



University College Dublin

REVIEW GROUP REPORT

Periodic Quality Review

UCD School of Information and Communication Studies

April 2016

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 20 December 2016

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Key Findings of the Review Group

The Review Group (RG) has identified a number of key findings in relation to areas of good practice operating within the School and areas which the RG would highlight as requiring improvement. The main section of this Report sets out all observations, commendations and recommendations of the RG in more detail. An aggregated list of all commendations and recommendations is set out in Appendix 1.

Examples of Good Practice

The RG identified a number of commendations, in particular:

1. The RG were impressed with the enthusiasm and energy of the School.
2. School faculty are research active in their individual fields and most of the topics under investigation are current.
3. The School is diverse in the Staff demographic and gender profile.
4. The potential of staff and their willingness to collaborate is a great strength of the School.
5. The decision to add 'Communication' to the remit of the School opens doors for future expansion and collaboration within the College and the wider University.

Prioritised Recommendations for Improvement

The full list of recommendations is set out in Appendix 1, however, the RG would suggest that the following be prioritised:

1. The open position of Professor must be filled with an individual who can offer strong and visionary leadership, administrative experience, creative curriculum development, and research profile. The School, its staff, students, and profile have suffered in a leadership vacuum. The search committee should identify a new professor who comes from a field that fits the existing research emphasis, which should include communication studies, emphasizing social media and not more traditional press, radio, and television topics.
2. It is recommended that the School be allocated an advisor (a senior UCD academic, external to the School and College, and with institutional experience) to help them build structures and processes that reflect and prioritise their roles and responsibilities. This should lead to enhanced transparency of roles and accountability for responsibilities at various levels of School organisation. The School, with assistance from the College, should also implement a mentoring system for staff.
3. The School needs to build a collective identity for the staff, students and research profile. Individuals should develop and invest in a common project. The collective identity will help

them work with other cognate subjects and their physical neighbours. The staff need to engage in existing and new University initiatives.

4. The School needs to conduct an analysis of the curricula and teaching approaches to identify content gaps, redundancies, pedagogical approaches and consistencies and opportunities to clearly advise students on logical pathways and programme opportunities to achieve their goals.
5. The School needs to identify and implement best practice for soliciting regular programme feedback from a range of stakeholders to inform curricular development.
6. While the budgetary model is constrictive, the School still has the opportunity to develop and invest in new strategic initiatives, such as joint majors with other Schools and joint MA programmes, which enable them to grow and expand. The School needs to develop a niche within the UCD Strategic Plan to enlist University support to grow the size of the School.

1. Introduction and Overview of UCD School of Information and Communication Studies

Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a quality review of the School of Information and Communication Studies (hereinafter referred to as SICS), University College Dublin, which was undertaken on 29 March – 1 April 2016. The School 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 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, and international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015). 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 developmental process in order to effect improvement, including:
- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning.
 - 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 identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify challenges and how to address these.
 - To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
 - To encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision.
 - To inform the University's strategic planning process.
 - The output report provides robust evidence for external accreditation bodies.
 - The process provides an external benchmark on practice and curriculum.
 - 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 procedures

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

The Review Process

1.4 Typically, the review model comprises four major elements:

- Preparation of a self-assessment report (SAR)
- A visit by a RG that includes UCD staff and international external experts. 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 RG for the UCD School of Information and Communication Studies was as follows:

- Professor Fiona Doohan, UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science (Chair)
- Dr Georg Grote, UCD School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics (Deputy Chair)
- Professor Heidi Julien, University at Buffalo, New York, USA (Extern)
- Professor Dr Michael Seadle, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany (Extern)

1.6 The RG visited the School from 29 March – 1 April 2016 and held meetings with School faculty and staff; undergraduate and postgraduate students; graduate employers, the SAR Co-ordinating Committee; other University staff, including the College Principal. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 3.

1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the RG considered documentation provided by the School and the University during the site visit.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report (SAR)

- 1.8 Following a number of briefings from the UCD Quality Office, a Self-assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) was established comprising all members of staff. Members of the committee drafted sections of the Self-assessment Report in consultation with other staff.
- 1.9 The SAR was prepared in the period January 2015 – February 2016. The SAR was submitted to the UCD Quality Office on 26 February 2016.

The University

- 1.10 University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origins date back to 1854. The University is situated on a large modern campus about 4 km to the south of the centre of Dublin.
- 1.11 The University Strategic Plan (to 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”.

The University is currently organised into six colleges and 37 Schools:

- UCD College of Arts and Humanities
- UCD College of Business
- UCD College of Engineering and Architecture
- UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences
- UCD College of Social Sciences and Law
- UCD College of Science

- 1.12 As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering, 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, 7,800 postgraduates and 2,200 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 programmes on campuses overseas.

UCD School of Information and Communication Studies

- 1.13 UCD's SICS is situated in the Library Building on the Belfield campus.
- 1.14 The School currently has FTE staffing of 7.5 permanent (2 Senior Lecturers, 5.5 Lecturers) and 0.5 FTE temporary (Lecturer) faculty, 1.5 permanent and 1 temporary administrative staff.
- 1.15 The School offers a number of programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

2. Organisation and Management

General Comments and Context

- 2.1 The SICS is one of eleven Schools in the College of Social Sciences and Law which was reconstituted in 1 September 2015.
- 2.2 The current management regime is bottom up. However, the School management and staff cohort lack institutional memory in terms of University structures and opportunities to adjust or amend the organization and management in order to achieve goals and minimize administrative burdens.
- 2.3 Within the UCD context and by international norms, it is a relatively small School. This means that faculty members have a disproportionately large administrative burden compared to larger Schools, as currently organized.
- 2.4 The School has 2.5 administrative support staff, which includes a School Manager, a half-time Marketing and Development Officer, and a Senior Executive Assistant (whose contract ends shortly). This is at or above norms based on the number of faculty, but at a minimum number necessary to ensure the operation of a School unit.
- 2.5 The School Management has undergone significant change in recent years as has its' organization. At present it is still 'bedding down' and developing its strategy.
- 2.6 The focus of the School has not yet been developed, following its reconstitution. This is understandable, but worrying in that the lack of focus or definition makes the School vulnerable in terms of its cohesive development.
- 2.7 The School is very democratic in its decision-making. This has both positive and negative implications and ramifications.
- 2.8 Discussions with the School highlighted challenges with the existing budgetary model and future resourcing of the School particularly around new initiatives. The School, in partnership with the College, should identify through a strategic planning process a clear set of goals and benchmarks linked to existing resources to enable new growth through

developing new joint initiatives. This should include prioritizing areas of development for the School, identifying and developing new funding streams/opportunities such as CPD or existing opportunities available within the new College structure.

