

MINUTES

of a meeting of the Executive Board held at
the Old Bank Hotel, 92-94 High Street, Oxford OX1 4BN
on Tuesday 22 April 2008 at 14.00

Present Toby Bainton, Anne Bell (Chair), Jane Core, Christine Fyfe, Alun Jenkins, Maxine Melling, Julia Munro and Chris West

Apologies Michael Breaks, Elizabeth Chapman, Bidy Fisher and Christine Sexton (UCISA)

In attendance Gail Downe, Philip Cohen (Dublin Institute of Technology), Anne Poulson (CURL), Ian Snowley (The British Library)

Welcome The Chair welcomed Ian Snowley, attending for the first time as a co-opted member representing the British Library



Strategic matters

1 Strategic issues

1.1 Collaborative strategic initiatives and developments

JISC

Noted

1.1.1 The final version of the LMS and related systems report including the briefing to libraries and the specific recommendations for JISC and SCONUL [Doc. 08/23](#)

1.1.2 That amongst the report's findings the following points were specially interesting

- the four major library management systems currently on the UK market were broadly comparable in product terms
- the continued usefulness of procurement decisions being made in the library rather than in a central institutional procurement office
- the lack of influence by individual libraries on system development

- the meetings with system vendors had been productive
- open source software remained a potential development
- specifications drawn up by libraries for their systems tend to concentrate on detail rather than 'big picture' aspects (such as innovative user-facing front ends in the style of Google)

1.1.3 In discussion about next steps the following points were raised

- institutions might wish to consider the risk of business failure by a system-supplier, and its impact on mission-critical processes like library loans and catalogues
- a project had been initiated by the British Library, JISC, and Research Libraries UK to revamp the COPAC/UK National Union Catalogue concept by 2012, envisaging a phased approach to a UK-wide service

Considered

1.1.4 A programme of work that SCONUL might develop with JISC, including development of existing work on LMS and related systems, and also collaboration with JISC's current communications programme

Agreed

1.1.5 That a joint SCONUL/JISC community engagement meeting arranged for 27 June (venue still to be decided) would provide an opportunity to discuss with JISC staff

- (a) the possibility of projects arising from findings of the LMS report, including perhaps an investigation into making library systems more user-friendly by imitating Google-type features (though the Digital Library Federation may have embarked on something similar)
- (b) alternatively, discussions direct with system vendors might produce 'quick wins' in terms of more popular features
- (c) the feasibility of a national procurement for a vertical search facility
- (d) opportunities for further collaborative work between SCONUL and JISC on public relations and communications, in order to broaden public understanding of modern academic and research libraries (building on the success of the 'Libraries unleashed' supplement in the *Guardian* of 22 April, in which SCONUL's communications officer Elliot Frankal had assisted Philip Pothen of JISC)

1.1.6 *Considered* an oral report on JISC's study on Web 2.0 features in library services

1.1.6.1 *Noted* that JISC had recently contacted SERO Consulting to carry out the study, and that no additional financial contribution from SCONUL appeared to be required

1.1.7 *Considered* an oral report on the JISC/SCONUL joint event on access management held on 7 March

- 1.1.7.1 *Noted* that the JISC-funded event, chaired in part by Chris West, had gone well and had been so oversubscribed that JISC had agreed to fund a repeat event on 13 May
- 1.1.5 *Considered* an oral report on the proposed horizon scan study
 - 1.1.5.1 *Noted* that the planning for the study was to resume now that Rachel Bruce had returned to JISC after a career break, and that JISC and SCONUL had agreed broadly on a series of events (aimed at senior library managers), each facilitated by a consultant, and producing a report written by a professional writer
 - 1.1.5.2 *Agreed* that SCONUL's current 'Top concerns' survey could influence topics for one or two events

UCISA

Considered

- 1.1.6 Progress on re-establishing a steering group to pursue further the aims of the HAERVI2 project
- 1.1.7 *Agreed* that in order to expedite re-establishment of a steering group SCONUL would consent to a chair from UCISA (if that was UCISA's preference) although the Board's own preference was for a 'champion' at Pro-Vice-Chancellor or similar level unconnected with either SCONUL or UCISA

HEFCE

- 1.1.8 *Considered* suggestions from Christine Fyfe for the proposed study of the management of e-resources
- 1.1.9 *Noted* Christine Fyfe's reminder that this suggestion arose from HEFCE's shared services agenda; and her report that she and Phil Sykes, having consulted, had decided that if SCONUL's proposition were to be UK-wide, it should come officially from the Joint RLUK/SCONUL Scholarly Communications Group; and that the proposition is closely related to the question of library management systems
- 1.1.10 *Agreed* that Christine Fyfe would consult Michael Breaks (Chair, Joint RLUK/SCONUL Scholarly Communications Group), with a view to possible future consultation with JISC; and that the experience of SCONUL's Irish members with IReL should be borne in mind.

