Amplifying CONUL's Voice

Exploring how Ireland's Research Libraries can be 'heard' in national and international contexts

Johanna Archbold & Michelle Breen

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Executive Summary

CONUL's 2016-2019 strategy, Ireland's Discovery Ireland's Memory, identifies communication, representation and advocacy at national and international levels as three of the five core themes for Ireland's Research Libraries. This research investigated how CONUL can best meet these aspects of the strategy with 10 recommendations presented in this report. The peer organisations identified for consideration in this research are: **CILIP**, Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals; **LIBER**, Association of European Research Libraries; **RLUK**, Research Libraries UK; **SCONUL**, Society of College, National and University Libraries; **SCURL**, Scottish Confederation of University Research Libraries; **WHELF**, Welsh Higher Education Libraries Forum.

Recommendations are presented as high-level statements with initial summary description and more detailed implementation suggestions/comments starting on page 9. Recommendations include:

1. Consider capacity to develop a dedicated CONUL role.

2. Articulate named advocacy topics that are understood and relevant to CONUL Members and the library sector, but also by non-library stakeholders.

3. Build on principle of existing access schemes for researchers to reach creatives, content producers and artists to work with unique collections and library experts.

4. Be proactive through existing and new networks to respond to relevant Calls for Submissions, Consultations and Value for Money Reviews (VFMs) at national levels, within the EU and internationally where relevant/appropriate.

5. Investigate opportunities for Strategic Partnerships/MOUs with non-library organisations, particularly in areas of mutual interest/advocacy/influencing and where wider collaboration benefits all.

6. Develop dynamic nature of CONUL web presence to facilitate easy identification of key topics and contacts, illustrations of strategy themes, member organisations, and sub-group activities with both internal and external audiences in mind.

7. Maximise current activities to promote the expertise, skills and supports ongoing in CONUL member libraries and highlight the contributions of the profession.

8. Develop capacity for collaborative projects nationally and internationally to raise CONULs visibility as a representative organisation for research libraries and build reputation as an expertise-driven partner.

9. Consider how CONUL promotes itself to staff of Member Organisations for the purposes of awareness, engagement with strategic themes and developing a pipeline for the internal 'voice'.

10. Develop Library Leaders programme to promote CONULs 'voice' from within Member Organisations for internal and external audiences.

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Terms of Reference

In 2016 Johanna Archbold and Michelle Breen were awarded the CONUL Training & Development Group (formerly ANLTC) Research Award for the project 'Amplifying CONUL's Voice: Exploring how Ireland's Research Libraries can be 'heard' in national and international contexts'.

The project set out to address a question about what CONUL can learn from international peer library organisations who represent collective library groups in key areas identified in CONUL's 2016-2019 strategy, *Ireland's Memory Ireland's Discovery.*

The primary evidence for this work would be semi-structured interviews with leaders of the peer-organisations who could provide particular expertise and insight into how the organisations have evolved to address similar themes. The researchers liaised with the CONUL Board to narrow down the peer organisations of interest to be most relevant and appropriate to current CONUL contexts, with particular focus on the following research questions:

- Organisational Voice, nationally and internationally
- Press Engagement
- Shared Agenda Building/Position Papers.

The results of this research aim to support the development of CONUL's organisational 'voice' on behalf of the Irish Research Libraries within its membership and particularly outwards to external stakeholders to support the ongoing implementation of the 2016-2019 strategy.

Introduction

Communication, representation and advocacy at national and international levels are identified in two of the five core themes within the CONUL Strategy 2016-2019. This research set out to investigate how CONUL can best meet these strategic goals by assessing how international peer library representative organisations have developed and built their organisation to support these activities.

The library sector in Ireland and internationally has well-established organisations for collective engagement within the profession. SCONUL was formed in the 1950s, LIBER in the 1960s, CONUL in 1971 and the others in the 1980s. An analysis of recent and historical strategy documents and an understanding of the changing governance landscape for representative organisations provides some context to the current position of each of the organisations. Contemporary practice for representative organisations calls for a keen understanding of the need for a strong sectoral voice.