Commendations

- 2.9 The School has welcomed the change in title and has begun the process of rethinking and refocusing their strategy.
- 2.10 The School has an average student to staff ratio for the College. This is to be commended given the low staff number.
- 2.11 The School faculty and staff members are very supportive of each other and are well regarded and supported by the College Principal. The good morale is commended and is particularly helpful in overcoming the recent period of flux.

Recommendations

- 2.12 The budgetary model is a constraint on the growth of this School. But, more innovative solutions could be investigated including new strategic initiatives and joint degree programmes. It is recommended that the School organization and management give careful consideration to maximizing their use of existing resources and use them to partner with other UCD Schools/Institutes/Centres to develop new joint initiatives that enable growth.
- 2.13 The School, with assistance from the College, should appoint an advisor (a UCD advisor from outside the School and College) in order to compensate for lack of institutional memory and to help the staff develop focus and build their strategy. This is a relatively urgent requirement if they are to best position themselves in terms of sustainable growth.
- 2.14 The School should ensure that they develop a clear vision and strategy over the next year in order that they can focus their organization and management on a strong base. Clear and measurable goals should be aligned to the strategy that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed (SMART objectives). This will require engagement with all key stakeholders such as College, School staff, students, external stakeholders.
- 2.15 The School is in a good position, both geographically and in terms of expertise, to carve out a unique niche in their discipline and thereafter focus their organization and management around this niche.
- 2.16 The academic administrative load is the norm for a UCD School, but when a School is so small it can lead to a high load per academic. However, the relatively low numbers of students associated with some duties can offset this. Hence the recommendation is that the work associated with each task is clearly outlined in order to equally balance the load for each School member.

- 2.17 While the democratic and collegial structure is commended, it does lead to a bottom up approach in organization. Such an approach needs direction by a senior academic. The combination of a new Professorial appointment coupled with input from an individual with institutional expertise should foster and drive the future direction of the School.
- 2.18 Great care has to be taken in deciding the profile of the new Professorial position as it is a critical position for the School and must be made with regard to a revised School Strategy.

3. Staff and Facilities

General Comments and Context

A. Staff

- 3.1 The RG met with all faculty and administrative staff during the site visit, including a meeting specifically with newly appointed faculty staff.
- 3.2 The RG noted that the School has recently offered permanent contracts of 3.5 FTEs at lecturer level and is currently in the process of recruiting a full professor post.
- 3.3 The School currently has 2.5 administrative staff, one of which is a temporary contract which will finish in May 2016. This is high for the size of the School.
- 3.4 The staff seem to work well together and are supportive of each other. They appear to be able to make decisions in common without social stress and they seem to be well aware of the kinds of technical resources they need to carry out their teaching and research missions. There is strong support within the School for the professorship, which is needed to give leadership and to have impact within the University.
- 3.5 Faculty staff are too focused on immediate problems that a more experienced administrator could likely solve. There are also issues that are outside the control of the School which they will need assistance with. Similarly, it appears that the University's finance model is opaque to the School.

B. Facilities

- 3.6 The office space current occupied by the School is seriously inadequate. The offices are cold, dark, and seem designed more as storage space than as work space for faculty.
- 3.7 The RG understands that the School will move to new space in the near future. This is a very positive step, but faculty and staff need to do careful planning to ensure that they allocate space in a way that covers their needs for privacy (student advising, for example), for common spaces and for specific School requirements (e.g. innovation lab, meeting room).

- 3.8 The computing infrastructure seems stressed. As in many universities, the computer laboratories are too small and have too many problem machines. The RG believes that central computing needs greater support in order to support Schools like this.
- 3.9 The Blackboard system seems inadequate for a School that might offer courses in partial or blended distance learning mode. Maintenance operations reportedly take place during the working day. The fact that system support has been outsourced is a risk to the University and units relying on it for income-generation.
- 3.10 The School needs an appropriate innovation lab within their new facilities. This lab should include specialized technical facilities such as eye-tracking, 3-D printing, and video-conferencing facilities.
- 3.11 A boardroom/meeting room is an important requirement for the operation and development of the School.

Commendations

- 3.12 The School is well-established regular member of the elite iSchool group, which represents the top Schools of information world wide and includes institutions like Berkeley, Berlin, and Copenhagen. Members of the School have taken on important roles within the iSchool organization, including being elected to the decision-making body (iCaucus) and being chosen to co-chair one of the tracks at the annual iConference. This puts the School into a peer group that can provide significant help and resources.

Recommendations

- 3.13 The RG supports the appointment of one new professorship position which is essential for the future of the School, both to provide internal leadership and to give the School a greater voice within the University and within the community.
- 3.14 The School should organize its research and teaching areas into larger groupings. The obvious areas seem to be 1) library and information science, 2) communication (which can include social computing and HCI), and 3) digital curation.
- 3.15 The School needs to have a clearer plan for delegating responsibility. Too many decisions seem to be made collectively.
- 3.16 The finance model needs to be adjusted to reflect the expenditure needed for the new professorship to avoid a financial time-bomb. The financial benchmarks stem from a time when income and expenditure were seriously out of balance. The School is ahead on its income targets, and the Principal appears to have a university-level agreement to adjust the spending targets when the new professor arrives. It is critically important that this happens.
- 3.17 The School should consider offering more degrees for part time students. This could be a blended learning model with on-campus requirements and some distance education. Some

pure distance education offerings could potentially be considered, particularly in the area of continuing education certificates, as long as it does not undermine the importance of the on-campus experience for most students.

- 3.18 The School should consider summer-School offerings, if an adequate business plan can be prepared, and should consider exchanges with other iSchools in Europe, Asia, and North America.
- 3.19 The School should make a renewed effort to involve the University Library in the LIS education track. The RG is aware that the relationships between university libraries and LIS Schools are often fraught, and that libraries see a need to protect themselves, but a closer relationship could benefit both parties.
- 3.20 The School should see to maximise opportunities and support through its membership of iSchool.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

General Comments and Context

- 4.1 Quality teaching and learning is valued in this School, and faculty strive to improve their skills. Faculty are dedicated to providing excellent learning environments for students, although there are opportunities for improvement, outlined below.
- 4.2 Assessment is tied to course learning outcomes, and, for the MLIS programme, curriculum breadth and depth is partly measured through the required Library Association of Ireland accreditation process.
- 4.3 Feedback is solicited from a range of stakeholders, but there exists significant opportunity to expand that feedback, particularly at the programme level. Some of the expressed student dissatisfaction with the MLIS programme could be explored and addressed through a more effective system for soliciting student feedback.

