
Report on the SCONUL Annual General Meeting, 6 April 2005



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This report focuses on the strategic outcomes following discussions at the AGM. A full report of all proceedings will be made available to members in due course.

The two key strategic issues that members were asked to address at the 2005 AGM were:-

- (a) what type of organisation members want SCONUL, on their behalf, to be in future
- (b) what strategic opportunities members wished SCONUL to undertake on their behalf in order to address feedback from various consultation exercises undertaken since the summer of 2004

Members were presented with proposals for a new SCONUL strategic framework and development programme, including an holistic review of SCONUL activities and strategy. The rationale being to:-

- Support SCONUL to become a more strategic organisation and ensure its aims of influencing and leading are given a sound foundation
- Enable a step change increase in SCONUL's activity levels so as to support enhanced delivery of its strategic agenda and to increase the value for money for members
- Respond to members' comments about SCONUL's visibility, impact and value for money and so bring together activities and plans which are currently disparate in order to improve their accessibility & visibility to members,
- Respond to Advisory Committee Chair concerns about capacity and sustainability issues associated with the work of the groups

Members at the 2005 AGM **considered a number of recommendations for action** which covered the following and included some far-reaching decisions:

- 1 A raft of papers were discussed in relation to **financial matters**:
 - 1.1. It was confirmed that a small group was being set up by the Executive Board (EB) to review SCONUL's **risk assessment and risk management arrangements**. Following the meeting two Representatives were asked to join that group.
 - 1.2. It was agreed that SCONUL **move to a new hybrid financial strategy** (Doc.05/53), predicated upon increasing income levels and simultaneously reducing certain designated areas of expenditure. The rationale for this is to enable SCONUL to move beyond the current financial constraints to support enhanced delivery of a strategic agenda.

Broadly, the approved outcomes of the new financial strategy fall into 4 groups:

- 1.2.1 Implementation of a **one-off tariff to kick-start development of a strategic fund** given that 2005 subscription levels have already been set. This will raise approximately £23,000 on current membership levels. The invoices will be sent out in the near future for **£150 for current standard rate members and £50 for other members**.

Members are again invited to comment on the proposed new investment and expenditure priorities for use of the strategic fund to support all members and to suggest any additional projects they would like considered by the Executive Board. Such priorities for deploying any additional income raised will need to be considered carefully, not least because it will only be possible to deliver on a limited number of proposals

- Commission work to develop a **toolkit, based upon sound methodologies, to enable members to demonstrate to their institutions the value for money and impact provided by library services**. This could potentially, for instance, assist members when submitting new resource bids or when struggling to maintain existing information resource portfolios given budgetary constraints.)

Such proposals could be internal to SCONUL or could be developed in conjunction with other parties

- Commission a **study on future professional hybrid skills requirements and anticipated job design issues and future working models** (including case study research from across the sector illustrating specifically the roles of library and information staff in e-learning (feeding into the HEFCE e-learning strategy actions and the work of the Higher Education Academy))
- Fund work to **integrate existing co-operative access schemes within an overarching managerial framework**
- Invest in the further **development and implementation of a marketing and communications strategy** to improve SCONUL's visibility and branding and to ensure members are well informed of activities being undertaken on their behalf, thereby reinforcing membership benefits including investment in the SCONUL **website** to make it more user friendly and to provide direct support for the development of the groups' websites. This could also include a means to make improvements to the **buildings directory**

1.2.2 **developing actions to increase income from other sources** to help support the recommended increase in SCONUL activity, including:

- introduction of a **new corporate membership category**, with a target of 10 members in 2005 rising by an additional 15 members for 2006. The proposed corporate membership fee of £1500 was passed and it is hoped this will be attractive to potential corporate members in return for the identified benefits.
- developing a **sponsorship strategy** with an initial target for 2005 of £20,000 rising to £30,000 in 2006.
- **development of a strategy for conference exhibitions**
- recovering a **higher rate of contribution towards the full costs of staging events** so that in future any event charges reflect more closely the real

costs of the Secretariat's input by including a 20% overhead

- proactive **targeting of appropriate external funding opportunities** to support strategic developments. No target for such income is proposed given that opportunities may vary considerably from year to year on an unpredictable basis.

