this should also include training for managers and supervisors as well as offering leadership development sessions (para 4.21).
12. The Library administration should support additional staff development opportunities that are made available to all staff or substantial portions of staff. These could include events that do not take significant time away from work (para 4.20).

C. Collections and Information Resources

Resourcing

13. The Library's collections budget of €2.23M is the lowest in Ireland and, with the exception of Sheffield University, a long way behind its UK peers for which the average budget is €7.5M. With the exception of the special collections, the Library cannot be considered adequate as a research library, even in the modern, digital sense. It cannot be compared favourably with the libraries of its comparator institutions with serious research agendas, struggling even to meet basic needs of all academic programmes (para 3.5).
14. Access to collections is increasingly digital, with loans beginning to show a gradual decline which is not only associated with a lack of available material. Many shelves are filled with low-use materials. A major de-selection exercise is long-overdue and a significant barrier to progress. The scale of the challenge is sizeable and therefore costly, but there is also a significant cost (financial) and a notable opportunity-cost to keeping libraries filled with low-use printed material, both in terms of a more strategic repurposing of the space for learning and scholarship, but also in improving access to more needed, highly valued collections. This shift will be important to the implementation of the Newman-Joyce project, and still vital without it (para 3.6). The Library should also aim to find an effective and more efficient way to manage consultation on any disposals to achieve quick results (para 3.16).

Special Collections

15. The Review Group noted the importance of the Library's holding of Special Collections and the steps taken to enhance their visibility, access and use. These collections together with the other important collections held across the University, constitute a remarkable heritage resource with great potential to enhance conservation, storage, access, exhibition and digitisation, to the great advantage of students, researchers and others who may wish to use them, and for the reputation of UCD as custodian of such treasures (para 3.10).

D. Resources and Budgeting

16. The Review Group recommends that the University should develop a stable stream of funding which can harness both teaching and learning and research budgets so as to enable the University to deliver on its core objectives to be a leading global university in terms of research impact, recruitment of the best students and leading faculty internationally, and delivery on high impact research addressing major societal challenges

(University Strategy 2015-2020). A key objective should be to ensure that Library funding for content resources to support research, teaching and learning is leading or at least average within the sector (relative to appropriate comparators), rather than lagging, and that a robust mechanism for making such evaluations is part of the budgetary process (para 4.15). Resourcing should also address key staffing needs in areas of skills shortages (paras 3.9 and 4.19).

E. Capital Facilities

Future Developments

17. UCD Library has been engaged in an ongoing process of upgrading its Library spaces for users through refitting and repurposing, and this is particularly evident in the James Joyce Library. The James Joyce Hub, with its integration of varied seating spaces, laptop loans and highly visible learning support activities (the Library Link incorporating the Maths Support Centre and the Writing Support Centre) is highly commended. This has been achieved through a combination of vision and careful marshalling and prioritisation of limited development resources (para 2.12). This process should be supported and maintained.
18. The Review Group recommends that the University focuses on prioritising the Newman-Joyce project as one of its key capital projects, with a view to facilitating the long overdue refurbishment of the James Joyce Library, and the development of a Learning Commons to capitalise on the remarkable asset it possesses in terms of the centrally located James Joyce Library and its units; and the opportunity for co-location of the various University heritage collections (paras 3.19 - 3.22).
19. Opening hours have needed to increase in some of the Library's five locations, although demand is far greater than is currently afforded. Student requests for 24/7 in the James Joyce Library are unambiguous (para 3.4). If funding can be identified, demand for a further extension to opening hours should be tested through a series of incremental pilot projects (para 3.18).

Collaborations

20. UCD Library should continue to build on current strategic collaborations such as that with Academic Affairs in order to develop centralised student-facing services within the James Joyce Library precinct allowing for optimum use of resources, greater usage of these areas, and supporting the vision of the University and the Library in terms of its service provision to students and researchers (paras 2.17 and 2.7).
21. Exploration of a low-cost storage model, including a collaborative option, is much needed to enable Library redevelopment plans to be progressed. A collaborative option should not be ruled out if this can be achieved at reasonable cost but if low cost solutions on campus can be achieved they should be adopted (para 3.15).

1. Introduction and Context of UCD Library

Introduction

- 1.1 This Report presents the findings of a quality review of UCD Library, at University College Dublin (UCD), which was undertaken in February 2015. The UCD Library response to the Review Group Report is attached as Appendix 2.

The Review Framework

- 1.2 Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Universities Act 1997, international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2007) and informed by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.

- 1.3 The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise learning from this essentially developmental process in order to effect improvement, including:

- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning opportunities.
- To monitor research activity, including: management of research activity; assessing the research performance with regard to: research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
- To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
- To provide a framework within which the unit can continue to work in the future towards quality improvement.
- To identify shortfalls in resources and provide an externally validated case for change and/or increased resources.
- To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice.
- To identify challenges and address these.
- To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality review

procedures also enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997 and informed by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

The Review Process

1.4 Typically, the review model comprises of four major elements:

- Preparation of a Self-assessment Report (SAR)
- A visit by a Review Group (RG) that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international. The site visit normally will take place over a two or three day period
- Preparation of a Review Group Report that is made public
- Agreement of an Action Plan for Improvement (Quality Improvement Plan) based on the RG Report's recommendations; the University will also monitor progress against the Improvement Plan

Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: www.ucd.ie/quality.

The Review Group

1.5 The composition of the Review Group for the UCD Library was as follows:

- Professor Colin Scott, Principal, UCD College of Human Sciences (Chair)
- Ms Sue Philpott, Director, Engineering and Architecture Programme Office (Deputy Chair)
- Dr Jan Wilkinson, University Librarian and Director of the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester
- Dr Joan Lippincott, Associate Executive Director, Coalition Network Information
- Mr Jon Purcell, University Librarian, Durham University

1.6 The Review Group visited UCD from 23-26 February 2015 and held meetings with Library staff on an individual or group basis, student, academic and professional staff representatives from across the University, and external stakeholders. The Review Group also toured Library facilities on the Belfield campus (James Joyce Library and the main Library for UCD, specialised libraries at Richview, Health Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, and a specialised library serving the UCD Smurfit School of Business on the Blackrock campus). The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 3.

1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report and its appendices, the Review Group considered documentation, provided in hard copy by the Library during the Site Visit.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report

1.8 UCD Library established a Self-assessment Co-ordinating Committee as required under the *UCD Guidelines for Internal Periodic Review*. The Outreach Librarian and Library Staffing and Finance Systems Manager were co-opted to the group. The members of the Co-ordinating Committee were:

- John B Howard, University Librarian (Chair)
- Peter Clarke, Programmer
- Christine Cullen, Senior Library Assistant
- Lorna Dodd, Assistant Librarian
- Angela Fox, Library Assistant
- Peter Hickey, Sub Librarian
- Michael Ladisch, Assistant Librarian
- Michelle Latimer (Notetaker), Senior Library Assistant
- Shirley Moloney, Staffing and Finance Manager
- Anne Marie Murphy, Library Assistant
- Carmel O’Sullivan, Associate Librarian
- Ros Pan, Sub Librarian
- Mark Tynan, Assistant Librarian

1.9 The Co-ordinating Committee (SARCC) oversaw the preparation of the SAR and individual members took responsibility for preparing different sections of the report supported by sub-groups. Timelines were agreed with the Quality Office and regular meetings held by the committee and working groups. Extensive consultation took place with the Library’s stakeholders. Staff were fully briefed and consulted during the preparation of the report. All staff had an opportunity to contribute to the final report and the Review Group particularly noted and commend staff on their engagement with the process.

The University

1.10 University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origin dates back to 1854. The University is situated on a large, modern campus (133 hectare), about 4km to the south of the centre of Dublin.