Commendations

- 4.4 The recent addition of the data curation programme is an excellent response to national need. This programme should be supported and marketed aggressively.
- 4.5 Some faculty are trying to be innovative in their teaching; some are taking opportunities to develop their teaching skills; others are receiving teaching awards. These indicators of care and attention to teaching are excellent models for all faculty in the School.
- 4.6 Faculty are responding to suggestions for improvement to teaching and learning made by the external examiner.

- 4.7 Faculty appear to be responsive to student feedback provided for individual modules.
- 4.8 The shift from final course examinations to ongoing, multiple formative assessments in modules is good practice.
- 4.9 Faculty spend far too much time negotiating University bureaucracy to obtain appropriate classroom space and to obtain sufficient IT support. UCD is losing the goodwill of its faculty staff and its students for want of sufficiently equipped classrooms and availability of IT support when needed. This is especially critical for teaching that occurs at times other than the current IT Support provision of 9-5, Monday to Friday. An “on-call” approach to IT support during other times cannot appropriately support teaching during evenings, nor is it sufficient to support online teaching, which may occur at any time of the day or night.

Recommendations

- 4.10 UCD must invest central resources to shoring up basic infrastructures of IT support, particularly outside Monday-Friday, 9-5, and fit for purpose equipped classrooms to an internationally recognized standard.
- 4.11 The School should seriously consider requiring that students bring their own laptops to their programmes. This is not an unreasonable requirement for IT-intensive modules.
- 4.12 Faculty need to identify a solution to the problem of insufficient library resources for students. If students cannot be expected to purchase materials, then licensing agreements must be obtained to enable students to access the learning resources needed to support their learning. Posting more links in BlackBoard to UCD Library-provided resources (e.g., journal articles) may be one way to improve access. Where e-books are not available for required textbooks, students must be held accountable for purchasing these texts.
- 4.13 Overall assessment of student satisfaction, as well as learning outcomes, should be enhanced through mechanisms such as regular town hall meetings between the HOS and students, as well as exit surveys of all graduating students. These are useful tools to identify and ameliorate ongoing challenges to optimal student learning experiences.
- 4.14 Opportunities to improve teaching include the following: Faculty need to analyze balance between theory and practice in the undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Students at both levels expressed concern about lack of opportunity to develop core information technology skills. Pedagogical development is needed for some faculty. There is a clear need to incorporate authentic assessment methods into modules (i.e., assignments which reflect tasks and projects that are typical in the workplace). Postgraduate modules should be analyzed for sound instructional design and best practices in assessment. For example, assessment should occur throughout each module, to provide timely formative feedback to students.

- 4.15 The School, and individual staff could improve their communication with students, particularly with respect to timely announcements of changes in faculty, and organizational changes in the School. A student listserv or School Twitter account are possible mechanisms.
- 4.16 Faculty need to ensure that all syllabi are complete and provided to students before the first day of class.
- 4.17 Syllabi need to reflect the official content descriptions provided to students.
- 4.18 Greater oversight is needed for all course syllabi, including regular analysis and assessment by a module design expert (or a colleague familiar with best practices in module design and assessment).

5. Curriculum Development and Review

General Comments and Context

- 5.1 The recent rebranding of the School to include “communications” provides an excellent opportunity to expand the scope of its programmes, and to raise the profile of and interest in the programmes. Curricular innovation is a hallmark of this School. A new Data Curation programme is responding to a national gap in this area. Students benefit from the cutting-edge research expertise of faculty. The curricula also benefit from close ties to a range of employers, who provide significant practical learning opportunities for students.
- 5.2 One relationship which requires greater development is the link between UCD Library and the School. A recent competitor (Dublin Business School) is offering flexible learning options for library and information studies, and therefore poses a threat to the existing UCD programme.
- 5.3 In addition, some employers are sending employees to online programmes for the MLIS degree, as these provide sufficient flexibility for full-time employees to earn their degree while remaining in their positions. The currency of the various programmes may be uneven.
- 5.4 There is some evidence that the MLIS curriculum could benefit from updating, but constraints placed by the Library Association of Ireland (LAI) accreditation process may be perceived by the staff.

Commendations

- 5.5 Programme requirement changes are being made to increase flexibility for students (e.g., to reduce core requirements).
- 5.6 The recent decision to “unflatten” programme structures is wise in order to facilitate scaffold learning, and to make progression logical.

- 5.7 Mapping of modules in the MLIS programme to the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) framework makes clear that the curriculum is largely comprehensive.
- 5.8 Curriculum review includes feedback from a range of stakeholders, with the exception of exit surveys.
- 5.9 Attention to generic skills in all programmes is positive, and reflects best practice.
- 5.10 The renaming of modules to reflect current nomenclature and contemporary content is positive.
- 5.11 The ongoing discontinuation of outdated modules, and those which cannot be staffed, as well as the addition of new modules to reflect current trends, is progressive.
- 5.12 The LAI accreditation process provides additional quality control and expands employment opportunities for graduates.
- 5.13 Faculty appear to be responsive to advice from the visiting subject extern.
- 5.14 The system of programme coordinators provides quality control and should provide a direct point of contact for students.
- 5.15 The First Destinations surveys provide good feedback for programme development.
- 5.16 The rebranding initiative provides opportunities for programme enhancements and expansion, particularly in the information science/communications areas.

Recommendations

- 5.17 Students need better advising about which modules to take and in what order (i.e., pathways to achieve their career goals), in the undergraduate and the postgraduate programmes. Perhaps the website could be used to provide generic advice about possible pathways for students, and a BlackBoard "Orientation" course could be created for all students, which could offer advice. A structured advising process by faculty should be created for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Currently many students turn to the School manager for advice, which is not appropriate. The School website should point to the academic leader for each programme as the contact for inquiries.
- 5.18 A review of undergraduate modules should be undertaken to identify redundancies and close gaps.
- 5.19 The relationship with the UCD Library needs to be examined for opportunities to enhance the curriculum, e.g., through multiple internship opportunities for MLIS students.

