

SOCIETY OF COLLEGE NATIONAL & UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Working Group on Performance Improvement

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 March 2008

Present: Stephen Town (Chair), Susan Copeland, Claire Creaser, Philip Payne, Tracey Stanley, Rupert Wood (Secretary), Jean Yeoh

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Toby Bainton, Angela Conyers and Charlotte Jarvis.

The Group will write to Toby to wish him a speedy recovery from his illness.

Charlotte has decided to resign from the Group as she is moving to a new job at Birmingham University which is outside the LIS sector. The Group wished to thank Charlotte for her work as a member of the WGPI. Stephen will confer with the Chair of SCONUL about procedures for recruiting a new member and then set the process in train.

Action: ST

It was agreed that whether or not a new member was recruited from the HE College sector there was a need to promote the activities of the WGPI to colleagues in the College sector.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2007 were accepted as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

3.1. Tracey will take up the matter of considering the question on libraries in the National Student Survey (in conjunction with the SCONUL Quality Assurance Working Group) with a view to gathering evidence about the question's validity and possibly trying to influence its wording.

Action: TS

3.2. The Group is interested in some PhD work underway on 'quality maturity' and will keep a watching brief on its progress.

3.3. Claire reported that the bid to HEFCE from Loughborough and BCU for a project researching evidence based management in HE libraries had not been successful. Alternative funding would now be sought. The Working Group strongly supports the project proposal.

3.4. The next meeting of the Sub-Group on Statistics in May 2008 will consider the issue of whether respondents to the statistical return may need more guidance on issues of shared space in library buildings.

3.5. Claire has drafted proposals for two adjustments to the Statistics on the Web service, firstly on the scaling of the chart outputs, and secondly on incorporating a report which would compare an institution's data with the average of sector groups. The proposals will now be costed to see if

implementation is possible. It was noted that some of the paler colours on the chart outputs didn't reproduce clearly, and Claire will investigate the possibility of changes here too.

Action: CC

3.6. The updating of the e-measures table, which was linked to from the notes to the Statistical Return, was thought to be in progress.

Action: AC

3.7. Links to the presentations from the training sessions held for those filling in the Statistical Return had been made from the Performance Portal. It was thought work was still needed on the authorities and permissions applied to the Performance Portal to improve accessibility, and to improve access generally to the SCONUL Statistics.

Action: ST

3.8. A discussion list for those filling in the statistical return is being established. Philip and Jean will be the list owners.

Action: PP

3.9. Providing content on ITIL (The Information Technology Infrastructure Library) would be included in the Performance Portal work plan.

Action: ST

3.10. Stephen reported that the costings of the 2008 Action Plan had been sent to the Executive Board. The Executive Board had agreed to carry forward the unexpended funds from 2007 in order to develop the Performance Portal's content. He was still seeking volunteers from WGPI members to encourage the uploading of content and to act as editors.

3.11. Angela is evaluating the JISC Academic Database Assessment Tool for possible inclusion in the Performance Portal's resource list.

Action: AC

3.12. Stephen will check with Toby in due course about progress in making the HELMS (*Higher Education Library Management Statistics*) report available via the web pages.

Action: ST / TB

3.13. A short summary of the WGPI's work in 2007 had been submitted to the SCONUL *Annual Review*.

3.14. Rupert reported that Jackie Skinner, Library Web Manager at University of Reading Library, had kindly agreed to handle the uploading of the Working Group's documents to the SCONUL web pages.

4. SCONUL Statistics

4a. The 2006/07 return

There had been 37 enquiries from respondents asking for clarification, etc. Claire reported that reminders were now being sent to those who hadn't yet submitted a return for 2006/07. She will draft a circular email for the Chair to send to some non-respondents from smaller institutions. Claire will also circulate a list of non-respondents to Working Group members so that personal approaches can be made where appropriate.

Action: CC / ST

4b. Scope for alignment with ARL (Association of Research Libraries, US) statistics

It was agreed that this issue, raised in recent correspondence, was worth investigating further; however the Working Group had serious concerns about the impact on trend analysis in the UK statistics if the definitions were to be changed to enable alignment with the US statistics. Scoping would be necessary before a commitment to a feasibility study could be made. The Statistics Sub-Group and Susan would consider this further.

Action: PP

In due course Stephen would canvass opinion from SCONUL members on whether the SCONUL statistics should be freely available on the web, which has been suggested as a means of developing alignment with the ARL statistics. Meanwhile Stephen would keep Martha Kyrillidou (the Director of ARL Statistics and Service Quality Programs) informed of developments.

5. The Performance Portal

5.1. Stephen circulated a report on the latest developments. [Statistics](#) of the Performance Portal's use were now available. They showed that so far there had been 1,000 visits to the Portal from 500 visitors. This seemed an encouraging start, although it was noted that the majority of visits had been from the UK. Eventually feedback would be available on what the Portal is being used for, which would help with evaluating and developing it.

5.2. A pro-active approach was needed in order to encourage further uploading of content. The work to provide content on Value should be available during Summer 2008. Other future developments might include a Quality Assurance tab and a Bibliography section. Philip reported that the M25 Quality Group had discussed space measurement issues recently and this interest might generate some interesting and useful content for the Portal in due course.

It was agreed that all members of the Working Group would keep a watch out for potentially useful content to be included, which might otherwise 'disappear' as such work could often be rather randomly encountered. Stephen was trying to find more content on KPIs at the moment.

6. The Publisher Deals Project

Angela's [report](#) on the Evidence Base Publisher Deals Project was noted. Stephen would discuss with Angela the possibility of the Project providing content for the Performance Portal.

Action: ST

7. ARL collaboration

7a. LibQUAL+

Stephen circulated a report. There were nineteen institutions participating in the 2008 SCONUL LibQual+ consortium, including seven new ones. There were some other UK participants too within the European Business Schools Consortium and from other sectors who aren't in the SCONUL consortium. Four institutions from France were now participating. It was planned to organise a workshop to analyse and interpret the results.

7b. ARL Sustainable & Practical Assessment Program

Stephen had mailed the SCONUL list about the Program, which was looking at assessment and performance measurement, and there had been some interest expressed in participation. A visit from the Program to the UK was planned for June 2008.

8. The Action Plan 2008

It was noted that the objective to support an evidence based approach to library management had been added to the Plan, although there was currently no specific deliverable envisaged. The possibility of gathering data via a consultation on which HE institutions are engaged with evidence based management would be considered further.

The objective to consider and develop plans for a Joint Evaluation Conference with ARL and CARL will be carried forward to a future date following the postponement of the proposed meeting in Montreal to avoid a clash with the IFLA Statistics meeting.

9. Any other business

None.

10. Dates of future meetings

22 May 2008 (12noon for 12.30 at SCONUL Headquarters)

18 September 2008 (12noon for 12.30 at SCONUL Headquarters)