Considered

- 1.1.11 Any implications of the Review of the HEFCE funding for research libraries (report by Professor Sir Ivor Crewe, March 2008)

1.1.11.1 *Noted* that there are no implications for SCONUL, though the future funding regime for the five designated libraries would be complicated, in some cases, by the recent disappearance from the institutions' accounting arrangements of an identifiable funding stream for the library support from HEFCE

1.1.12 An oral report on progress on the UK Research Reserve project (including a note that Jean Crawford has been appointed Project Manager), especially the nature of SCONUL's involvement

Noted

- The holding of a meeting on 19 February 2008 of an advocacy event which had been supportive of the UKRR concept
- That the Board of Universities UK had supported the bid to HEFCE for funding for Phase 2
- That Phase 2 embodies a five-year commitment on behalf member libraries and that a new subscription model would be examined by focus groups from May onwards
- That the Secretary should consult the UKRR programme manager about the likely extent of SCONUL's supporting role (which had been agreed in principle) and the level of funds budgeted for it

SCONUL's international agenda

1.1.13 *Considered* an oral report by Maxine Melling on the planned SCONUL study tour to Canada in 2008

1.1.13.1 *Noted* that seventeen SCONUL participants had confirmed and booked for the study tour, and that although CARL had changed the date of their Board meeting (which had originally figured in the study tour), it was likely that SCONUL and CARL members could nevertheless meet in Ottawa, where CARL's office is situated

1.1.14 *Noted* that Christine Fyfe and Liz Chapman had been discussing plans for a study tour to Scandinavia in 2009

1.1.14.1 *Agreed* outline plans for a five-day tour to Denmark and Sweden in May 2009, with possible visits to the Danish Electronic Library and the Royal Library in Copenhagen, followed by visits to libraries in Malmö, Lund and Uppsala

1.2 Internal SCONUL developments

SCONUL's Learning and Teaching Strategy

1.2.1 *Considered* initial work undertaken by Julia Munro on developing SCONUL's Learning and Teaching Strategy Doc. 08/24 (tabled)

- 1.2.2 *Agreed* the main messages of the paper
 - 1.2.2.1 That liaison in institutions with learning and teaching committees (and academic staff) would be important
 - 1.2.2.2 That case studies of successful contributions by libraries to the learning and teaching agenda would be helpful
 - 1.2.2.3 That Maxine Melling would join Julia Munro in carrying on the investigation
 - 1.2.2.4 That in principle SCONUL's contractors Susan Baker and Maria Hiscoe might be employed to draw up reports, in a uniform format, of successful case studies

Working Groups

Considered

- 1.2.3 The 'self-review' meeting of the CILIP/SCONUL Health Strategy Group in the context of its periodic review by the Board
 - 1.2.3.1 *Agreed* the strategy recommended by the Group, and that this outcome satisfied the Board's formal periodic review of the Group
- 1.2.4 The annual meeting between Officers and Group chairs prior to the SCONUL's annual strategy and planning meeting
 - 1.2.4.1 *Agreed* that pre-meeting discussions between the officers and the Chairs of Groups should take place by telephone conference

SCONUL's Top concerns survey

- 1.2.5 An oral report by Chris West on progress on the Top Concerns survey
- 1.2.6 *Noted* that the number of responses had increased by 20 over 2007, that the detailed analysis would be available in one month's time, and that the principle concern had been identified as space planning and buildings

Secretariat and communications

- 1.2.7 An oral report by the Vice-Chair on the progress of the staff salaries review
 - 1.2.7.1 *Noted* that work on staff job descriptions was well in hand and that the planned timetable should be met
- 1.2.8 An oral report from the Secretary on SCONUL's key media messages work

- 1.2.8.1 *Noted* that in February the Secretary had revised the proposed key media messages in the light of comments made at the Board's meeting in December 2007, and that he would circulate them shortly after consultation with the Chair

SCONUL website developments

- 1.2.9 An oral report from the Secretary on website developments
- 1.2.10 *Noted* that improvements to the website had been delayed by the Secretary's recent sick leave
- 1.2.11 *Agreed* that the Annual General Meeting should receive a report