'Amplifying CONUL's Voice' has an internal and external dimension, internal in terms of identifying what that voice should be projecting and external in terms of how this is being done beyond the library sector to other relevant and connected sectors, professions and stakeholders. The representative organisations that we interviewed have successfully provided a platform for libraries to meet, share, discuss and debate ongoing and emerging issues/trends/developments within the sector. CONUL has made significant progress in providing a platform for the work of individual member organisations through the website and CONUL Conference but the audiences are still largely internal and focused on skills, practice and information sharing. Although this is a very important function of representative organisations, there is work to do to fulfil the mandate to advocate on behalf of the collective voice, and provide the appropriate content to engage with external stakeholders on behalf of the member organisations.

It should be noted that for all library representative organisations, the external 'voice' is a newer element of their activities and all organisations acknowledge that their processes and activities to support this are continually developing. They also all acknowledge that this goes hand-in-hand with generating that 'voice' internally by engaging members and identifying what and where the representative organisation can best advance their collective representation to advocate on behalf of the profession and its activities *outside* the library sector.

Research Methodology

Research Consultations with CONUL

At the initial stages, a research design consultation with the CONUL Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) guided the scope and objectives of the work. Leveraging the networks and insights of the CONUL Directors, semi-structured interviews were arranged with representatives at the organisations of interest and relevance to CONUL.

In December 2017 the researchers attended a workshop at DCU Library facilitated by Ann Rossiter of SCONUL to consider the scope and activities of the new Communications & Outreach Sub-Group. In this workshop, the researchers joined the Communications Officers from each of CONUL's Sub-Groups and the topic for discussion was CONUL's overall communications strategy. It was evident in this engaging session, chaired by Chris Pressler, that there is a desire to build CONUL's profile among the network of members, to seek to overcome the fixed mind-sets about libraries and their role in society, to tailor messages that emanate from CONUL to the target audiences, raise the profile of all Irish research collections and services and enhance our services to students, scholars and the public.

Both of these activities fed into the final recommendations presented below.

Methodology Overview

This research employed both quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques, with the primary focus on qualitative data. Grounded Theory is used as a broad framework to help analyse and synthesise this qualitative gathered to surface 'categories of meaning' that can be applied to the research questions under consideration in this project

Given the project proposed and the feedback from the CONUL Board, semi-structured interviews were deemed most appropriate for this study because of the pool of interviewees, the limited time available to 'access' their knowledge and the differences in the interviewees organisations and activities. The semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to delve beyond the publicly available information and provided rich insights to the peer organisations, in the words of current and past Executive Directors or leaders in the areas of specific interest to this project.

The questions and structure designed addressed the objectives set out in our research proposal and each of the six interviews lasted approximately one hour. The recorded, and transcribed, interviews

are the main evidence-gathering methodology for this project. Text coding of the transcripts allowed for categories of meaning to emerge that addressed key areas of interest as well as related areas that emerged across our pool of interviewees. This approach allowed us to identify common themes related to questions asked while also allowing for unique perspectives from interviewees on interrelated concepts to be surfaced.

Quantitative data gathered was in preparation for the interviews to provide context for the researchers and background knowledge. Relevant information from this process is also presented here but is not the focus of this project. The researchers prepared profile and data sheets on UK & EU peer organisations. This data included gathering mission statements, membership information, staffing profiles, social media platforms and published strategies.

Representative Organisations

This research interviewed representatives from each of the following organisations:

CILIP, Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals

LIBER, Association of European Research Libraries

RLUK, Research Libraries UK

SCONUL, Society of College, National and University Libraries.

SCURL, Scottish Confederation of University Research Libraries,

WHELF, Development Officer, Welsh Higher Education Libraries Forum.

The organisations range in size from the relatively small WHELF (Welsh Higher Education Libraries Forum) with 13 members to the very large CILIP, with 13,000+ members. CILIP operates a personal membership model, the other organisations are a hybrid of institutional or director level membership i.e. the libraries themselves or their Heads of Service are the members.

