

# **SOCIETY OF COLLEGE NATIONAL & UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

## **Working Group on Performance Improvement**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 May 2008**

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

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Angela Conyers.

#### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2008 were accepted as a correct record.

#### **3. Matters arising from the Minutes**

3.1. The process for recruiting a new member of the Working Group will be set in train. As a call for expressions of interest had been made fairly recently a new one wasn't thought to be needed.

3.2. Pat Barclay, University of Westminster, will be invited to the next meeting in order to discuss the proposed revisions to the e-measures table.

3.3. A message had been sent to the SCONUL e-mail list about the questions on learning resources in the National Students Survey in order to gather evidence about their validity and to ask for opinions as to whether SCONUL should adopt a position. Tracey will report on responses to the next meeting.

##### **Action: TS**

3.4. Claire had received an estimate for the changes proposed at the last meeting to the Statistics on the Web service. The costs were within budget. Toby will now arrange for the work to be commissioned.

##### **Action: TB**

3.5. Stephen reported that the plan for developing the Performance Portal included the points mentioned at the last meeting: authorities and permissions; access generally to the SCONUL statistics; and new content on ITIL (The Information Technology Infrastructure Library).

3.6. The lis-sconul-stats list has now been set up for those filling in and otherwise concerned with the statistical return.

3.7. Angela has evaluated the JISC Academic Database Assessment Tool and recommends that this is now included in the Performance Portal's resource list.

##### **Action: ST**

3.8. Toby will take forward the proposal to make the HELMS (*UK Higher Education Library Management Statistics*) report available via the web pages.

##### **Action: TB**

3.9. Philip reported that the issue of whether there was scope for alignment between SCONUL and ARL statistics had been discussed by the Sub-Group on Statistics, who thought that alignment would involve a large mapping job between the two sets, since each was fulfilling different needs and there wasn't a lot of overlap in what was being collected; the value of such work was therefore questionable. Generally speaking better international alignment to achieve, for example, meaningful benchmarking would require a more co-ordinated set of international definitions than was currently available. It was noted that IFLA was working to achieve more consistent definitions in this respect. Stephen reported that he had invited John McColl (OCLC Program and Research), Claire and other members of the WGPI, and possibly a representative from IFLA, to meet with Martha Kyrillidou and other ARL members on 24 June 2008 to discuss this issue further.

3.10. Stephen has still to discuss with Angela the possibility of the Publisher Deals Project providing content for the Performance Portal.

**Action: ST**

#### **4. SCONUL Statistics**

##### **4a. The 2006/07 return**

Claire had circulated the draft SCONUL Statistics 2006/07 to the Working Group and welcomed comments or corrections. There had been an 85% response rate. It was noted that the response rate for HE Colleges had declined to 67% this time. The Statistics and the Trend Analysis were on target for publication in June or July. Claire said that she would update the FAQs.

##### **4b. The Statistics Sub-Group**

Philip reported on the meeting held on 22 May 2008.

4b.1. Comments will be sought from the email discussion list on a proposal to include multimedia in the acquisitions and cataloguing statistics.

4b.2. Comments would also be sought from the list about a proposal to measure library space use more effectively. It might be useful, for example, to attempt a measure of space used for printed materials and that for user work areas, and so on. Currently there were problems in disaggregating space used for various purposes, especially when the space was under the aegis of a library but wasn't being used for traditional library purposes.

4b.3. Feedback on a proposal to introduce a new category for enquiries - adding IT related enquiries - will also be sought from the list.

4b.4. It was proposed to refine the question on study space to reflect the number of user spaces with PCs and those with data point connectivity; a measure of laptops for loan would also be introduced.

4b.5. The Sub-Group thought, in connection with the e-measures definition table, that questions on e-journals (where unique titles accessed through databases weren't being counted) might not be reflecting what users of the statistics required. Further consultation will take place on this issue so that changes, if required, could be introduced for the 2008/09 return.

4b.6. The issue had been raised as to whether the purpose and context of the SCONUL Statistics needed to be reviewed so that in a rapidly changing environment they can continue to meet the needs of the LIS community and serve as effective advocacy tools. It was thought that the possible survey on assessment and performance measurement approaches in UK academic libraries (based on the ARL Spec Kit 303 survey, 2007) would be one way forward in helping to clarify these important issues (see below at 6b). A wider trends analysis in consultation with heads of services would also be needed. The Sub-Group will develop a short form for such a consultation.

**Action: PP**

Generally, it was agreed that awareness of the SCONUL Statistics needs to be raised further so that their advocacy role can be as effective as possible.

4b.7. Claire reported that the workshops for those filling in the return had been very well received and more would be organised, probably in November 2008 and January 2009.

**5. The Performance Portal**

Stephen reported that it was being used at a steady rate. Additional content had been received and the work developing content on Value would be added soon. A workshop session would be delivered at the SCONUL Conference in June to seek ideas for new developments, for further content, and to raise the Portal's profile. A paper on the Portal has been accepted for the Library Assessment Conference 2008 in Seattle in August.

Toby will arrange for regular updating on the Portal in the SCONUL Monthly Newsletter.

**Action: TB**

Tracy will be submitting an article on the Portal to SCONUL Focus

**Action: TS**

**6. ARL collaboration**

**6a. LibQUAL+**

Stephen reported that a meeting on the results of the 2008 LibQUAL+ consortium will be held in June 2008.

ARL have requested that joint support with SCONUL be explored for the future development of LibQUAL+. It was agreed that a budget bid should be made to the SCONUL Executive Board for this.

**6b. ARL Sustainable & Practical Assessment Program**

One institution (University of York) will be engaging with the programme this year. A survey of assessment and performance measurement approaches in UK academic libraries (based on the ARL Spec Kit 303 survey, 2007) is being considered; there would be cross-national benefits from the results. Stephen will start to plan the survey with the aim of publishing results in late 2008 or early 2009.

**Action: ST**

**7. Consultation on the student experience (JM Consulting) for HEFCE**

Toby reported that SCONUL had been asked to contribute to a report from JM Consulting being prepared on HE student teaching and learning for the Government's spending review. LISU will be providing data. The Group brainstormed issues raised by the consultation, which was asking about changes in HE Libraries since the 1990s and their resourcing.

**8. The Action Plan 2008**

It was agreed that the proposed survey on assessment and performance measurement (see 6b above) and the survey on the SCONUL Statistics (see 4b above) should be added to the Action Plan.

Results should help advance the Working Group's understanding of how evidence based practice was developing in the sector, and help to encourage it.

**9. Any other business**

None.

**10. Dates of future meetings**

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

15 January 2009 (12noon for 12.30 at SCONUL Headquarters)

21 May 2009 (12noon for 12.30 at SCONUL Headquarters)