It is difficult to identify potential maximum income from these sources and clearly figures cannot be included at this stage. But it is clear that without extra income any strategic developments identified cannot be delivered.

1.2.3 **reviewing current or future opportunities for reducing central costs** including

- using most cost effective methods of holding group meetings provided group numbers are manageable and the agenda appropriate.
- a review of modus operandi and costs of EB meetings by the end of 2005.

1.2.4 **moving to a transparent, multi-year business planning process** so that members are informed of proposed plans and their anticipated cost. In future financial reports to both the Executive Board and members will include: dis-aggregated data on income raised from the various membership categories; data on annual sponsorship targets and sponsorship income raised; data on income secured from external funding sources

1.3 **In 2006 SCONUL will introduce a moderated variable subscription model based on JISC bandings (as indicated in section 5.2 of Doc. 05/52)**, in order to provide a fairer model that reflects the wide variance in institutional income across the SCONUL membership. EB has been asked to **integrate the Irish university members on the basis of institutional income** and to continue discussions with the **national libraries on how best to assimilate them into the new model**. There will be a formal review of the new subscription model in 2010.

1.4 Members also elected Alun Jenkins (Cardiff University), as SCONUL's new Honorary **Treasurer**

2 Members approved the proposed **realignment of current committees and groups based on introduction of a revised portfolio of fixed Working Groups and shorter life Task and Finish Groups reporting to the EB** (Doc.05/54), and which are designed to lead on the following high visibility areas of work.

- Access
- Advocacy and lobbying
- Communication and marketing
- E-Learning
- Fundraising and sponsorship
- Health strategy
- HR issues
- Information Literacy
- Performance improvement
- Quality assurance
- Scholarly communications
- Space planning

This will be underpinned by a clear shift to EB owning operational planning and by the **introduction of an annual planning/strategy meeting**, attended by group officers and EB members, in order both to improve coordination between the Board and the groups and to provide an input for strategic priorities (informed by 'top concerns' surveys, etc.).

New terms of reference for every group will be publicized as part of an updated Operational Plan which builds on former success and which will outline for members the key actions that SCONUL might undertake over the coming short term period in these high visibility activities. (NOTE: Some of this is still subject to resource availability, especially where proposed work would include commissioning).

In addition Members agreed to:

2.1 **move the locus of many steady state activities within the Secretariat** (such as awards, ongoing staff development events, buildings events etc), supported as and when needed by small sub-panels (1 or 2 people) who would be asked to initiate and direct activities.

2.2 **implement recommendations arising from the review of current group procedures** designed to ensure transparency, clarify processes (e.g. on becoming a member of a group, membership tenure etc.) and support increased effectiveness of all groups.

2.3 move onto the **next stage of strategic review of structures, which will cover the review of the 3 continuing groups** (Health Strategy; Communication and Marketing and Joint Scholarly Communications) which are outside the current review, **EB itself and the Secretariat** in order to improve their fit against strategy, strategy development and implementation by evaluating them against the question 'how does this group/body demonstrate strategic fit' and by setting them in context against other EB activity and the vision, mission and role already articulated by SCONUL.

2.4 move to a transparent, multi-year **business planning process** and use the opportunities presented by the financial review to improve financial support to support strategic activities undertaken by EB and groups so that members are informed of proposed plans and their anticipated cost.

3 **A new look annual review for 2004** was received and will now be finalised for publication. It is intended to send this to Representatives and to Vice-Chancellors (or equivalent) of Member Institutions and to other stakeholder bodies in the near future.

4 **Business matters:**

A number of **changes to SCONUL's Articles of Association and Rules for the conduct of business** were approved to support the above changes

5 **Future meetings of SCONUL**

5.1 **The Autumn Conference in 2005 will be a one day meeting to be held on 29 November 2005 at the British Library Conference Centre in London**

5.2 **The 2006 AGM and Conference will be held on 21—23 June 2006 in Newcastle** under the auspices of the University of Northumbria and the University of Newcastle.