- 5.20 The School needs to work with the LAI to publicize the value of preparation for librarianship, since many employers may not recognize it.
- 5.21 The School also needs to work more with the LAI to show leadership in curriculum revision, to ensure currency in the MLIS programme. Currently there are some content requirements that are outdated, according to international trends.
- 5.22 The current capstone structure needs to be reconsidered to create learning opportunities which match student interests and career goals.
- 5.23 There is opportunity for the School to offer more professional development for librarians, and to offer short or compressed courses in topical areas to librarians and other information professionals (e.g., data curation). Another possibility is to offer CPD in a summer School.
- 5.24 There is opportunity to grow the doctoral programme, with the recent addition of three permanent Lecturers, and an expected appointment of a Professor. The selection of the Professor as discussed in previous sections will be key, to ensure that visionary leadership and an entrepreneurial spirit (i.e., creative curriculum development) guide curriculum change in the coming years.
- 5.25 There may be opportunity for the School to expand course offerings in LAM (Library, Archives, and Museums) areas. Potential for collaboration with existing archival education options at UCD should be investigated. Currently it was stated that there is no comprehensive programme of museum studies in Ireland; this also presents significant potential for the School.
- 5.26 The UCD IT and classroom infrastructure needs to be brought up to international standards, to support the current and future teaching needs. This is particularly critical for an iSchool, which teaches curriculum heavily dependent on reliable and current IT infrastructure. Currently, the School's IT infrastructure and IT support provided by UCD are insufficient.
- 5.27 The School should investigate opportunities to move some curriculum delivery online. UCD would need to support such an initiative with IT and instructional design expertise. Currently the School is losing potential students in librarianship to online programmes elsewhere, such as Aberystwyth and Robert Gordon Universities. These students cannot leave their working positions and require flexible learning opportunities, which the School must address. The School Marketing Manager should investigate the market for librarianship students, and the current and future threats to that market. The School benefits from the expertise of a marketing manager which could be more fully exploited for curriculum development and marketing.

6. Research Activity

General Comments and Context

- 6.1 Faculty are research active, in line with the norms for their career stage and discipline.
- 6.2 The research strategy was descriptive, but lacked cohesion and focus.
- 6.3 Faculty need opportunities to take paid research leave. At present the opportunities are very limited and some breaks require them to give up a significant portion of their salary. Various models are in operation around the University that should be considered by the School, such as a cost neutral one semester leave of absence or a full year leave. The College should make sure that the School can exploit these options.
- 6.4 The School needs to develop a strategy to facilitate staff participation in international conferences. The conference allowance for faculty is inadequate for the kinds of international involvement the School needs.
- 6.5 The research at the School focuses broadly on the social and behavioural aspects of information, as opposed to the other pillars of information science: information retrieval and applied computer science (sometimes called information management). This is good because it gives the School a logical and consistent profile.
- 6.6 Early career faculty lack mentoring by more experienced colleagues with significant grant-getting and peer-reviewed publication experience. Some mentoring is essential to help early career faculty understand the journal expectations and the idiosyncrasies of the peer review process. Nonetheless they do quite well as researchers.

Commendations

- 6.7 Considering how small and how relatively young faculty are, their research activity is higher than would normally be expected.
- 6.8 Faculty show a genuine enthusiasm for their research topics and focus strongly on them. Some of them have been able to win a number of small grants and have good publication records.

Recommendations

- 6.9 The new professor should come from a field that fits the existing information behaviour emphasis, which should include a form of communication studies that emphasizes social media and HCI (Human-Computer Interaction) rather than traditional press, radio, and television topics.
- 6.10 The new professor should have sufficient research experience to provide intellectual leadership for the School. The person should be able to bring more focus to the School's

research agenda and to create an environment in which faculty can give each other mutual support.

- 6.11 The new professor will also need time and resources to build a research agenda. In order to make this possible, the Review Group recommends the appointment of a Senior UCD academic, external to the School and College with UCD administrative experience, as Head of School to “pilot” them for some years.
- 6.12 The School should develop research programmes; it will gain maximum benefit from its research by clustering its portfolio into focal programmes. These programmes will be attractive components of multidisciplinary research projects, collaborating within and without UCD.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

General Comments and Context

- 7.1 ICS members avail of UCD’s module student feedback system, but there is a need for more monitoring of the School’s teaching portfolio beyond this, both at undergraduate or on the postgraduate level. There are no exit surveys and no programme feedback.
- 7.2 It became obvious in discussions that students, both on the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, are not sufficiently aware of the study paths within the programmes offered and in relation to their second subject outside the School.

Commendations

- 7.3 The School takes its teaching very seriously and stresses its proximity to students; staff-student fora are a visible and structured attempt to enhance this relationship further.
- 7.4 The Head of School was lauded in interviews with the Review Group for her tireless and enthusiastic endeavours to induce and mentor new staff, of which there are many, to the School and University life, but this is a demand that far exceeds the capabilities of a single person.

Recommendations

- 7.5 The Review Group recommends that a system be introduced to ensure that the School’s teaching offerings remain topical and that their delivery of programmes retains a high-quality status.
- 7.6 It is advisable that the School introduces a concise staff-student forum on each of its engagement levels to monitor its provision and address possible shortcomings swiftly.

- 7.7 Detailed and structured student advice is necessary to remedy the lack of student awareness of study paths – a systematic approach would also help to foster a clear School identity and loyal student attachment to the School, which, by many of the interviewed students, is currently regarded as ‘my other subject’. Given the centrality of the School in UCD’s teaching agenda this is unnecessary and can be quickly remedied.
- 7.8 Mentoring of new staff is an area of concern within the School. The School should attempt to pair new members of faculty with more experienced, if not necessarily more senior, staff and to avail of UCD-wide opportunities to help this, such as enrolling early career faculty in Teaching and Learning diplomas etc.

8. Support Services

General Comments and Context

- 8.1 The Review Group’s meeting with support services revealed that ICS is facing problems similar to other Schools in UCD, a lack of resources in the library sector (mainly due to unfavourable exchange rates with £stg and US\$) and a threat to existing holdings of journals and periodicals.
- 8.2 On the other hand, ICS has established relationships with UCD Library, resulting in mutual aid and support in recent conferences and public appearances.
- 8.3 ICS, like many other Schools, expressed concerns with IT support and provision, particularly in the area of IT support outside core hours to allow for a greater number of online modules, which are mainly due to outsourcing of key teaching tools (such as Blackboard) and a 9-5 attendance in UCD’s key IT support unit.
- 8.4 There is a good working relationship with the International Office, and earlier problems with the admission system for postgraduate students have been largely eliminated.

Commendations

- 8.5 The Review Group noted a good level of engagement with the majority of support units across the University. In particular, the relationships that have been developed with the Library in the areas of conferences and other activity.

Recommendations

- 8.6 The challenges experience by the School on IT Services provision need to be addressed in order to ensure that current and future teaching needs are supported beyond what is currently provided.

- 8.7 It is recommended that the School should engage with Support Units, such as Human Resources and Teaching and Learning, to develop and support career training and mentoring for all staff within the School.