1.11 The University Strategic Plan (2015-2020) states that the University’s Mission is:

“to contribute to the flourishing of Dublin, Ireland, Europe and the world through the excellence and impact of our research and scholarship, the quality of our graduates and our global engagement; providing a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential”.

1.12 The University has agreed ten key objectives to achieve its vision for 2020 as Ireland’s Global University.

- 1.13 The University is reviewing the structure of its Colleges and Schools for implementation in academic year 2015-16. It is currently organised into 38 Schools in seven Colleges;
- UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies
 - UCD College of Human Sciences
 - UCD College of Science
 - UCD College of Engineering and Architecture
 - UCD College of Health Sciences
 - UCD College of Business and Law
 - UCD College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine
- 1.14 As the largest university in the Republic of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering, Architecture, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 26,000 students in our UCD campus (approximately 16,300 undergraduates, 7,782 postgraduates (including CPD) and 2,271 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on over 70 University degree programmes, including over 6,300 international students from more than 121 countries. The University also has over 5,400 students studying UCD degree courses on campuses overseas.
- 1.15 The University accounts for over 30% of international students within the Irish education sector, over 25% of all graduate students and almost 28% of all doctoral enrolments across the seven Irish Universities.

UCD Library

- 1.16 UCD Library is one of nine support units in UCD Academic Affairs reporting to the Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs.
- 1.17 The current UCD Library management structure was put into place in 2011 following a strategic planning exercise and public sector cuts that resulted in a large-scale restructuring of the Library.
- 1.18 UCD Library currently has 111.18 FTE staff. 69% of staff are female, 31% male. The age demographic breakdown is predominantly in the 30-59 age groups with a relatively even distribution over the other three age groups of between 28-30% of staff in each group.
- 1.19 UCD Library provides client services from five sites on two campuses. On the Belfield campus the James Joyce Library is the main library for UCD and provides collections and services support for a wide range of campus stakeholders, and three specialised libraries of Health Sciences, Veterinary Medicine and Richview. The Blackrock Library, a recent quality refurbishment of a disused chapel, serves the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School at the UCD Blackrock Campus. The total space occupied by the five library sites

exceeds 18,000 Sq. Metres of which the James Joyce Library occupies more than 13,500 Sq. Metres.

- 1.20 With significant growth in student numbers since its original construction the James Joyce Library has accommodated this expansion through branch libraries, particularly in areas that require subject accreditation. In parallel, dedicated space has diminished due to space requirements from other academic and support units. Currently space allocated to non-Library functions in the James Joyce Library building comprises approximately one-third of the floor area.
- 1.21 Library storage provision on campus is located within the James Joyce Library (currently full) and in Newstead (c.75% full).
- 1.22 Total study space provision for users are 2,836 individual study spaces, 16 group study rooms, a social study hub space, and dedicated bookable provision of 38 individual study rooms and 39 PCs and laptop spaces for postgraduates.
- 1.23 Dedicated teaching space is also provided for academics, Library and University Staff.

Methodology

- 1.24 Prior to the site visit the Review Group considered the Self-assessment report and its appendices. The site visit allowed the Review Group an opportunity to evaluate and verify the data outlined in the Self-assessment Report. Key stakeholders, including staff from within the Unit and wider University, students, and external stakeholders met with the Review Group. All members of the Group participated in all discussions and meetings. This Report has been read and approved by all members of the Group.
- 1.25 At the exit presentation the Review Group provided an overview of their initial comments.
- 1.26 The Library Self-Assessment Report provided an effective reflection on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the UCD Library. Overall the Review Group concluded that the UCD Library is delivering on a complex and diverse mission for the University under challenging financial circumstances, with a good self-understanding of the challenges it faces.
- 1.27 The Review Group commends the very high quality of the Library's Self-Assessment Report and the wider process, offering a reflective self-assessment and high quality materials (for example the very good national and international benchmarking reports). The very strong and open engagement of Library staff with the Review Group reinforced the views reached through reading of the Self-Assessment Report.
- 1.28 The Review Group met highly experienced and dedicated staff from within the Library and the wider University. These meetings were very helpful in teasing out some of the key aspects of the quality regime for the Library, including mechanisms for learning about user

needs, budgetary and staffing processes, strategic reviews and their implementation, and management of the various dimensions of library activity. Participants were extremely helpful in bringing their knowledge and addressing issues raised by the Review Group. Feedback from stakeholders was fairly uniform in assessing strengths of the Library in terms of commitment, professionalism, flexibility and vision and in identifying aspects of internal and external communication as areas where more might be done to link aspects of service provision to users. Equally feedback on the resourcing challenges and distinct opportunities available to the Library was fairly consistent.

- 1.29 Students who attended the meeting showed a high degree of commitment to their usage of the library as an aspect of their studies and of the wider group of students whom they represented. They highlighted their high usage of the Library resources and spaces. Some of their comments indicated difficulties with awareness of key resources, policies concerning fines (for late returns and anti-social behaviour), opening hours and limits to collections in some research areas.
- 1.30 The Review Group noted the current fiscal climate and diminishing resources, both financial and human, in parallel with increasing student numbers. It was noted that the core state grant fell from €126m in 2008 to €65m in 2013 with an increase in the student contribution, as defined by the Minister for Education, that is insufficient to compensate.
- 1.31 In considering the SAR the Review Group noted that the achievements of UCD Library are strong but not sustainable within the current resourcing structure. The resourcing challenges faced by the Library threaten to prevent the University from achieving its strategic objectives, but equally the Library is well positioned, were the resourcing difficulties to be resolved, to play a major part in supporting delivery of University Strategy 2015-2020.

2. Planning, Organisation and Management

Comments

- 2.1 The stated mission of UCD Library is to organise the University's information to inspire engagement and learning, to enable its use in promoting research and innovation, and to contribute to the preservation of Irish cultural heritage. It is the vision of UCD Library to be the University's centre for information and knowledge management services and expertise, creating dynamic environments that inspire learning, catalyse innovation, and enable the creation of new knowledge (SAR p.4, Section 1.). UCD Library has a clear sense of its mission and vision. From meetings with the Librarian and Library Management representatives, it is clear that the Library is very aware of the ways in which its core functions and planned development and innovations can support delivery of the University's Strategy 2015 -2020. It is clear that there is an appetite within Library Management and its staff as a whole to embed the Library as a core contributor to the success of the UCD Strategic Plan 2015-2020.
- 2.2 In its Strategic Plan 2010-2014, five Strategic Objectives were identified (SAR Appendix 6). These were well-planned and the process to achieve these objectives was defined and managed appropriately. A Plan Monitoring Group (PMG) was set up in April 2012 to monitor and oversee the progress of the Library Strategic Plan 2010-2014. This Group completed its work in December 2014, and concluded that overall the Library has achieved considerable success in all five objectives with 97% of actions either completed (67%) or in progress (30%) (SAR Appendix 7). The PMG identified factors which impeded the progress under certain objectives and made seven recommendations for the next strategic planning process.
- 2.3 The Library has an appropriate planning process with annual work programmes covering core activities of the Library and its support for UCD strategic plan implementation. Each Library Unit produces an annual work plan which forms an overall annual Library Operational Plan (SAR Appendix 9).
- 2.4 From the Library's point of view, this Quality Review is timely insofar as the recommendations of the Review Group Report will help the Library in the development of its own Strategic Plan 2015-2020, within an overall planning process within Academic Affairs, where the UCD Library resides. (SAR, p.9). The Library's Self-Assessment report, (SAR, p.47, Section 6) gives a detailed account of how the Library views itself and delineates its own recommendations which will inform its future strategic and organisational planning.
- 2.5 UCD Library management restructured in 2011 following a robust strategic planning process (2009/2010) and introduced a two-tier management structure along with a large-scale restructuring of Library Units (SAR p.6, Sections 1.2 and 1.3). Clear terms of reference for Library Executive and Library Senior Management Team (SAR Appendix 4) were stated. It is acknowledged that both the Library restructuring and the achievement of the objectives of its Strategic Plan 2010-2014 were undertaken despite a backdrop of severe austerity measures. The successful restructuring has enabled the Library to respond to the challenges

of the financial retrenchment and diminishing staff and operations budgets. The Library has managed not only to sustain a quality service to its stakeholders, but also to develop and expand its range of services (SAR, p.8 Section 2.1 Strategic Planning).