Forthcoming meetings

Considered

- 1.2.12 The dates, venue, content and arrangements for the 2008 annual strategy and planning meeting
- 1.2.12.1 *Agreed* that the Secretary would arrange a date and venue according to participants' availability
- 1.2.13 Key issues for consideration at the 2008 AGM
- 1.2.13.1 *Agreed* that the AGM should be kept short and should include an informal report on the website and an overview of the year emphasising recent successes in public communications and in forming an alliance with JISC

2 Financial report

Accepted

- 2.1 The balance sheet and sub-accounts for 2007 audited by Baker Tilly Doc. 07/14 Rev.1
- 2.2 The draft report for 2007 prepared by the auditors Doc. 07/14 Rev.1
- 2.3 *Considered* the Board's forthcoming recommendation to the Annual General Meeting regarding subscriptions for 2009

Agreed

- 2.3.1 That the new subscription for performing arts institutions would be introduced at £150 (in accordance with minute 4.3 of the meeting of 11 December 2007) and that otherwise subscriptions would be increased by the Retail Price Index figure of 4.1%, in line with usual policy

2.3.2 That in view of the fairly high percentage increase, coupled with the healthy reserves at the close of 2007, an explanation should be given to the AGM that SCONUL will need this level of income in 2009 to mitigate the effect of the recent collapse of the financial markets, and to allow for increased rental costs for the SCONUL office at the end of the current lease in 2009.

2.2 *Considered* an oral report from the Treasurer on the potential cost implications of the proposal that national libraries, where allocated to a JISC band, should pay at the standard subscription rate for that level

Agreed

2.2.1 The Treasurer's proposal that SCONUL's subscriptions should distinguish between designated national libraries (e.g. libraries having no parent institution) and national libraries which are part of a larger institution (such as the Tate and Wellcome). Libraries in the latter category could be allocated a subscription according to their JSC band if one had been assigned to them.

2.2.2 That detailed proposals for subscriptions would be agreed by e-mail according to these principles.

3 **Executive Board**

Noted the resignation of Phil Sykes from the Board and that an election would take place at the Annual General Meeting in order to fill the resulting vacancy

4 **Company matters**

Noted

4.1 A paper from the Secretary on activities, developments and appointments [Doc. 08/18](#)

4.2 The draft *Annual review* for 2007 [Doc. 08/01](#)

5 **Appointments**

Noted

5.1 The appointment by CURL of Phil Sykes to the Joint CURL/SCONUL Scholarly Communications Group in place of Tom Graham who had resigned

5.2 The resignation of Charlotte Jarvis (University of Birmingham) from the Working Group on Performance Improvement and the Working Group on Quality Assurance

6 **Membership of SCONUL**

Noted

- 6.1 That Brendan Casey had been appointed Director Academic Services at University of Birmingham from 5 May
- 6.2 That Liz Harris had been appointed Interim Director at City University from 1 April
- 6.3 That David Perrow had been appointed Interim Librarian at the School of Oriental and African Studies from March
- 6.4 That Ann Murphy, Head of Learning Services, University of Greenwich, had been appointed SCONUL Representative
- 6.5 That Nigel Macartney, Director of Information Services, University of Ulster would retire on 30 April and that Elaine Urquhart, Assistant Director, would act as the SCONUL Representative
- 6.6 That Agnes Neligan, Librarian, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, retired on 4 April
- 6.7 That Ian Snowley, Head of Higher Education, The British Library, had been appointed SCONUL Representative
- 6.8 That Steven Phillips, Head of Learning Resources, University Campus Suffolk, had been appointed SCONUL Representative
- 6.9 Dartington College of Arts merged with University College Falmouth on 6 April



Conferences, etc.

7 **Meetings and conferences**

Noted

- 7.1 An oral report on the annual residential conference to be held in Edinburgh, 11-13 June 2008
- 7.2 That the Autumn conference would take place on 16 December at the British Library Conference Centre and that Robin Green (Warwick) had agreed to be on the planning team

7.3 An oral report on the annual residential conference to be held at Bournemouth, 10-12 June 2009, where a firm booking still remained to be made at one of two adjacent hotels

8 **Minutes**

Approved the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 12 February 2008
Doc 08/16 (previously circulated)

9 **Any other business**

The Vice-Chair thanked Anne Bell for her chairing of the Board for the past two years

10 **Dates of forthcoming meetings**

Noted that the next meeting of the Executive Board would be held at 10.30 on Tuesday 1 July 2008 at the SCONUL office