

**Minutes of the Student Library Liaison Group Meeting**  
**28 November 2007**

Present: Cathryn Gallacher (chair), Joy El Dieb, Emma Feggetter, Peter King, Chris Prior, Mike Wall, Tobin Webb

Apologies: Alison Alden, Jennifer Scherr

1. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be correct.

Item 1 – JED reported that the format of induction events was currently under consideration. She will contact the Library in the case of direct input from library staff being needed.

2. Issues to be raised by student representatives

Issues to be raised were already included in the agenda.

3. Introduction to the Library for new members of the group

CG welcomed the new members of the group. PK gave a brief overview of the Library and its funding.

4. Library opening hours

CG introduced this item, with reference to the findings of the 2006/07 Student Survey. She said that the Library's management welcomed the role the survey has played in confirming opening hours as an important issue for students. The branch libraries' variable opening patterns should be considered in the light of the dispersed nature of the service, with some branches being situated in departmental buildings. This should be compared with the smaller number of library service points in many universities. Where possible the Library is negotiating with academic departments to improve opening hours cut short by building closure times (the Geography Library is an example).

PK said that pressure on resources requires detailed information to assist in identifying priorities.

TW reported that he had recently taken a paper to the Student Affairs Committee, arguing that the issue of the Library is at the forefront of students' concerns. He agreed that more detailed information is important, and proposed a follow up to the 2006/07 survey, with the aim of breaking down users' needs by mode and level of study, by main branch library used, and the types of study space, levels of service and range of hours they require. It might be possible to extract some of this information from the 2006/07 survey.

**Actions:** TW to investigate 2006/07 survey data in order to link student preferences to particular branch libraries.

TW to refer any future survey questions to Library managers.

JED/EF/TW all stressed the importance of the availability of study space for longer periods, in particular around exam times and on weekends for part-time students. Postgraduates would like longer opening in vacations for writing up.

EF said that in some libraries the most highly sought after books are unavailable in non-service opening hours because they are kept in closed areas. She suggested that copies of key texts for a wide range of subjects might be made available in a single library with extended opening, thereby reducing the need for multiple branches to be open.

PK/MW said that this was done in some universities, but that there were cost implications in buying duplicate materials.

CG reported that the Library is investigating new methods of delivering information to students which might not require physical access to the Library, such as 'electronic study pack' services. These provide a tailored set of readings for specific courses via the web. Copyright costs and other practicalities will be assessed in a pilot in 2008. Technological developments in eBooks technology may offer similar benefits: the Library will monitor these.

CG stated that the planned closure of the Continuing Education Library would offer a limited amount of centralisation of resources, which would be used to support student needs.

#### 5. National Student Survey (NSS)

CG introduced this item by noting that the most highly rated issue among UoB students was a shortage of books in some subject areas. She said that this perception needed to be examined in more detail in order to seek solutions, including more input from teaching staff and feedback from students. The Library tracks the most heavily used books and modifies loan periods based on this information.

TW suggested that an enhanced role for student Course Representatives would improve student feedback. CG and PK welcomed the idea of more contact with student representatives. TW also said that he would be seeking a meeting with an NSS analyst to interrogate the UoB data more thoroughly.

**Actions:** TW to discuss with Course Representatives methods of improving contact with the Library in order to gather information about individual items or specific subject areas where resources are not available.

TW to report back on progress with NSS analyst, and invite the Library to attend a meeting on the NSS, if such is possible.

#### 6. Refurbishment plans

MW gave an overview of development plans across the branch libraries. Bearing in mind the long-term goal of a 'Nucleus' library, shorter term measures are being taken to make improvements to the branches. Part of this is the development of a design template to inform the look and feel of developments across the service.

Projects are under way to improve the Arts & Social Sciences and Medical Libraries. The target for completion is the start of academic year 2008/09. Refurbishment work, scheduled for summer 2008, will inevitably cause disruption and the Library will seek to minimise this. TW suggested that there might be a way of opening areas of the Students Union as quiet study zones during the summer period.

MW said that the input of students in planning and evaluating development proposals is essential. TW and EF agreed that students need to be involved, and suggested that Course Representatives might be willing to participate.

**Action:** MW will contact TW about obtaining a list of representatives.

#### 7. Library stock: retention and disposal

Following a report in the Times Higher Education Supplement about university libraries throwing away millions of books, PK explained that at Bristol the Library performs a continuous housekeeping task of relegating and disposing of unwanted stock in order to make room for new materials.

In the last academic year the Library acquired 27,000 new books and disposed of 10,000. Books that are disposed of are offered in sales to students, to other libraries, shipped to other countries or sold to specialist book dealers to provide a small amount of income to the Library.

TW mentioned that the Students Union was considering establishing a second hand bookshop. PK said that the Library would be happy to place old stock there if it was suitable.

#### 8. AOB

TW asked for some clarification on the recent rise in Inter-Library Loan (ILL) charges. PK explained that the rise in cost was forced upon the Library by price rises from the principal ILLs supplier, the British Library.

TW asked whether student representation at the Student Library Liaison Group might be increased by inviting Course Representatives. The group agreed that this would be a positive step.

**Action:** TW to discuss with Course Representatives

TW reported that the Students Union would be launching a campaign before Christmas to raise students' concerns about the Library with the University's management. This would take the form of pieces in Epigram and a Facebook petition addressed to the Vice-Chancellor.