- 2.6 The Review Group noted that while the organisational structure was improved some staff do not feel well-informed and that a silo approach to certain aspect of its services exists, which impacts internal communication and cooperation between some Library units. This was evident from the SAR documentation, and from some of the Review Group's meetings. However, the Review Group notes the positive steps taken towards the improvement of internal communications and the efforts made by Library Management to address these issues following a full review of Library internal communications undertaken in 2012. Overall, the Review Group notes that the staff interviewed were committed, engaged in their work and optimistic about the future of the Library.
- 2.7 The Review Group noted that the Library engages in an intensive budgeting process, supported by UCD Academic Affairs. However, there is clear evidence that available resources are inadequate to permit the Library to pursue its vision in terms of the services to students and researchers at UCD, e.g. the development of a Learning Commons; the maintenance and development of its collections; the maintenance, development and promotion of its special collections; and fulfilling its strategic ambitions in support of the UCD Strategic Plan 2015-2020.
- 2.8 The Review Group concludes from its site visit, and the views of the stakeholders and users interviewed, that the Library has managed, through its planning, organisation and management, to substantially address the internal communications and other management challenges, and against a backdrop of financial retrenchment, to deliver, sustain, develop and innovate a remarkable set of services to a growing clientele of student and academic users, and other stakeholders.

Commendations

- 2.9 The Review Group commends the planning, implementation and management processes established by the Library to identify and deliver on objectives consistent with the wider UCD Strategy. These actions have enabled the Library to sustain an impressive range of services, in very challenging financial circumstances, and to develop significant new areas of activity (for example in Research Services and Outreach) (SAR, p.22, Section 3.2.3.4).
- 2.10 The Review Group found an impressive commitment and motivation to deliver on the University Strategy. Restructuring and realignment of staff responsibilities has moved staff into other roles or created new roles for existing staff. The management structure has empowered some individuals to speak with passion about their views of what could be possible for the Library and its contribution to the University. The Review Group commends the leadership success in changing roles and expanding the skill sets of some library staff. These achievements were evidenced by the Review Group's interviews with University stakeholders, professional and academic and with a representative group of students. The

University units that work with the Library have highly favourable impressions of their professionalism, abilities, and flexibilities. The Library is seen as “open” by other units and a University service willing to innovate, collaborate and offer the highest quality of services to its users.

- 2.11 The Review Group commends the full review of Library communications undertaken in 2012 which realised improvements in the way that the Library interacts with internal and external stakeholders (SAR, p.39, Section 5).
- 2.12 The Library spaces are a much valued resource for a wide range of users. Some of the spaces are of outstanding quality, notably the Health Sciences Library. The Library has added considerable value to these spaces through refitting and repurposing, especially in the James Joyce Library, as to be able to demonstrate the significant potential for transforming a rather tired building into a 21st century library of the highest quality and engagement with users. The James Joyce Hub, with its integration of varied seating spaces, laptop loans and highly visible learning support activities (the Library Link incorporating the Maths Support Centre and the Writing Support Centre) is highly commended. This has been achieved through a combination of vision and careful marshalling and prioritisation of limited development resources. The other library branches serve their communities in varying ways and with a high degree of commitment, appreciated by users.



Figure 1: Refurbished UCD Library Hub and Social Learning Space

Recommendations

- 2.13 The Review Group notes that while the Library Senior Management Team is large there are good reasons for that. However, the Library Executive should consider reviewing this structure for its effectiveness. It is also noted that Library Executive members and Senior Librarians are often distracted from the strategic and leadership aspects of their roles by operational tasks, and the Review Group recommends that a framework to delegate operational matters should be explored.

- 2.14 The Review Group recommends that the Library engage in a process of organisational development to determine how the entire organisation can address skills shortages and evolve for the future to continue to achieve its strategic goals. Such an exercise should focus on empowering staff at all levels within the organisation; conduct a review of the organisational culture; challenge staff; encourage risk-taking; and encourage collaboration and cross-team projects.
- 2.15 Consideration should be given as to how effectively to prioritise the Library's work plan with a view to eliminating or deferring low priority activities.
- 2.16 Consideration should be given to existing formal communication, consultative and engagement channels within the Library's organisational structure and how these can be further improved to ensure more effective, valued and open communications between and within Library units. This will help to address the sense of silos in the Library.
- 2.17 The Review Group recommends that Academic Affairs and the UCD Library should strategically collaborate with a view to further centralising student-facing services in the form of a large Learning Commons within the James Joyce Library precinct in the light of the successful creation of the Library Link space which houses two key University support centres resulting in greater usage of these centres and greater footfall into the James Joyce Library.



Figure 2: UCD Library Link Classrooms

3. Functions, Activities and Processes: Collections and Services

Comments

- 3.1 The Library continues to see an increase in the use of its buildings, although patterns of use have changed significantly in recent years. Footfall is high among students, who still demand access to the textbooks and journals, and increasingly see the Library as a place to study. Expectations for a broader range of services are also raised, as are those for a more comfortable and attractive environment with a full range of spaces to cater for the full spectrum of preferences from social learning and collaboration to lone working.
- 3.2 Significant constraints have been imposed on University budgets since 2008, and the Library is no exception to this retrenchment; all elements of the budget appear to have suffered, and all operational units. The Library is successfully achieving, doing more and more with less, but there are opportunity costs to this; choices have been forced which would be considered unpalatable by other libraries of this standing. The scope for further efficiency gains has almost certainly reached its limit, beyond some small nibbling at the edges.
- 3.3 Automation, online support, digital collections and self-service are being utilised to very good effect. These important strategic changes show the Library in a forward-looking, proactive light, are popular with users, and have undoubtedly helped to mitigate the impact of cuts to staffing levels in many areas. Not all operations lend themselves to new technology, however, and productivity levels of front of house services in areas such as shelving have not been maintained.
- 3.4 Opening hours have needed to increase in some of the Library's five locations, although demand is far greater than is currently afforded. Student requests for 24/7 opening in the James Joyce Library are unambiguous.
- 3.5 The Library's collections budget of €2.23M is the lowest in Ireland per FTE, and with the exception of Sheffield University, a long way behind its UK peers for which the average budget is €7.5M (SAR, p.20, section 3.2.3 and SAR Appendix 17). SCONUL comparative data 2012/2013 indicates that the resources expenditure per student FTE stands at €80.50 for UCD which is the lowest of all UK and Irish comparator institutions (ranging from €93.1 (UCC) upwards to €383.80 (UCL)). SCONUL comparison data 2012/2013 shows that UCD has the second lowest Library spend per academic FTE @ €322 in a range from lowest (UL) @ €268 to the highest (UCL) @ €799, noting TCD @ €685 per academic. Even after factoring in the value of the IReL electronic resources collection, which is part financed by Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Higher Education Authority (with a projected value of €600,000 externally funded, and from which all Irish universities benefit) the total value of the Library collections budget is under €3M. Access to only a minimum range of resources is possible. With the exception of the Special Collections, the Library cannot be considered adequate as a research library, even in the modern, digital, sense. The UCD Library cannot be compared favourably with the libraries of its comparator institutions with serious research

agendas, while it is struggling even to meet basic needs of all academic programmes. Recent attempts to increase the content budget have enabled the Library to begin buying books again, but this still fails to address the impact, year on year, of publisher inflation rates, and the challenge of supporting a university the size and breadth of UCD.