9. External Relations

General Comments and Context

- 9.1 The School maintains a strong relationship with professional bodies in the library world, who accredit their programme and provide feedback. This is laudable as it ensures a meaningful design of teaching offerings and seeks to enable student employability after completing courses in ICS.
- 9.2 However, this professional accreditation process may emphasize aspects of existing working practices, rather than a focus on new technologies and new practices in the digital and electronic world.
- 9.3 At the same time, individual members of faculty, through their research interests, engage with current issues and developments straddling the divide between the university world and the wider public, such as the engagement with the 1916 commemorations (1916 walking app) and the attempts of a diverse group of academics to attract the Irish Photographic Archive (IPA) to UCD and include their holdings into the heritage collection of the University.
- 9.4 If we look at ICS's 'external relations' in a domestic university environment, the School has huge cooperative potential with many other academic units in UCD in the areas of research and teaching. Strong engagement with Schools such as History, but also Art History and Cultural Policy, would give the School much more visibility with little effort, and may facilitate the development of new programmes within UCD, while responding to the UCD Internationalisation and Globalisation campaign.

Commendations

- 9.5 The School has developed and maintained strong relationships with professional bodies.

Recommendations

- 9.6 The School should continue to develop its engagement with Schools across the University to identify new opportunities for programme development, an increased profile for the School, and the creation of opportunities and funding for the School as part of the University's global strategy.
- 9.7 New teaching posts in the School could be created through such collaborative engagement and through engagement with strategic initiatives to secure additional funding.

- 9.8 The School should engage with professional bodies to review and identify opportunities to incorporate into the curriculum, an increased focus on new technologies and new practices in the digital and electronic world.

10. SWOT Analysis

General observations:

- 10.1 The School has huge potential to develop into a dynamic unit that may inform the entire UCD constituency on communication and information issues. The School's highly motivated and enthusiastic faculty and staff are its greatest asset, and the unmitigating support for the School as expressed by the College Principal, is a huge bonus on the way to sustainable success as an academic unit.
- 10.2 The School needs to tackle its quality and enhancement issues to remain strong in the field of programme delivery.
- 10.3 The School needs to engage strategically with the University's objectives in order to boost its own role in the University and to increase its critical staffing levels.
- 10.4 A successful outcome of the selection process for the new Professor is crucial for the survival and success of the School, both in UCD and inter-/nationally. It is of the highest importance that the new Professor is able to integrate staff in an overarching academic strategy for the School and that s/he fosters cooperation and does not facilitate polarisation in the School.
- 10.5 It is advised that the College Principal seeks to nominate an academic advisor with strong administrative experience to assist the Head of School. This person needs to be experienced in UCD to advise of academic practices, the use of home strength in the academic environment and the tackling of weaknesses. RG advises that this person is selected from an academic area as remote as possible from ICS, not from a cognate field and not from within the College of Social Sciences and Law.

10.6 Strengths

- The diversity of the staff portfolio (demographic, gender, research, international).
- The enthusiasm, adaptability and energy of the staff.
- The School is research active in their individual fields and most of the topics under investigation are current
- Their potential and willingness to collaborate is a great strength of the School
- The decision to add 'Communication' to the remit of the School opens doors for future expansion

10.7 Weaknesses

- The absence of senior academic leadership which has led to a lack of strategic planning and structural clarity.
- Decision-making processes and role responsibilities are not clearly outlined.
- The School lacks a collective identity.
- A thorough analysis of the curricula, beyond the modular level, is missing.

- The lack of advice for students regarding logical pathways and programme opportunities to achieve their goals.
- The lack of clarity at University level regarding the role of the School. The School needs to demonstrate its contribution to the globalisation initiative and the increasingly international student body on the campus.
- The School needs to identify and implement best practice for soliciting regular programme feedback from a range of stakeholders to inform curricular development.
- While the budgetary model is constrictive, the School still has the opportunity to develop and invest in new strategic initiatives, such as joint majors with other Schools and joint MA programmes, which enable them to grow and expand. The School needs to develop a niche within UCD Strategic Plan to enlist University support to grow the size of the School.

10.8 Opportunities

- Engagement in existing and new strategic initiatives at College level.
- The School can take advantage of UCD experience in both online T&L and Summer Schools in exploring their options and developing new initiatives.
- Development of educational programmes in digital curation in conjunction with UCD-wide activities (e.g., heritage, folklore).
- Collaboration with other disciplines to develop new research initiatives and teaching programmes.
- The potential of the School, through the new Professorial appointment, to shape and focus its research profile.
- The opportunity, with the development of the communications element, to exploit new opportunities in research and teaching.
- Identify the key niches in communication for UCD as compared to national competitors.
- To use the marketing role to enhance their markets.
- The appointment of an advisor for the School in order to build new structures and processes that reflect and prioritise roles and responsibilities.
- The development of a collective identity for the staff, students and research profile.
- The development of new curriculum review strategies and feedback programmes to ensure the delivery of high quality programmes.
- To advise students such that they choose logical pathways and programme opportunities to achieve their goals.
- The potential to develop a niche within UCD Strategic Plan to enlist University support to grow the size of the School.

10.9 Threats

- Increasing competition from other institutions that deliver similar programmes
- Lack of realisation regarding student satisfaction with course content
- Focus on specific rather than broader employer requirements

- Broadness of the curriculum leaves the School open to internal competition from new course developments
- Overreliance on the MLIS programme
- Dilution of their strengths into areas of Communications which they do not currently cover.

UCD School of Information and Communication Studies – Full List of Commendations and Recommendations

This Appendix contains a full list of commendations and recommendations made by the Review Group for the UCD School of Information and Communication Studies and should be read in conjunction with the specific chapter above. *(Please note that the paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the report text)*

2. Organisation and Management

Commendations

- 2.9 The School has welcomed the change in title and has begun the process of rethinking and refocusing their strategy.
- 2.10 The School has an average student to staff ratio for the College. This is to be commended given the low staff number.
- 2.11 The School faculty and staff members are very supportive of each other and are well regarded and supported by the College Principal. The good morale is commended and is particularly helpful in overcoming the recent period of flux.

Recommendations

- 2.12 The budgetary model is a constraint on the growth of this School. But, more innovative solutions could be investigated including new strategic initiatives and joint degree programmes. It is recommended that the School organization and management give careful consideration to maximizing their use of existing resources and use them to partner with other UCD Schools/Institutes/Centres to develop new joint initiatives that enable growth.
- 2.13 The School, with assistance from the College, should appoint an advisor (a UCD advisor from outside the School and College) in order to compensate for lack of institutional memory and to help the staff develop focus and build their strategy. This is a relatively urgent requirement if they are to best position themselves in terms of sustainable growth.
- 2.14 The School should ensure that they develop a clear vision and strategy over the next year in order that they can focus their organization and management on a strong base. Clear and measurable goals should be aligned to the strategy that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed (SMART objectives). This will require engagement with all key stakeholders such as College, School staff, students, external stakeholders.

