

SCONUL Strategy 2016 – 19

Collaborating for Change



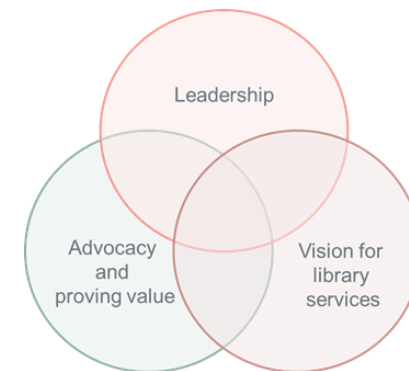
Collaborating for Change

Liz Jolly, SCONUL Chair and Director of Library and Information Services at Teesside University

SCONUL's core strength is its collaborative approach to the challenges we face. This is true for the development and delivery of shared services; for sharing intelligence and best practice; and for putting forward our collective view on the policy changes, project and programmes that members require. It is the fact that the SCONUL membership includes such a wide spectrum of institutions that allows us to speak with authority on the needs and views of our community as a whole. Acting together allows us to learn from each other and to develop a common understanding of the needs of the sector.

SCONUL's Executive Board and members of its four Strategy Groups met together in March 2015 to discuss the development of SCONUL's new strategy, informed by a survey of members which identified the most significant leadership and management issues facing institutions and the library community in general over the coming three years. The main focus of the discussion was three closely inter-related, cross-cutting

themes which underpin many of the individual challenges facing member representatives – leadership support and development; advocacy and demonstrating value; and a clear vision for library services both at institutional and national level.



This work has identified a set of six core projects and programmes, and this document sets out those programmes. This is a three-year strategy, however, it has been drawn up with a much longer-term time frame in mind, with the aim of putting in place the changes required now to support members over the coming decade and beyond.

SCONUL Strategy 2016 – 2019

The process of transformation of our libraries is an on-going one, and members see an important role for SCONUL in drawing together intelligence and sharing best practice on service redesign, creating a **vision for the development of the academic library and librarian**.

Our members want to ensure that they are equipped fully to lead through that process of change and we will be developing a **leadership capacity building** programme, and a second programme on **workforce planning** to ensure that member institutions have the staff skills that will be required.

Rethinking the way that we deliver for our users will be vital given that budgetary constraints are likely to remain a very important factor influencing service planning and design. SCONUL will continue to look at how and where shared services might enable member institutions to deploy their resources most effectively. Describing how those above-campus services can be brought together under the rubric of a **national digital library** for UK higher education and being vocal in shaping the debates informing the **cost of content** will be important elements of our **advocacy work**. This will be a strand of the strategy which underpins and support all of the work we do as an organisation.

Of course, we will continue to provide its core services which I know are very highly valued by SCONUL members, including the Access Scheme, the SCONUL statistics, the Library Design Awards and our programme of events.

I look forward to working with the whole SCONUL community to deliver our Strategy for the next three years. I urge all member representatives to consider how and where you are best placed to contribute.



Liz Jolly

Our mission

SCONUL promotes awareness of the role of academic libraries in supporting research excellence and student achievement and employability. It represents the views and interests of academic libraries to government, regulators and other stakeholders. It helps academic libraries collaborate to deliver services efficiently, including through shared services, and to share knowledge and best practice.

Programmes

1. Vision for the development of the academic library and librarian

Scope

This programme of work aims to explore and shape how the key functions and form of the academic library will be transformed over the next decade, and by implication, describe the modern academic library. This will draw on current work being undertaken internationally. We will describe the skills and attributes library leaders will require to deliver and to support the modern academic library.

Outputs under consideration include a suite of reports looking at different aspects of the library function. Briefing materials aimed at FDs, PVCs and VCs would then be produced from the same source material.

Objectives

The Transformation Strategy Group will support members in planning their own service development, produce an advocacy toolkit for use at institutional level and nationally, and inform the development of shared services and transformational projects in partnership with other bodies.

2. A national digital library for UK Higher Education

Scope

Under this programme, SCONUL will develop a shared vision for the future of above-campus services for the UK HE library sector. The aim is not to produce a blue print or specification for a monolithic service but to produce a vision for the practical development of shared library services. Some initial work has already been undertaken in this area. Initial outputs are likely to be:

1. Research into the development of national or regional digital libraries internationally
2. A high-level briefing on the concept to be shared with partners, informed by their input.

Objectives

The Collaboration Strategy Group will provide a vision of how above-campus services should develop over the next decade. This is likely to include data and discovery services; content purchasing and timely content delivery. The group will also inform the development of shared services in partnership with other bodies and inform the development of a national vision for individual academic library services.

3. Programme of leadership capacity building across the sector

Scope

This programme will focus on building collective and individual leadership capacity across the SCONUL membership. This will be a broad-ranging programme with a number of strands, which may include:

- Identifying sources of leadership development training for the next generation of library leaders.
- Providing support for deputy directors groups and new directors groups.
- Setting up a mentoring network for new directors.
- Assessing skills requirements amongst heads of service, particularly in advocacy, benchmarking and value and impact.
- Developing action learning sets in the areas identified above.
- Providing additional mechanisms for the sharing of good practice.