- 3.6 Access to collections is increasingly digital, with loans beginning to show a gradual decline which is not only associated with a lack of available material. But shelves are filled with low-use materials, including where digital surrogates are provided. Library staff views are mixed on this. For some staff, there appears to be an emotional attachment to print, but for the majority, a major de-selection exercise is regarded as long-overdue and a significant barrier to progress. The scale of the challenge is sizeable and therefore costly, but there is a significant cost (financial) and a notable opportunity-cost to keeping libraries filled with low-use printed material, both in terms of a more strategic repurposing of the space for learning and scholarship, but also in improving access to more needed, highly valued collections - a seeing “the wood for the trees” benefit. This shift will be important to the implementation of the Newman-Joyce project, and still vital without it.
- 3.7 Storage for all types of collections poses a particular challenge to the Library; buildings are either full to capacity or approaching that, including remote stores (SAR p.4, section 1.1). The vital need to ‘weed’ stock will require a rethink in terms of what is kept, and what is held where, and availability of additional storage is key to a major project of this kind. The Library has been exploring a collaborative approach to off-site storage with TCD and the National Library, although this seems a costly option (€40m).
- 3.8 In terms of service development, the Library has managed to maintain its strategic relevance to the University, not by bringing in new staff, but by reorganising the staff structure, developing existing staff and moving many into new roles. A dramatic reduction in Liaison Librarians has enabled a more distributed model of support to Schools and Colleges. And a move away from a fairly narrowly defined subject approach has enabled the concentration of expertise in a small Research Services Team, for example. Other aspects of subject support are now also being offered in Collection Services, and across a number of staff in Client Services. The challenge of achieving so much change while simultaneously significantly reducing numbers is noted, and as awareness of new services increases, along with the need to continue to innovate, scalability is bound to become an issue. Such small teams will need to be able to rely on the support of their colleagues in other teams, e.g. Liaison Librarians, to help to communicate the message to Schools.
- 3.9 The Library introduced a new Learning Support Strategy in 2013, and a range of online tools have been developed to support students, researchers and Library staff. eLearning expertise has been developed in-house but lacks advanced education technologist skillsets. These resources appear to focus on information skills (retrieval, evaluation and management) rather than the development of wider skills sets which support student retention and success beyond information literacy. Opportunities also exist to blend the online tools with face to face support, although resource constraints may be a limiting factor.

- 3.10 The Review Group noted the significance of the Library's holding of Special Collections and the steps taken to enhance their visibility, access and use, together with the important UCD Archives collection, also housed in the James Joyce Building but managed by the School of History and Archives. Taken together these two collections, along with other important collections held by UCD, including the National Folklore Collection, the Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute and other important but smaller collections constitute a remarkable heritage collection with great potential to enhance conservation, storage, access, exhibition and digitisation, to the great advantage of students, researchers and others who may wish to use them, and for the reputation of UCD as custodian of such treasures.

Commendations

- 3.11 The Library has responded extraordinarily well to the changing nature of academic libraries. This is particularly worthy of note given the environment of rationalisation and economy in which it is operating. The last Library Strategic Plan was forward thinking, and has served to foster a climate of constant change; this is the only way in which the Library can successfully align itself to the strategic aspirations of the University. A proactive approach has led to the development of an impressive range of services given the resources available.
- 3.12 There is strong and impressive evidence across the Library of a uniform level of commitment to the University; staff appeared highly engaged, professional and motivated. Those in new roles demonstrated a particular energy for the development of new services, internal and external to the Library, and a strong desire to see their services understood and promoted.
- 3.13 The Library's extremely positive focus on customer service is to be congratulated. The widespread willingness to embrace new ways of doing things, particularly using automation, online support and self-service is to be celebrated, and opportunities should be sought to do even more in this way.

Recommendations

- 3.14 An urgent need exists to address the shortfall in budget to support research, both in terms of collections and specialist staff. Without increased resources for collections, the protracted conversations about the need for collection development policies should be given low priority.
- 3.15 Exploration of a low-cost storage model is much needed to enable Library redevelopment plans to be progressed. A collaborative option should not be ruled out if this can be achieved at reasonable cost but if low-cost solutions on campus can be achieved they should be adopted.
- 3.16 A major de-selection project is urgent and plans should begin in order to liberate space from Library buildings for more strategic purposes. The Library should aim to find an effective and more efficient way to manage consultation on any disposals to achieve quick results.

- 3.17 An extension to the use of RFID to the James Joyce Library would facilitate vastly increased use of self-service enabling staff to be released to contribute to more value-added service provision.
- 3.18 If funding can be identified, demand for a further extension to opening hours should be tested through a series of incremental pilot projects.
- 3.19 As strategic planning moves forward a review of sites and opportunities for consolidation should be given serious consideration.
- 3.20 The Review Group recommends that the future potential of the Library Special Collection will be best secured through collaborative activity across the UCD heritage collections which, while retaining their distinctive identities and usage, will unify them under a strong leadership which is capable of addressing collaboratively, and for all the collections, urgent issues of conservation, storage, access and visibility and exhibition potential. This project has the potential to transform the relationship of UCD staff, students and alumni and of its wider community, nationally and internationally, with the great stock of treasures held across the campus in a way that proudly and tangibly demonstrates UCD's leading role as a key custodian of the nation's heritage and facilitator of engagement with the materials. Such a shift should provide a focal point for a significant fundraising campaign to support a major capital development programme, focusing on bringing together the heritage collections in a shared facility.
- 3.21 Work already undertaken in the James Joyce Library demonstrates how effectively the Library spaces can be upgraded and repurposed. The Review Group recommends that the Library continues to undertake incremental enhancement to spaces, alongside planning for the large scale redevelopment envisaged by the complete refurbishment of the Newman-Joyce complex. Further incremental work should involve replacing the current security desk at the entrance (which is said to give users a feeling of being policed) with a desk more consistent with the attractive information desk located adjacent to the Learning Hub area.
- 3.22 The Review Group recommends that, acting on the University's own assessment that current facilities are sub-standard, the Newman-Joyce project should be prioritised as a major step towards meeting Objective 8 of the UCD Strategy to 'further develop world class facilities to support our vision'. This project will enhance the development of a Learning Commons to capitalise on the remarkable asset it possesses in terms of the centrally located James Joyce Library and its units; and the co-location of the various University Collections (SAR, p.12, section 2.1.3.2). With the multiple constraints on Library capacity and space (SAR, p.5), the Newman-Joyce project offers the opportunity to the Library to tie in large-scale projects to address the storage, weeding, conservation, preservation, disposal and consultation on its collection (SAR, p. 13, section 2.1.3.4 and p.49 section 6.2.2). In preparation for the Library renovation, the Review Group recommends the establishment of a 'weeding' project to decrease the number of print volumes in the James Joyce Library and in its branch libraries.