- 2.15 The School is in a good position, both geographically and in terms of expertise, to carve out a unique niche in their discipline and thereafter focus their organization and management around this niche.
- 2.16 The academic administrative load is the norm for a UCD School, but when a School is so small it can lead to a high load per academic. However, the relatively low numbers of students associated with some duties can offset this. Hence the recommendation is that the work associated with each task is clearly outlined in order to equally balance the load for each School member.
- 2.17 While the democratic and collegial structure is commended, it does lead to a bottom up approach in organization. Such an approach needs direction by a senior academic. The combination of a new Professorial appointment coupled with input from an individual with institutional expertise should foster and drive the future direction of the School.
- 2.18 Great care has to be taken in deciding the profile of the new Professorial position as it is a critical position for the School and must be made with regard to a revised School Strategy.

3. Staff and Facilities

Commendations

- 3.12 The School is well-established regular member of the elite iSchool group, which represents the top Schools of information world wide and includes institutions like Berkeley, Berlin, and Copenhagen. Members of the School have taken on important roles within the iSchool organization, including being elected to the decision-making body (iCaucus) and being chosen to co-chair one of the tracks at the annual iConference. This puts the School into a peer group that can provide significant help and resources.

Recommendations

- 3.13 The RG supports the appointment of one new professorship position which is essential for the future of the School, both to provide internal leadership and to give the School a greater voice within the University and within the community.
- 3.14 The School should organize its research and teaching areas into larger groupings. The obvious areas seem to be 1) library and information science, 2) communication (which can include social computing and HCI), and 3) digital curation.
- 3.15 The School needs to have a clearer plan for delegating responsibility. Too many decisions seem to be made collectively.
- 3.16 The finance model needs to be adjusted to reflect the expenditure needed for the new professorship to avoid a financial time-bomb. The financial benchmarks stem from a time when income and expenditure were seriously out of balance. The School is ahead on its

income targets, and the Principal appears to have a university-level agreement to adjust the spending targets when the new professor arrives. It is critically important that this happens.

- 3.17 The School should consider offering more degrees for part time students. This could be a blended learning model with on-campus requirements and some distance education. Some pure distance education offerings could potentially be considered, particularly in the area of continuing education certificates, as long as it does not undermine the importance of the on-campus experience for most students.
- 3.18 The School should consider summer-School offerings, if an adequate business plan can be prepared, and should consider exchanges with other iSchools in Europe, Asia, and North America.
- 3.19 The School should make a renewed effort to involve the University Library in the LIS education track. The RG is aware that the relationships between university libraries and LIS Schools are often fraught, and that libraries see a need to protect themselves, but a closer relationship could benefit both parties.
- 3.20 The School should see to maximise opportunities and support through its membership of iSchool.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Commendations

- 4.4 The recent addition of the data curation programme is an excellent response to national need. This programme should be supported and marketed aggressively.
- 4.5 Some faculty are trying to be innovative in their teaching; some are taking opportunities to develop their teaching skills; others are receiving teaching awards. These indicators of care and attention to teaching are excellent models for all faculty in the School.
- 4.6 Faculty are responding to suggestions for improvement to teaching and learning made by the external examiner.
- 4.7 Faculty appear to be responsive to student feedback provided for individual modules.
- 4.8 The shift from final course examinations to ongoing, multiple formative assessments in modules is good practice.
- 4.9 Faculty spend far too much time negotiating University bureaucracy to obtain appropriate classroom space and to obtain sufficient IT support. UCD is losing the goodwill of its faculty staff and its students for want of sufficiently equipped classrooms and availability of IT support when needed. This is especially critical for teaching that occurs at times other than the current IT Support provision of 9-5, Monday to Friday. An “on-call” approach to IT

support during other times cannot appropriately support teaching during evenings, nor is it sufficient to support online teaching, which may occur at any time of the day or night.

Recommendations

- 4.10 UCD must invest central resources to shoring up basic infrastructures of IT support, particularly outside Monday-Friday, 9-5, and fit for purpose equipped classrooms to an internationally recognized standard.
- 4.11 The School should seriously consider requiring that students bring their own laptops to their programmes. This is not an unreasonable requirement for IT-intensive modules.
- 4.12 Faculty need to identify a solution to the problem of insufficient library resources for students. If students cannot be expected to purchase materials, then licensing agreements must be obtained to enable students to access the learning resources needed to support their learning. Posting more links in BlackBoard to UCD Library-provided resources (e.g., journal articles) may be one way to improve access. Where e-books are not available for required textbooks, students must be held accountable for purchasing these texts.
- 4.13 Overall assessment of student satisfaction, as well as learning outcomes, should be enhanced through mechanisms such as regular town hall meetings between the HOS and students, as well as exit surveys of all graduating students. These are useful tools to identify and ameliorate ongoing challenges to optimal student learning experiences.
- 4.14 Opportunities to improve teaching include the following: Faculty need to analyze balance between theory and practice in the undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Students at both levels expressed concern about lack of opportunity to develop core information technology skills. Pedagogical development is needed for some faculty. There is a clear need to incorporate authentic assessment methods into modules (i.e., assignments which reflect tasks and projects that are typical in the workplace). Postgraduate modules should be analyzed for sound instructional design and best practices in assessment. For example, assessment should occur throughout each module, to provide timely formative feedback to students.
- 4.15 The School, and individual staff could improve their communication with students, particularly with respect to timely announcements of changes in faculty, and organizational changes in the School. A student listserv or School Twitter account are possible mechanisms.
- 4.16 Faculty need to ensure that all syllabi are complete and provided to students before the first day of class.
- 4.17 Syllabi need to reflect the official content descriptions provided to students.
- 4.18 Greater oversight is needed for all course syllabi, including regular analysis and assessment by a module design expert (or a colleague familiar with best practices in module design and assessment).

5. Curriculum Development and Review

Commendations

- 5.5 Programme requirement changes are being made to increase flexibility for students (e.g., to reduce core requirements).
- 5.6 The recent decision to “unflatten” programme structures is wise in order to facilitate scaffold learning, and to make progression logical.
- 5.7 Mapping of modules in the MLIS programme to the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) framework makes clear that the curriculum is largely comprehensive.
- 5.8 Curriculum review includes feedback from a range of stakeholders, with the exception of exit surveys.
- 5.9 Attention to generic skills in all programmes is positive, and reflects best practice.
- 5.10 The renaming of modules to reflect current nomenclature and contemporary content is positive.
- 5.11 The ongoing discontinuation of outdated modules, and those which cannot be staffed, as well as the addition of new modules to reflect current trends, is progressive.
- 5.12 The LAI accreditation process provides additional quality control and expands employment opportunities for graduates.
- 5.13 Faculty appear to be responsive to advice from the visiting subject extern.
- 5.14 The system of programme coordinators provides quality control and should provide a direct point of contact for students.
- 5.15 The First Destinations surveys provide good feedback for programme development.
- 5.16 The rebranding initiative provides opportunities for programme enhancements and expansion, particularly in the information science/communications areas.