This work will be completed as an 18-month project, beginning in January 2016.

Objectives

A task and finish group on leadership capacity building will work to ensure directors have the skills and attributes they require to deliver and to support the modern academic library. They will set up formal and semi-formal structures for mutual support for directors to share information and expertise, and see ways to contribute to the development of leaders in the academic library sector, providing access to appropriate skills training and capacity building for heads of service and their teams.

4. Strategic workforce planning for the sector

Scope

This programme will identify the future workforce requirements of member libraries. This will be heavily informed by the work above on the future of the academic library, since it will look at the workforce implications of the changes described. Included in this work will be the production of advocacy materials in relation to (a) funding for staff from institutions and (b) library schools and training providers.

This project will start in September 2017.

Objectives

A task and finish group on strategic workforce planning will be set-up to support members in their own workforce planning, produce an advocacy tool for use at institutional level and nationally and to produce an advocacy tool for use with library schools and training providers to specify the needs of libraries as employers.

5. Campaign on the cost of content

Scope

The aim of this programme is to maximise access to content at the lowest possible cost. The campaign will look beyond the level of individual negotiations with publishers, and will seek the development of a level playing field in negotiating power, particularly in light of open access in the UK and the growing cost of e-books. Potential areas for work include:

1. Projections of the cost of content over the coming decade(s)
2. Identifying models for purchasing content which are financially sustainable long-term, including evaluation of national licenses
3. Identifying calls to action from institutions and academics to deliver the outcomes identified in (2)
4. Working with government(s), funding councils, research funders and other partners to agree further system changes to manage the cost of content long-term
5. Engaging with international initiatives.

Establishing effective partnerships and collective responsibility for solutions will be critical to success.

Objectives

The Content Strategy Group will work to help shape the future of publisher deals on the cost of journals and the development of the market for e-books, and in license conditions. The group will position the cost of content as a challenge for institutions and governments, as well as for libraries, and inform and educate senior institutional leaders about the cost of content, and to enlist them in activities which will have a positive impact on the scholarly communications market.

6. Advocacy programme, based on programmes above

Scope

Work under this programme will take place across the organisation to deliver a suite of advocacy materials for use by SCONUL and peer organisations nationally, and directors locally, based on the projects and programme above. This will be supported by an active campaign by SCONUL with sector bodies and governments.

Objectives

Though all those involved with delivering the above programmes will have a responsibility in delivering this strand of work, the Communications Advisory Group will work especially to support the organisation in improving understanding of the value of the library's contribution to institutional mission and performance, particularly among VCs, PVCs and FDs. The aim is to improve understanding of the external challenges and opportunities facing academic libraries and librarians among VCs, PVCs and FDs, and position librarians as strategic contributors to institutional missions.

Delivering the strategy

The Strategy Groups will be the driving force in delivering the new strategy and we will retain our existing organisational structure with some minor modifications.

The key functions of the Strategy Groups will remain as follows:

- representing member views across a range of policy and practice working groups and committees, ensuring that the voice of academic libraries is heard
- updating members on significant developments via policy briefings and announcements
- engaging with SCONUL's strategic partners on issues of mutual interest, as well as working with them on specific projects
- commissioning projects and research on behalf of members which will include the majority of the programmes and projects identified above
- responding to government and EU consultations on behalf of members.

A Strategy Group lead for each programme has been identified in the organisation chart at the end of this document.

SCONUL's core services

SCONUL remains committed to supporting our members through our established services.

The SCONUL statistics

Production of statistics on library activities is a core SCONUL service, allowing members to benchmark against their peers and providing a detailed picture of library activity across in the UK and Ireland. They are used for planning, research and advocacy purposes by a wide range of stakeholders.

The SCONUL Access Scheme

The Access Scheme is an important enabler for students and researchers at UK universities to pursue their studies and research objectives by allowing access to resources and space. 169 libraries participated in the scheme in 2014, welcoming 45,732 visitors. They loaned 340,036 books to staff, research students, post-graduates, part-time students and distance learning students.

Events programme

The programme of events organised by SCONUL is widely valued by members and in 2016-19 will focus

more closely on issues-based events. The highlight of the events programme is a two-day residential event in late spring / early summer.

Information sharing

SCONUL facilitates information sharing between members in a variety of ways, including through our monthly newsletter and our triannual practitioner journal, SCONUL Focus. The Communications Advisory Group will consider the scope and mechanisms for communications over the next year and review our portfolio of communications tools to ensure that it meets members' needs.

Supporting member consortia

Following a successful pilot in 2014 with the Northern Collaboration in which SCONUL provided some administrative and financial functions, we are now rolling this service of supporting member consortia with some back office functions to a number of other consortia, including the Mercian Collaboration and NoWAL. Support for member consortia is always on a cost-recovery basis.

Organisational structure