Figure 3: Students Working Collaboratively in the Refurbished UCD Library Hub

4. Management of Resources

Comments

- 4.1 The Library carefully manages its budget allocation. The budget is divided into three distinct categories: pay, information resources, and operations. The pay category of the budget allows for very little discretion and therefore the information resources (collections, as noted above in 3.5) and operational expenses categories have borne most of the necessary cuts. Thus, there is a negative, disproportional impact on collections and information resources and the operations budget which includes technology and facilities upgrades. The constraints on the pay budget and university policies have resulted in a reduction in Library staffing levels by 35.6% since 2002-2003. This means that staff working across the Library and managing to maintain long opening hours are spread thinly, but has also led to a loss of important skills (through staff leaving or retiring) at exactly the time when libraries internationally are trying to attract new skills as a means of future-proofing their organisations in this fast-changing environment of HE. Recent austerity measures have resulted in both a non-replacement of existing staff, and no new roles needed for innovation going forward. The collections budget has also suffered severely, and doubly, as a result of similar, severe budget cuts which have been compounded by publishers' inflation which is typically far higher than the RPI/CPI.
- 4.2 The Library collects a standard set of statistics and submits data to the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL), enabling it to benchmark against other UK and Irish academic libraries. The Library also collects data through many of its systems and is able to report on such things as numbers of students using the facilities and for how many hours and online users of materials. The Library participates in the widely used LibQUAL survey which provides both quantitative and qualitative data on the user community's assessment of many aspects of the library, including such things as collections, services, and facilities. (SAR, p. 42, section 5.6).
- 4.3 The Library follows UCD requirements and recommendations on procurement.
- 4.4 The Library reviews contracts and maintenance agreements for its computer equipment and attempts to keep up-to-date with new technologies through professional meetings and online information sources.
- 4.5 Due to contractual stipulations, many Library staff have funds for their development and manage to attend and present at conferences in Ireland and internationally. It is important for staff to continue to have interactions with their colleagues in other libraries in order to learn about innovations, compare their own library's programmes to others, and provide visibility for the innovations taking place at UCD.
- 4.6 The Library was a key partner in Working Smarter Together, a university staff development day programme, which was highly successful.

- 4.7 There has been no University requirement for annual performance management development reviews of staff in recent years due to its discontinuation. Consideration by the University of introducing an annual performance review system should be undertaken and should also ensure that any system introduced brings positive benefits for employees, and the University as an employer.
- 4.8 Many staff expressed concerns about the structural silos within the Library. They believe that there is not enough communication across its units and no clear strategies or incentives for cooperation and collaboration. This feeling is not unique to UCD Library. However, it needs to be addressed.
- 4.9 Slightly less than half of Library staff gave a survey response that indicated they were only moderately well informed or not well informed about the Library and that they had mixed or negative views about whether their opinions were valued. This should be a concern for senior management to address.

Commendations

- 4.10 The Library has demonstrated its strategic use of the budget by managing resources in such a way as to allow for some small upgrades to facilities. These have been very important as a way of demonstrating the potential of a renovated library to become a more vibrant hub of university learning and research. These projects have significantly and positively affected the footfall and they have enabled new services that are particularly relevant to the university's research aspirations.
- 4.11 Representatives from University units concerned with budget, statistics, and other operations universally commended the Library staff for their professionalism, high quality reports, adherence to standards, and cooperation.
- 4.12 The Review Group found the benchmarking of UCD library data against a comparable set of both UK libraries and Irish libraries to be particularly useful in helping it understand the nature of the resources of the library. Library staff provided a very rich set of data to the Review Group, and this was instrumental in its preparation for the visit and in the Review Group's ability to carry out our work.
- 4.13 The Review Group found that staff were generally enthusiastic, motivated, committed to providing high quality service to the University, and positive about many of the changes in the library. The Review Group was very impressed by the high level of performance despite the many constraints under which they have operated for years. While some of the morale issues portrayed in the materials provided to the Review Group prior to the visit also emerged during their visit, by and large, staff seemed upbeat, optimistic, and engaged in their work.
- 4.14 Both the Library Annual Staff Training Day and the Library's participation as a key partner in the Working Smarter Together university professional development day are excellent

examples of mechanisms for increasing the understanding of all staff about current issues, motivating staff to explore innovations, and increasing morale.

Recommendations

- 4.15 The University needs to decide on the implications for the Library of its commitment to being a leading international research-intensive university in terms of mechanisms and processes for funding of Library resources, operations and infrastructure. The current level of provision cannot sustain the essential requirements of a research-intensive university (for example, a static resources budget makes it impossible to respond to exchange rate fluctuations and to high inflation in publishing with the consequence that resources continue to be degraded from an unacceptably low base). The requirement which must be met is to develop a stable stream of funding which can harness both teaching and learning, and research budgets to enable the University to deliver on its core objectives to be a leading global university in terms of research impact, recruitment of the best students and internationally renowned faculty delivering high impact research to address major societal challenges (University Strategy 2015-2020). We recommend that the University should consider how it links its Library provision to its research strategy, for example by ensuring representation of the Library on key decision-making bodies in respect of research as already occurs in respect of education and student engagement (The Review Group notes that the Library is represented on the Research Policy Committee, but not on the key Research, Impact and Innovation Group). A key objective should be to ensure that Library funding for content resources to support research, teaching and learning is leading or at least average within the sector (relative to appropriate comparators), rather than lagging, and that a robust mechanism for making such evaluations is part of the budgetary process.
- 4.16 The Library has developed a plan for data management that aims to collate, measure, evaluate and make decisions based on accurate and timely data. The Review Group recommends the establishment of a central repository of data collected by various library units, which would be beneficial to many staff in the University. In addition, the Library should consider whether it could use the University's InfoHub system for data storage and access, which might facilitate examining library data in connection with other university operations and allow for some of the library data to be easily used by other units in their studies of topics such as learning analytics.
- 4.17 The Library's senior management team, as well as the next level of supervisors, should take deliberate actions to ensure that they are systematically using available data in their decision-making within their areas of responsibility. The Review Group recommends the systematic employment of data-driven decision-making to maximise efficiencies, to determine where additional self-service may be employed; and to target the development of specific facilities and technologies and services.
- 4.18 The Library should have a running list of its future technology needs, to be considered for purchase when the financial constraints are less severe. The Library has made excellent progress in developing services for research data management, has developed a digital

library and digitisation projects, and teaches in technology-equipped classrooms. These are all areas which demand frequently refreshed, high-spec technologies and currently there is inadequate budget for these needs.

- 4.19 The Library needs funding to develop on-going and additional technology services such as development of digital humanities services, data curation and digital preservation. Funding for technologies, staff with specialist skills, and facilities in which to provide consultation services are all needed to develop a robust portfolio of services.
- 4.20 The Library management should support provision of additional staff development opportunities for all staff or a substantial portion of staff. These could include events that do not take significant time away from work, for example a series of lunchtime talks on such topics as treasures in Special Collections or developments in data management. These events would be used to encourage inclusion of all library staff in an understanding of some of the specialised areas of the library and assist in raising morale through community events. In addition, hands-on workshops for staff could be offered to assist in developing skills with various types of software. Given resource constraints, there needs to be a concerted effort to have a staff development programme that both encourages library staff to learn about new things and also serves as a mechanism to improve morale, giving staff the feeling that they are advancing despite the difficult financial climate. Designating a staff member to have responsibility for the function of organising an on-going staff development programme should be considered.
- 4.21 The University should implement an annual performance review system for all staff. The University should also provide training for managers and supervisors to understand how to implement such reviews in a way that ensures a productive and positive experience for all involved.
- 4.22 The Library Executive needs to develop strategies, both communication and operational, to decrease or eliminate the feeling of staff that the library operates in silos. An ethos of cooperation and collaboration is to be encouraged and celebrated. The Review Group notes that the level of consultation in relation to new projects/developments, whilst important, should be fit for purpose and not necessarily committee, or individual Library unit based. Some specific actions could include more joint academic School visits or outreach by teams of librarians, for example a College Liaison and a Research Services Librarian or a College Liaison and a Special Collections Librarian, as appropriate to the discipline. Staff should also be proactive in identifying opportunities to improve communication and engagement with their colleagues on a cross-unit basis.
- 4.23 A view was expressed by some staff on the value of their input to contribute to processes, procedures and developments within the Library. Others did not feel particularly well informed. The Library's Senior Management team, in consultation with UCD HR, should seek to explore opportunities to address these.