Recommendations

- 5.17 Students need better advising about which modules to take and in what order (i.e., pathways to achieve their career goals), in the undergraduate and the postgraduate programmes. Perhaps the website could be used to provide generic advice about possible pathways for students, and a BlackBoard “Orientation” course could be created for all students, which could offer advice. A structured advising process by faculty should be created for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Currently many students turn to

the School manager for advice, which is not appropriate. The School website should point to the academic leader for each programme as the contact for inquiries.

- 5.18 A review of undergraduate modules should be undertaken to identify redundancies and close gaps.
- 5.19 The relationship with the UCD Library needs to be examined for opportunities to enhance the curriculum, e.g., through multiple internship opportunities for MLIS students.
- 5.20 The School needs to work with the LAI to publicize the value of the preparation for librarianship, since many employers may not recognize it.
- 5.21 The School also needs to work more with the LAI to show leadership in curriculum revision, to ensure currency in the MLIS programme. Currently there are some content requirements that are outdated, according to international trends.
- 5.22 The current capstone structure needs to be reconsidered to create learning opportunities which match student interests and career goals.
- 5.23 There is opportunity for the School to offer more professional development for librarians, and to offer short or compressed courses in topical areas to librarians and other information professionals (e.g., data curation). Another possibility is to offer CPD in a summer School.
- 5.24 There is opportunity to grow the doctoral programme, with the recent addition of three permanent Lecturers, and an expected appointment of a Professor. The selection of the Professor as discussed in previous sections will be key, to ensure that visionary leadership and an entrepreneurial spirit (i.e., creative curriculum development) guide curriculum change in the coming years.
- 5.25 There may be opportunity for the School to expand course offerings in LAM (Library, Archives, and Museums) areas. Potential for collaboration with existing archival education options at UCD should be investigated. Currently it was stated that there is no comprehensive programme of museum studies in Ireland; this also presents significant potential for the School.
- 5.26 The UCD IT and classroom infrastructure needs to be brought up to international standards, to support the current and future teaching needs. This is particularly critical for an iSchool, which teaches curriculum heavily dependent on reliable and current IT infrastructure. Currently, the School's IT infrastructure and IT support provided by UCD are insufficient.
- 5.27 The School should investigate opportunities to move some curriculum delivery online. UCD would need to support such an initiative with IT and instructional design expertise. Currently the School is losing potential students in librarianship to online programmes elsewhere, such as Aberystwyth and Robert Gordon Universities. These students cannot leave their working positions and require flexible learning opportunities, which the School must address. The School Marketing Manager should investigate the market for librarianship students, and the

current and future threats to that market. The School benefits from the expertise of a marketing manager which could be more fully exploited for curriculum development and marketing.

6. Research Activity

Commendations

- 6.7 Considering how small and how relatively young faculty are, their research activity is higher than would normally be expected.
- 6.8 Faculty show a genuine enthusiasm for their research topics and focus strongly on them. Some of them have been able to win a number of small grants and have good publication records.

Recommendations

- 6.9 The new professor should come from a field that fits the existing information behaviour emphasis, which should include a form of communication studies that emphasizes social media and HCI (Human-Computer Interaction) rather than traditional press, radio, and television topics.
- 6.10 The new professor should have sufficient research experience to provide intellectual leadership for the School. The person should be able to bring more focus to the School's research agenda and to create an environment in which faculty can give each other mutual support.
- 6.11 The new professor will also need time and resources to build a research agenda. In order to make this possible, the Review Group recommends the appointment of a Senior UCD academic, external to the School and College with UCD administrative experience, as Head of School to "pilot" them for some years.
- 6.12 The School should develop research programmes; it will gain maximum benefit from its research by clustering its portfolio into focal programmes. These programmes will be attractive components of multidisciplinary research projects, collaborating within and without UCD.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

Commendations

- 7.3 The School takes its teaching very seriously and stresses its proximity to students; staff-student fora are a visible and structured attempt to enhance this relationship further.

- 7.4 The Head of School was lauded in interviews with the Review Group for her tireless and enthusiastic endeavours to induce and mentor new staff, of which there are many, to the School and University life, but this is a demand that far exceeds the capabilities of a single person.

Recommendations

- 7.5 The Review Group recommends that a system be introduced to ensure that the School's teaching offerings remain topical and that their delivery of programmes retains a high-quality status.
- 7.6 It is advisable that the School introduces a concise staff-student forum on each of its engagement levels to monitor its provision and address possible shortcomings swiftly.
- 7.7 Detailed and structured student advice is necessary to remedy the lack of student awareness of study paths – a systematic approach would also help to foster a clear School identity and loyal student attachment to the School, which, by many of the interviewed students, is currently regarded as 'my other subject'. Given the centrality of the School in UCD's teaching agenda this is unnecessary and can be quickly remedied.
- 7.8 Mentoring of new staff is an area of concern within the School. The School should attempt to pair new members of faculty with more experienced, if not necessarily more senior, staff and to avail of UCD-wide opportunities to help this, such as enrolling early career faculty in Teaching and Learning diplomas etc.

8. Support Services

Commendations

- 8.5 The Review Group noted a good level of engagement with the majority of support units across the University. In particular, the relationships that have been developed with the Library in the areas of conferences and other activity.

Recommendations

- 8.6 The challenges experience by the School on IT Services provision need to be addressed in order to ensure that current and future teaching needs are supported beyond what is currently provided.
- 8.7 It is recommended that the School should engage with Support Units, such as Human Resources and Teaching and Learning, to develop and support career training and mentoring for all staff within the School.

9. External Relations

Commendations

9.5 The School has developed and maintained strong relationships with professional bodies.

Recommendations

9.6 The School should continue to develop its engagement with Schools across the University to identify new opportunities for programme development, an increased profile for the School, and the creation of opportunities and funding for the School as part of the University's global strategy.

9.7 New teaching posts in the School could be created through such collaborative engagement and through engagement with strategic initiatives to secure additional funding.

9.8 The School should engage with professional bodies to review and identify opportunities to incorporate into the curriculum, an increased focus on new technologies and new practices in the digital and electronic world.

UCD School of Information and Communication Studies – Response to the Review Group Report

The School wishes to thank the Review Group for their time and expertise, both at the site visit and in their written Report. We are pleased that the Review Group recognised our strengths and made thoughtful recommendations for improvement, which we will address during the Quality Improvement Planning process.

