

SOCIETY OF COLLEGE NATIONAL & UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Working Group on Performance Improvement

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 January 2007

Present: Stephen Town (Chair), Toby Bainton, Susan Copeland, Claire Creaser, Philip Payne, Rupert Wood (Secretary), Jean Yeoh.

1. Apologies had been received from Angela Conyers.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2006 were accepted as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

3.1. Philip said that he was consulting with some libraries who hadn't returned statistics for 2004-05 so that the Statistics Sub-Group could think further about improving the rate of return. The two main reasons for non-return appeared to be: sensitivity to local 'political' issues; and the workload implications for very small institutions. It was agreed that the reminder letter would be reviewed in the light of this consultation. Philip would draft a letter for the Chair of the Working Group to send to those who hadn't returned statistics for 2005-06.

Action: PP

3.2. At its next meeting the Statistics Sub-Group would consider inviting a non-Working Group member to join the Sub-Group.

Action: PP

3.3. Stephen confirmed that he was hoping to develop links with CHELSA (Committee for Higher Education Librarians of South Africa) during the upcoming SCONUL Study Tour of South Africa.

3.4 Susan said she would keep the Group informed of any further developments in the proposed AHRC funded project to examine CRM methodology in UK HE libraries, following the call for volunteers to participate from Judith Broady-Preston of the Department of Information Studies, University of Wales Aberystwyth.

4. Membership of the Working Group

Stephen has circulated a call for new members in order to fill the two vacancies. The closing date for expressions of interest is Monday 22 January 2007 after which the Chair of the Group, with the Chair and Secretary of SCONUL, will select the new members.

Action: ST

5. The Working Group's Action Plan 2007

The latest Action Plan was confirmed and will be put up on the website. It will be a regular standing item at future meetings to act as a checklist.

Action: RW

A subsequent meeting will discuss the methodology and implications of the objective to interest Vice-Chancellors in the outcomes of the VAMP project; this will be added to a future agenda.

Action: RW

It was noted that the SCONUL Executive Board would probably allow any unspent funds from the Group's 2006 budget to be carried forward to the 2007 budget, which wasn't yet known. The Working Group had spent £998.59 on its meetings during 2006.

6. The Working Group's web pages

Stephen reported that Selena Lock, Cranfield University, had agreed to help the Group maintain and in due course develop the content of its web pages, including the pages which would be developed as part of the VAMP project.

7. Value and Impact Measurement Project (VAMP)

Stephen updated the Group on progress; the project was on schedule to complete its work at Easter 2007. Work was in progress or being commissioned on: institutional value; the impact of learning & teaching and research; staffing costs; the planned review of existing products and tools; the development of the VAMP web pages; and the development of a community of practice. A strategy for maintenance and sustainability of the resulting toolkit would also need to be developed.

Presentations had been made to the SCONUL Autumn Conference and positive feedback received. An invitation has been made to provide a presentation at the ARL (Association of Research Libraries) Members Meeting in May 2007, showing the international interest in this topic and the possible scope for collaboration in the future.

Attention was drawn to the JISC Value for Money report: www.jisc.ac.uk/valueformoney

8. The Publisher Deals Project

The Group had received a report from Angela on progress. The project aimed to assist libraries in the collection and analysis of e-journal usage statistics available through NESLi2 or similar publisher deals. Participating libraries would be able to judge the value of the big deals and share knowledge and skills in analysing them. The proposed outcomes were being met and the project would now consider how best to continue the work. Angela would be invited to clarify the funding implications of the project's next stage, which was to complete the toolkit and the accompanying guidance for users. Stephen will follow up any implications of the next stage for the Working Group's Action Plan.

Action: AC, ST

9. LIBQUAL+

Stephen reported that the 2006 SCONUL cohort had successfully completed and the final analysis of the results was in progress. One notable emerging result appeared to be continuing dissatisfaction among respondents on the 'Library as Place' element. There were 22 participants in the 2007 SCONUL Consortium, which meant that 62 SCONUL members had now been involved in the use of LIBQUAL+ since its introduction in 2003.

The EU TEMPUS project bid to support the development of LIBQUAL+ in Europe, mentioned at the last meeting, hadn't gone forward after all.

It was thought that because it was difficult to apply the LIBQUAL+ methodology to converged services this might be something of a barrier to participation.

10. The Statistical Return 2005-06

Claire reported that the response rate at the deadline (12 January 2007) was slightly better than last year. Reminders would now be sent to those who hadn't responded (see above at 3.1.) There had been 27 queries received about the Return from respondents but 11 of these had been about accessing the website and forgotten passwords. Claire reminded the Group that all queries from those submitting returns should be addressed to her in the first instance.

The Statistics Sub-Group would consider the following matters at their next meeting: an invitation to a non-WGPI member to join the Sub-Group; whether the next Return should take account of information skills sessions delivered via a VLE; issues about federated searching in connection with the next Return; whether a training event might be organised for those compiling the returns; and whether an email discussion list could be set up for those working on the returns.

11. Any other business

Claire reported on a project proposal from the Department of Information Science, Loughborough University, and LISU on the 'effective use of evidence in strategic management of service delivery in HE libraries.' A bid for funding for this project on evidence based practice would be made to the HEFCE Leadership, Governance and Management Fund.

The Working Group endorsed the aims of the proposed project, which related closely to its own work. It would be prepared to support it by acting as an advisory body; contributing if required to the summative review; and helping to sustain the project outcomes. A member of WGPI might also join the project's management team. The SCONUL Secretary would be invited to send a letter of support.

Action: ST, TB

It was noted that Evidence Base had recently completed a survey of HE libraries on a similar theme and the results would be available soon.

Claire said she would keep the Group informed of the progress of the proposal.

12. Dates of future meetings

3 May 2007, 12noon for 12.30 at SCONUL Headquarters

6 September 2007, 12noon for 12.30 at SCONUL Headquarters