5. User Communications and Perspectives

Comments

- 5.1 The establishment of an Outreach Unit has enabled the Library to develop a more professional, outward facing, strategic and holistic approach to user communication. As a core academic service critical to the achievement of the University's teaching, learning, research and engagement agendas, there is need for the Library to publicise, promote and disseminate information about services and activities while at the same time having mechanisms in place to obtain regular and systematic feedback from users and stakeholder communities about the take-up, usage, value and evaluation of Library services and activities.
- 5.2 Multiple formal and informal communication, evaluation and feedback channels have been developed to ensure that user communication is effective, responsive and evaluative. Qualitative user perspectives are regularly sought and used to inform both strategic and operational planning and immediate responses to practical issues. The use of social media is one means of more instant communications and responsiveness.
- 5.3 The Outreach Unit consists of two staff who work to an annual operational plan which establishes a range of actions to ensure effective and visible communication activities. Working with the Client Services Unit, and specifically the College Liaison Librarians, mechanisms are in place to inform user stakeholders about new service developments, engaging with users and seeking feedback about service effectiveness and quality. The Outreach Team are fully engaged and committed to ensuring effective communication channels to and from users but face limitations in terms of the absence of graphic design and web development capability.
- 5.4 As a user focussed service the Library is committed to regularly obtaining and measuring user satisfaction. A variety of methods are used including the bi-annual LibQual+ survey instrument, an annual plan of granular feedback exercises to inform service development; extending the range and format of user feedback; developing the Unishare CRM system to capture user interventions; and user feedback mechanisms post Library workshops and presentations. The results from the 2014 LibQual+ survey were compared with the 2011 survey and the results highlighted areas in which the Library had successfully implemented service and quality improvements while indicating areas where further Library investigation and improvement are required. Both surveys also indicated differences in the perspectives on Library service quality between stakeholder groups.
- 5.5 Both the LibQual survey and the annual SCONUL data set are a transparent means to benchmark user satisfaction with other comparable Irish and UK libraries. The SAR comparator analysis indicates that the UCD Library overall Quality score was the second lowest of the comparator group indicating further scope for service improvement and satisfaction across all user groups (SAR Appendix 17).
- 5.6 Evidence presented to the Review Group would indicate that the Library is generally successful in communication with its users but concerns exist that communication with academic staff is patchy, with some academic areas happy with the level and extent of communication and others less so.

- 5.7 Within the resources available the Library is adept at using a variety of methods and strategies to promote its services and facilities. Given that communication relies on information being pushed out to users and being received, the Library can take pride in a number of solid achievements which have resulted from the outreach strategy. The Review Group noted that there are still categories of users that include students and staff where communicating with users involves ongoing refinement and activity.
- 5.8 There is currently no Library Users' Committee to act as a liaison committee with users. The Librarian meets periodically with representatives of the Student Union. The Review Group noted some student dissatisfaction with the regime of fines for overdue books and anti-social behaviour, partly because of the level of fines, and partly in relation to the scope of the policy (for example covering bringing of food into the Library and use of mobile phones).
- 5.9 Library staff also constitute a user category in its own right and outreach activities should and are also directed towards internal communication. The 2014 Library staff survey indicates that internal Library communications remain an issue.

Commendations

- 5.10 The customer/user driven approach by the Library is exemplary. Staff are recognised as being helpful, engaged, committed, motivated, professional, efficient, open and hard working. The Review Group commends the introduction of College Liaison Librarians to connect with Colleges, Schools and associated units, and the focus on academic programmes requirements and the mix of communications channels it uses to communicate with Library users (SAR, p.18, Section 2.4.5 and p.41, Section 5.4).
- 5.11 The establishment of an Outreach Team has energised and facilitated a greater strategic and operational commitment to effective user communication and feedback.
- 5.12 The Review Group identified and commends a willingness to recognise where the outreach strategy has been successful but also the recognition that there are service and quality challenges which the Library needs to respond to more proactively.
- 5.13 Strong professional relationships have developed between the Outreach Team and the University Communications Office.
- 5.14 The Review Group commends the high quality and range of Library publicity materials. The breadth of information displayed on the Library plasma screens is of particular note.
- 5.15 The scope and ambition of the Library Outreach Plan 2014-2015 is impressive, for example in respect of Special Collections.

Recommendations

- 5.16 The Group recommends that the Library Outreach team should further develop its portfolio of communication activities to users, and that consideration be given to strategic appointments in the area of graphic design, web development and programming.
- 5.17 The Group recommends the development of a holistic approach to improving communications with academic and administrative staff. Evidence suggests that existing communications is variable across University units and services and that all outward facing Library staff should regard outreach as a core function and responsibility.
- 5.18 To ensure that Library services remain user centred, the Review Group recommends the establishment of appropriate consultative forums to formally engage with Library users including academic, administrative staff and students, on a regular basis. This does not negate existing formal and informal communication structures but ensures that the user voice has a higher profile within both the Library and the University. Such forums would provide an appropriate mechanism for feedback and review of policies on user fines which might seek alignment with university libraries which have reduced or eliminated regimes of fines.
- 5.19 The Review Group recommends improvements in the Library webpages for communicating key Library information, policies and procedures to users. This links to the requirement of a strategic appointment of a Library Web Developer.
- 5.20 Adverse academic staff comments relating to the Library's new resource discovery/search interface *OneSearch* should be investigated and resolved. It was unclear to the Review Group whether the comments were the result of poor understanding/training or substantive weaknesses in the system.
- 5.21 The Review Group notes that one strategic element of improved communications with academic staff centres on an effective Library message on the strategic necessity of collection development and specifically to weed the Library collections to make space available both in the stacks and in store.

Appendix 1: Summary Commendations and Recommendations

This chapter contains a summary of all commendations and recommendations made by the Review Group for UCD Library and should be read in conjunction with the specific section. *(Please note that the paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the report text)*

Planning, Organisation and Management

Commendations

- 2.9 The Review Group commends the planning, implementation and management processes established by the Library to identify and deliver on objectives consistent with the wider UCD Strategy. These actions have enabled the Library to sustain an impressive range of services, in very challenging financial circumstances, and to develop significant new areas of activity (for example in Research Services and Outreach) (SAR, p.22, Section 3.2.3.4).
- 2.10 The Review Group found an impressive commitment and motivation to deliver on the University Strategy. Restructuring and realignment of staff responsibilities has moved staff into other roles or created new roles for existing staff. The management structure has empowered some individuals to speak with passion about their views of what could be possible for the Library and its contribution to the University. The Review Group commends the leadership success in changing roles and expanding the skill sets of some library staff. These achievements were evidenced by the Review Group's interviews with University stakeholders, professional and academic and with a representative group of students. The University units that work with the Library have highly favourable impressions of their professionalism, abilities, and flexibilities. The Library is seen as "open" by other units and a University service willing to innovate, collaborate and offer the highest quality of services to its users.
- 2.11 The Review Group commends the full review of Library communications undertaken in 2012 which realised improvements in the way that the Library interacts with internal and external stakeholders (SAR, p.39, Section 5).
- 2.12 The Library spaces are a much valued resource for a wide range of users. Some of the spaces are of outstanding quality, notably the Health Sciences Library. The Library has added considerable value to these spaces through refitting and repurposing, especially in the James Joyce Library, as to be able to demonstrate the significant potential for transforming a rather tired building into a 21st century library of the highest quality and engagement with users. The James Joyce Hub, with its integration of varied seating spaces, laptop loans and highly visible learning support activities (the Library Link incorporating the Maths Support Centre and the Writing Support Centre) is highly commended. This has been achieved through a combination of vision and careful marshalling and prioritisation of limited development resources. The other library branches serve their communities in varying ways and with a high degree of commitment, appreciated by users.