Some of the most important recommendations suggested by the Review Group have already been addressed since the site visit. With specific reference to the prioritised recommendations identified by the Review Group, the School's initial proposals/comments are outlined below:

Recommendation 1: The Review Group recommends that the open position of Professor be filled with an individual who comes from a field that fits the existing research emphasis, which should include communication studies.

Proposal/Comment: On 23 June 2016 after an external search, the current Head of School, Dr Kalpana Shankar, was appointed Professor of Information and Communication Studies. She has agreed to serve as Head of School until 31 August 2018. Her areas of expertise include library and information studies but also encompass some areas of communication studies, particularly scholarly communication. The stability and leadership provided by this appointment will lessen many of the uncertainties within the School that have been at the core of many of its strategic challenges.

Recommendation 2: The Review Group recommends that the School be allocated an advisor (a senior UCD academic, external to the School and the College, and with institutional experience) to help them build structures and processes that reflect and prioritise their roles and responsibilities.

Proposal/Comment: The establishment of the Professor position and her appointment as Head of School was necessary before the School could seek such an advisor. The committee has advised that the advisor come from outside of the College and will be chosen in consultation with the College Principal. To maximise the usefulness of this advisory relationship, the School believes there should be clear goals which should be established in consultation with the School with a time-limited "term of service".

Recommendation 3: The School needs to build a collective identity for the staff, students, and research profile. Individuals should develop and invest in a common project.

Proposal/Comment: With the appointment of the Professor and four permanent hires, the School is in a good place to develop this identity that encompasses the research/teaching of the staff but allows for growth. The staff will be engaging in an exercise to identify broad areas of research that represent the current staff's research expertise, allow for stronger identity development, and align with the School's other strategic goals. Once this is accomplished, the School's Marketing Officer will be working with the staff to create appropriate branding materials that will allow staff to "market" the School to students, potential collaborators, and other units on campus.

Recommendation 4: Conduct an analysis of the curricula and teaching approaches to identify content gaps, redundancies, pedagogical approaches, and opportunities.

Proposal/Comment: The newness of the Digital Curation programme and the LAI re-accreditation process in Spring 2016 have provided two key opportunities to review the associated postgraduate programmes. As a result, for 2016-2017, some structural changes will be put in place for both the MLIS and the MSc in Digital Curation. The MSc in Information Systems should likely be next, as it has been six years since the programme was launched. The undergraduate programme will also be revisited since 2018 marks the launch date of new undergraduate cross-university BSc courses in social sciences and potential restructuring of the BA. The School's external examiner also suggested a phased approach to programme review by focusing on 1-2 programmes a year.

Recommendation 5: The School needs to identify and implement best practice for soliciting regular programme feedback from a range of stakeholders to inform curriculum development.

Proposal/Comment: The School recognises that the different programmes in the School will need feedback from different organisations and institutions as well as potential employers. In addition to the School's recent external examiner, who has lauded the School's commitment to updating educational offerings while maintaining academic coherence and rigor, the School has also looked to the Library Association of Ireland's reaccreditation process and directors of comparable programmes in digital curation. We are discussing forming an advisory board of academics and industry partners to provide feedback on the MSc in Information Systems and the undergraduate programmes in particular.

Recommendation 6: The School needs to develop a niche within the UCD Strategic Plan to enlist University support to grow the size of the School.

Proposal/Comment: Staff are actively engaged in collaborations with colleagues from other units on grants, research projects, and teaching initiatives. As a result, the School is well-primed and eager to engage other units in more systematic ways and will be seeking opportunities through the Research office, Teaching and Learning, and personal contacts to further develop its profile. Since the staff is so multidisciplinary, we anticipate that there may be multiple campus initiatives where our expertise can contribute (and also in turn, we will be careful to vet opportunities to make sure that they support our own needs and identities).



UCD School of Information and Communication Studies

Quality Review Site Visit 29 March – 1 April 2016

TIMETABLE

Day 1: Wednesday, March 30th, 2016

Venue: The Boardroom, Ground Floor, Agricultural & Food Science Centre

09.00-09.30	Private meeting of Review Group (RG)
09.30-10.15	RG meet with Principal, College of Social Sciences and Law
10.15-10.30	Break
10.30-11.15	RG meet with Head of School and Chair of Self-assessment Report Co-ordinating Committee
11.15-11.30	Tea/coffee Break
11.30-12.15	RG meet with SAR Coordinating Committee
12.15-12.45	Break – RG review key observations and prepare lunch meeting
12.45-13.45	Working lunch – meeting with employers/other external stakeholders
13.45-14.15	RG review key observations
14.15-15.30	RG meet with College Finance Manager and HOS to outline School's financial situation
15.30-15.45	RG tea/coffee break
15.45-16.30	RG meet with School staff on T&L and Curriculum issues
16.30-16.35	Break
16.35-17.05	RG meet UCD Programme Dean of Arts and Dean of Social Sciences
17.05-17.15	Break
17.15-18.15	Tour of current facilities and new area in Newman Building
18:15	RG depart

Day 2: Thursday, March 31st, 2016

Venue: The Boardroom, Ground Floor, Agricultural & Food Science Centre

08.45-9.15	Private meeting of RG
09.15-09.55	RG meet with support service representatives
09.55-10.10	Break
10.10-11.00	RG meet with recently appointed members of staff
11.00-11.15	RG tea/coffee break
11.15-12.15	RG meet with the School Research Committee
12.15-12.30	RG meet with representative group of UG students
13.00-14.00	Lunch - RG only
14.00-14.15	RG private meeting - review key observations
14.15-15.00	RG meet with support staff
15.00-15.15	Break
15.15-16.35	RG meet with a representative group of postgraduate students (taught and research) and recent graduates:
16.35-17.30	RG available for private individual meetings with staff
16.45-17.15	RG meet with the UCD IT Chief Technology Officer
17.30-18.00	RG private meeting - review key observations/findings
18.00	RG depart

Day 3: Friday, April 1st, 2016

Venue: The Boardroom, Ground Floor, Agricultural & Food Science Centre

09.00-09.30	Private meeting of RG
09.30-10.30	RG meet with HOS and/or specified University staff to clarify any outstanding issues <u>OR</u> begin preparing draft RG Report
10.30-10.45	Break
10.45-12.30	RG continue preparing draft RG Report

12.30-13.15	Lunch
13.00-13.30	RG meet with Principal, College of Social Sciences and Law to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
14.00-14.15	RG meet with Head of School to feedback initial outline of commendations and recommendations
14.30-15.00	Exit presentation by RG to all available staff of the School summarizing the principal commendations/recommendations of the RG
15.00	Review Group depart