There is a range of organisational structures and sizes in terms of 'staff' within these organisations. Some of the organisations have a team of professional staff that run the organisation; others operate largely through a combination of volunteers from within the sector and paid office staff. WHELF has a part-time development officer for 17.5 hours a week, seconded from Swansea University whereas RLUK has 5 full-time staff, one of whom is on secondment from The Wellcome

Trust. LIBER has a small office staff but augment this with Project Officers related to funded projects they collaborate on and some time from that role contributes to their organisational work.

All of the organisations work to support libraries. Many of them conduct research and do sectoral projects e.g. the shared LMS project in Wales and the Advocacy Toolkit from SCONUL. The differences in scale are relevant to CONUL, as CONUL would be operating at the smaller end of the scale in terms of resources available to it, but there are relevant learnings from all as they all identify advocacy, engagement and influencing as key priorities for their organisations.

We identified common practices and successful approaches around communication, representation and advocacy and will present these in our findings.

Overview Profiles of Representative Organizations

	Organisation start date	Membership 2016	Conference	Staff numbers	LinkedIn Followers	Facebook Likes	Twitter Followers
CILIP	2002 (merger between Lib Assoc UK est. 1877 & Institute of Information Scientists est. 1958)	c. 20,000 Individual Members	Yes	c.50	3,526	5,418	22,200
LIBER	1971	430 Member Libraries	Yes	4 full-time & Project roles (part-time)	244	1,448	4,572
RLUK	1983	37 Member Libraries	Yes	5 full-time	203	2,500	3,271
SCONUL	1950s	175 Member Libraries	Yes	4 full-time; 1 part-time	160	NA	797
SCURL	1980s	25 Member Libraries & 2 Associate Member Libraries	No	1 part-time	NA	NA	230
WHELF	1980s	14 Member Libraries	No	1 part time	NA	NA	534
CONUL	1971	13 Member Libraries	Yes	None	NA	81	456

Recommendations & Discussion

The following recommendations are presented for consideration within the wider contexts of CONUL's implementation of its current strategy (2016-2019) and possibly for further development as the recent changes in the organisational structure to continue to bed-in and preparation work for the post-2019 strategy develops.

Recommendations are presented as high-level statements with initial summary description and more detailed implementation suggestions/comments.

1. **Consider capacity to develop a dedicated CONUL role to support the organisational function, with particular remit for being a lynchpin role for internal communications and projection of external CONUL 'voice' and relationship-building on behalf of CONUL.**

   All of the peer organisations studied had some form of administrative support for the functioning of the organisation. These roles, a minimum of 17.5 hours up to Executive Director roles and staff, all provided support in some capacity for managing internal conversations around strategy, implementation and monitoring and representing the organisation in an outward capacity to some degree or another. Where there is more developed staff organisations, the lead for advocacy, agenda setting and relationship-building inside and outside the sector is the key responsibility of the senior leaders.

   For CONUL's purposes in the first instance, 17.5 hours per week would add significant capacity to the organisation, similar to the roles in WHELF and SCURL. This role would provide a continuous point of contact for CONUL Directors and Members to manage implementation of the strategy, liaise with sub-groups and develop relationships with other organisations. In WHELF and SCURL this role also contributes to the management of collaborative projects/shared services, but also supported by Programme Managers in these projects.

   In terms of the most valuable skills for this position, CONUL might consider focusing on a candidate with a policy, PR, and / or Public Administration background rather than a librarian, particularly with a responsibility for developing CONUL's voice outside of the

sector. This adds new and desired skillsests to CONULs executive and organisational function which would bring additional expertise to the organisational capacity.

In the longer term an Executive Director type role would provide a wider scope for high-level advocacy, stakeholder engagement, lobbying and relationship-building but would likely be most valuable when built on a strong administrative function already established.

The roles played by the professional staff in the organisations studied vary but responsibilities include:

  i. Coordinates activity of board and sometimes attends sub-group meetings

  ii. Manages production of the strategic plan

  iii. Conducts stakeholder-mapping

  iv. Manages project portfolios – particularly shared collaborative projects

  v. Coordinates communication activities on behalf of the organisation

  vi. Identifies project partners and research opportunities across the library sector and beyond the library sector

  vii. Fields media queries

  viii. Advises individual Board Members

  ix. Develops and uses personal networks to advance organisational goals

The physical location of this role could be within one of the larger Member Organisations, but could be more strategically useful if hosted within another organisation where additional value could be gained from awareness of what CONUL does, proximity to stakeholders and more. For example, the role might be hosted within the Higher Education Authority (HEA) or the Irish Research Council (IRC) offices.