Recommendations

- 2.13 The Review Group notes that while the Library Senior Management Team is large there are good reasons for that. However, the Library Executive should consider reviewing this structure for its effectiveness. It is also noted that Library Executive members and Senior Librarians are often distracted from the strategic and leadership aspects of their roles by operational tasks, and the Review Group recommends that a framework to delegate operational matters should be explored.
- 2.14 The Review Group recommends that the Library engage in a process of organisational development to determine how the entire organisation can address skills shortages and evolve for the future to continue to achieve its strategic goals. Such an exercise should focus on empowering staff at all levels within the organisation; conduct a review of the organisational culture; challenge staff; encourage risk-taking; and encourage collaboration and cross-team projects.
- 2.15 Consideration should be given as to how effectively to prioritise the Library's work plan with a view to eliminating or deferring low priority activities.
- 2.16 Consideration should be given to existing formal communication, consultative and engagement channels within the Library's organisational structure and how these can be further improved to ensure more effective, valued and open communications between and within Library units. This will help to address the sense of silos in the Library.
- 2.17 The Review Group recommends that Academic Affairs and the UCD Library should strategically collaborate with a view to further centralising student-facing services in the form of a large Learning Commons within the James Joyce Library precinct in the light of the successful creation of the Library Link space which houses two key University support centres resulting in greater usage of these centres and greater footfall into the James Joyce Library.

Functions, Activities and Processes: Collections and Services

Commendations

- 3.11 The Library has responded extraordinarily well to the changing nature of academic libraries. This is particularly worthy of note given the environment of rationalisation and economy in which it is operating. The last Library Strategic Plan was forward thinking, and has served to foster a climate of constant change; this is the only way in which the Library can successfully align itself to the strategic aspirations of the University. A proactive approach has led to the development of an impressive range of services given the resources available.
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- 3.21 Work already undertaken in the James Joyce Library demonstrates how effectively the Library spaces can be upgraded and repurposed. The Review Group recommends that the Library continues to undertake incremental enhancement to spaces, alongside planning for the large scale redevelopment envisaged by the complete refurbishment of the Newman-Joyce complex. Further incremental work should involve replacing the current security desk at the entrance (which is said to give users a feeling of being policed) with a desk more consistent with the attractive information desk located adjacent to the Learning Hub area.
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- 4.14 Both the Library Annual Staff Training Day and the Library's participation as a key partner in the Working Smarter Together university professional development day are excellent examples of mechanisms for increasing the understanding of all staff about current issues, motivating staff to explore innovations, and increasing morale.

Recommendations

- 4.15 The University needs to decide on the implications for the Library of its commitment to being a leading international research-intensive university in terms of mechanisms and processes for funding of Library resources, operations and infrastructure. The current level of provision cannot sustain the essential requirements of a research-intensive university (for example, a static resources budget makes it impossible to respond to exchange rate fluctuations and to high inflation in publishing with the consequence that resources continue to be degraded from an unacceptably low base). The requirement which must be met is to develop a stable stream of funding which can harness both teaching and learning, and research budgets to enable the University to deliver on its core objectives to be a leading global university in terms of research impact, recruitment of the best students and internationally renowned faculty delivering high impact research to address major societal challenges (University Strategy 2015-2020). We recommend that the University should consider how it links its Library provision to its research strategy, for example by ensuring representation of the Library on key decision-making bodies in respect of research as already occurs in respect of education and student engagement (The Review Group notes that the Library is represented on the Research Policy Committee, but not on the key Research, Impact and Innovation Group). A key objective should be to ensure that Library funding for content resources to support research, teaching and learning is leading or at least average within the sector (relative to appropriate comparators), rather than lagging, and that a robust mechanism for making such evaluations is part of the budgetary process.
- 4.16 The Library has developed a plan for data management that aims to collate, measure, evaluate and make decisions based on accurate and timely data. The Review Group recommends the establishment of a central repository of data collected by various library units, which would be beneficial to many staff in the University. In addition, the Library should consider whether it could use the University's InfoHub system for data storage and access, which might facilitate examining library data in connection with other university operations and allow for some of the library data to be easily used by other units in their studies of topics such as learning analytics.

- 4.17 The Library's senior management team, as well as the next level of supervisors, should take deliberate actions to ensure that they are systematically using available data in their decision-making within their areas of responsibility. The Review Group recommends the systematic employment of data-driven decision-making to maximise efficiencies, to determine where additional self-service may be employed; and to target the development of specific facilities and technologies and services.
- 4.18 The Library should have a running list of its future technology needs, to be considered for purchase when the financial constraints are less severe. The Library has made excellent progress in developing services for research data management, has developed a digital library and digitisation projects, and teaches in technology-equipped classrooms. These are all areas which demand frequently refreshed, high-spec technologies and currently there is inadequate budget for these needs.
- 4.19 The Library needs funding to develop on-going and additional technology services such as development of digital humanities services, data curation and digital preservation. Funding for technologies, staff with specialist skills, and facilities in which to provide consultation services are all needed to develop a robust portfolio of services.
- 4.20 The Library management should support provision of additional staff development opportunities for all staff or a substantial portion of staff. These could include events that do not take significant time away from work, for example a series of lunchtime talks on such topics as treasures in Special Collections or developments in data management. These events would be used to encourage inclusion of all library staff in an understanding of some of the specialised areas of the library and assist in raising morale through community events. In addition, hands-on workshops for staff could be offered to assist in developing skills with various types of software. Given resource constraints, there needs to be a concerted effort to have a staff development programme that both encourages library staff to learn about new things and also serves as a mechanism to improve morale, giving staff the feeling that they are advancing despite the difficult financial climate. Designating a staff member to have responsibility for the function of organising an on-going staff development programme should be considered.
- 4.21 The University should implement an annual performance review system for all staff. The University should also provide training for managers and supervisors to understand how to implement such reviews in a way that ensures a productive and positive experience for all involved.
- 4.22 The Library Executive needs to develop strategies, both communication and operational, to decrease or eliminate the feeling of staff that the library operates in silos. An ethos of cooperation and collaboration is to be encouraged and celebrated. The Review Group notes that the level of consultation in relation to new projects/developments, whilst important, should be fit for purpose and not necessarily committee, or individual Library unit based. Some specific actions could include more joint academic School visits or outreach by teams

of librarians, for example a College Liaison and a Research Services Librarian or a College Liaison and a Special Collections Librarian, as appropriate to the discipline. Staff should also be proactive in identifying opportunities to improve communication and engagement with their colleagues on a cross-unit basis.

- 4.23 A view was expressed by some staff on the value of their input to contribute to processes, procedures and developments within the Library. Others did not feel particularly well informed. The Library's Senior Management team, in consultation with UCD HR, should seek to explore opportunities to address these.

User Communications and Perspectives

Commendations

- 5.10 The customer/user driven approach by the Library is exemplary. Staff are recognised as being helpful, engaged, committed, motivated, professional, efficient, open and hard working. The Review Group commends the introduction of College Liaison Librarians to connect with Colleges, Schools and associated units, and the focus on academic programmes requirements and the mix of communications channels it uses to communicate with Library users (SAR, p.18, Section 2.4.5 and p.41, Section 5.4).
- 5.11 The establishment of an Outreach Team has energised and facilitated a greater strategic and operational commitment to effective user communication and feedback.
- 5.12 The Review Group identified and commends a willingness to recognise where the outreach strategy has been successful but also the recognition that there are service and quality challenges which the Library needs to respond to more proactively to.
- 5.13 Strong professional relationships have developed between the Outreach Team and the University Communications Office.
- 5.14 The Review Group commends the high quality and range of Library publicity materials. The breadth of information displayed on the Library plasma screens is of particular note.
- 5.15 The scope and ambition of the Library Outreach Plan 2014-2015 is impressive, for example in respect of Special Collections.

Recommendations

- 5.16 The Group recommends that the Library Outreach team should further develop its portfolio of communication activities to users, and that consideration be given to strategic appointments in the area of graphic design, web development and programming.

- 5.17 The Group recommends the development of a holistic approach to improving communications with academic and administrative staff. Evidence suggests that existing communications is variable across University units and services and that all outward facing Library staff should regard outreach as a core function and responsibility.
- 5.18 To ensure that Library services remain user centred, the Review Group recommends the establishment of appropriate consultative forums to formally engage with Library users including academic, administrative staff and students, on a regular basis. This does not negate existing formal and informal communication structures but ensures that the user voice has a higher profile within both the Library and the University. Such forums would provide an appropriate mechanism for feedback and review of policies on user fines which might seek alignment with university libraries which have reduced or eliminated regimes of fines.
- 5.19 The Review Group recommends improvements in the Library webpages for communicating key Library information, policies and procedures to users. This links to the requirement of a strategic appointment of a Library Web Developer.
- 5.20 Adverse academic staff comments relating to the Library's new resource discovery/search interface *OneSearch* should be investigated and resolved. It was unclear to the Review Group whether the comments were the result of poor understanding/training or substantive weaknesses in the system.
- 5.21 The Review Group notes that one strategic element of improved communications with academic staff centres on an effective Library message on the strategic necessity of collection development and specifically to weed the Library collections to make space available both in the stacks and in store.

Appendix 2: UCD Library Response to the Review Group Report

UCD Library welcomes the Report of the Quality Review Group. The review process was undertaken during the final year of the Library's current strategic plan and at a time when the launch of a new University Strategic Plan and changes in University organisational structures have been identified and are in an implementation phase. Delivery of the Report is therefore ideally timed in UCD Library's planning cycle.

Preparation of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was coordinated by a largely volunteer committee that dedicated significant time and effort to the undertaking. Their work was complemented by the engagement of a large cohort of University staff and students who are stakeholders in the quality of Library services, and their participation in the process is gratefully acknowledged.

The Site Visit was a very positive experience for Library staff, many of whom were able to meet in groups from the various Library units with the Review Group, and some of whom arranged individual or small group meetings. We thank the Review Group for their flexibility in this regard. The majority of Library staff attended the Review Group's exit presentation, which summarised the major commendations and recommendations that would be articulated in the final Report. The Review Group's acknowledgement of the extraordinary efforts Library staff have made to maintain and improve services during a time of sharply declining resources was an extremely positive and welcome message.

The recommendations of the Review Group Report address strategic concerns for the consideration of University management, including a lack of alignment of the University's stated aspirations as a research university with its investment in Library resources, facilities and staffing. We agree with the assessment of the Report that "the Library is well positioned, were the resourcing difficulties to be resolved, to play a major part in supporting the delivery of University Strategy 2015-2020." The Library's agenda for service development has been innovative and aggressive, and has led to the introduction of novel and effective programmes to enable and catalyse the success of the University's teaching/learning and research mission. With investment in facilities, staff and information resources, much more can be accomplished to both raise quality and scope of services and enhance the University's global reputation.

The Review Group Report also identifies strategic and operational matters requiring further developmental activities within UCD Library. These recommendations are largely consistent with the recommendations also made in the SAR. The Library also welcomes the Review Group's recommendations with regard to the relationship of UCD's internationally significant cultural collections. Raising the levels of coordination, cooperation and collaboration among these will have extraordinary benefits to the curatorial units; however it will also enhance UCD's international standing with regard to engagement with Irish society and culture.

The recommendations of the Review Group Report will inform the development of both a Quality Improvement Plan and the next iteration of the Library Strategic Plan, covering the period 2015-2020.

Appendix 3:



Schedule for Review Group Site Visit to UCD Library

23rd February 2015 Pre-Visit Briefing Prior to Site Visit

- 17.00-19.00 RG meet at hotel to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the site visit – RG and UCD Quality Office only
- 19.30 Dinner hosted for the RG by the Registrar and Deputy President

Day 1: 24th February 2015

Venue: Room 130 James Joyce Library and visit to James Joyce and Blackrock Libraries

- 09.00-09.30 Private meeting of Review Group (RG)
- 09.30-10.00 RG meet Registrar and Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- 10.15-11.00 RG meet with Head of Unit and University Librarian
- 11.15-11.45 RG tea/coffee break together with the Library Self-Assessment Co-ordinating Committee members
- 11.45-12.15 Tour of James Joyce Library with University Librarian and UCD Library Facilities Manager
- 12.30-13.00 RG meet with Associate Librarians
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch – RG only
- 14.00-16.30 RG meet with Library Units plus RG tea/coffee break
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| <u>Client Services representatives</u> | 14.00-14.30 |
| <u>Collection Services representatives</u> | 14.40-15.10 |
| RG tea/coffee break | 15.10-15.30 |
| <u>Planning and Administration/Library IT representatives</u> | 15.30-16.00 |
| <u>Research Services and Cultural Heritage representatives</u> | 16.10-16.40 |
- 17.15-17.45 Visit to Blackrock Library
- 17.45-18.15 Meeting of Review Group to identify any remaining aspects to be clarified and to finalise tasks for the following day (Blackrock Library)

- 18.15 RG depart
- 19.00 Working dinner for RG at hotel

Day 2: 25th February 2015

Venue: Room 130 James Joyce Library and visits to Richview, Health Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Libraries

- 08.45-10.15 RG visit to Richview, Health Sciences and Veterinary Library
- 10.15- 10.45 RG meet with Head of Unit and University Librarian
- 10.45-11.00 RG tea/coffee break
- 11.00-11.30 RG meet with Academic Affairs HR Partner and Finance Director
- 11.30-11.45 RG meet with Chief Technology Officer
- 11.45-12.30 RG meet with representative group of professional staff
 Director of Communications
 Director of Administrative Services, Registry
 Building Planning Manager, UCD Estates
 Adult Education Access Coordinator
 Business Systems Programme Manager
 Director of Teaching and Learning
- 12.45-13.45 RG have working lunch with representative group of students
- 14.00-15.00 RG meet with representative group of academic staff
- 15.15-15.45 (RG have a working tea/coffee break) RG meet representative stakeholders with a Cultural Heritage agenda
- 15.45-16.15 (RG have a working tea/coffee break) with representative group of stakeholders with a Cultural Heritage agenda
- 16.30-17.30 Meeting with Individual Staff by request
- 17.30-17.45 Meeting with representative from UCD Foundation
- 17.45-18.30 Preparation of first draft of Review Group Report and exit presentation
- 18.30 Working dinner for Review Group at hotel

Day 3: 26th February 2015

Venue: Room 130 James Joyce Library and exit presentation in (still to be decided)

- 09.00-9.10 Meeting with individual staff by request

- 9.10-14.00 Preparation of first draft of Review Group Report and exit presentation continues
- 10.30-10.45 RG tea/coffee break
- 12.45-13.30 Lunch
- 14.00-14.30 RG meet with Registrar and Deputy President to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
- 14.30-15.00 RG meet with Head of Unit and University Librarian to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
- 15.10-16.00 Exit presentation to all available staff of the Library by the Review Group summarising the principal commendations/recommendations of the Review Group
Venue: Theatre L024 Sutherland School of Law
- 16.00 RG depart