2. **Articulate named advocacy topics or campaign themes that are understood and relevant to CONUL Members and the wider library sector, but also by non-library stakeholders, to provide fertile ground for cross-sectoral conversations, engagement and collaboration.**

CONUL should consider articulating named key advocacy topics or campaign themes which are at an organisational level that align with the strategy themes but reflect broad themes understood and recognised beyond the library sector.

CONUL Directors, Sub-Groups and Members will be well-familiar with the type of topics that could be considered in this area and inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral work is already ongoing. This recommendation is suggesting a much more articulated approach with consideration given to an approach that reaches beyond the CONUL Members to promote wider collaboration for the benefit of all library/research users, and with clear documentation and content to articulate these areas.

Examples of these might include Open Access; Open Science; Open Data; Digital Literacy; Research Landscapes; Excellence in Scholarship; Research Impact; Skills development for Lifelong Learning; Collaboration for Service Efficiency etc. These topics would relate to research libraries and activities but also to the wider library sector, education/higher education, research agendas, government priorities, social inclusion and international audiences.

Specific responsibility for representing on these topics could be given to a particular group or member of the SIG or additional temporary structures could be activated to support each as appropriate and governmental/state agency/international work in these areas for wider collaboration would be an important part of scoping of topics. CONUL might consider adding to its current organisational structure to support advocacy on behalf of named topics such as appointing *Members at Large* on particular issues, who are appointed for a number of years with a focus on specific topic and who have both an internal focus with the CONUL Membership but also a key external focus to non-library sector organisations and influencers. This type of role would add significant capacity to CONUL to develop networks for the organisation and build relationships towards collaboration on key topics of interest.

RLUKs named campaign on the Cost of Content is a good example and LIBERs named key topics of Scholarly Communication; Digital Skills & Services; Research Infrastructure are god examples in this area. These are long-term ongoing activities that allow them to build and demonstrate expertise in areas at a high-level for advocacy, influencing and consultation purposes, leading to invitations to contribute at key national and international fora.

Working days or half-day seminars bringing together library and other expertise on these topics are an efficient way to target those *outside* the library sector who have known

activities or interests in the topic areas. Invitations to Directors or Programme Managers of external stakeholder organisations to speak and/or attend/nominate attendee within their organisation is an efficient way to ensure that library expertise is known and most importantly socialise non-library sector stakeholders with their library counterparts.

3. **Memory, Discovery, Inspiration, Creativity - Build on the principle of existing access schemes for Higher Education Staff & Students, to bring new audiences into contact with unique collections and library experts.**

CONUL should consider how current access schemes might be developed to ways to develop awareness among the 'Creative Communities' about the unique collections held in CONUL Member Libraries as referenced in the title of the current strategic plan, *Ireland's Memory, Ireland's Discovery*.

For example, a collaborative access arrangement with artists registered with Arts Council could provide Artists & Creatives with access to unique and distinct collections as inspiration or materials for creative productions. The Arts Council has a range of schemes it manages or funds with direct engagement from individual artists as well as artistic groups throughout the country. The provide information sessions for artists, particularly through Visual Artists Ireland who manage some of their schemes, newsletters and online information portals where information could be shared to increase awareness of collections and such opportunities.

An output of such partnerships or arrangements could be an Award or affiliation with the Arts Organisations (including Northern Ireland) for artists to apply for fellowships in CONUL Libraries which could include access and time with library experts and ideally small stipend (possibly sponsored). With Brexit on the horizon, other organisations which promote cross-border community and artistic engagement could also be approached for funding and supports givens CONUL's all-Ireland membership e.g. British Council.

4. **Be proactive through existing and new networks to respond to relevant Calls for Submissions, Consultations and Value for Money Reviews (VFMs) at national levels, within the EU and internationally where relevant/appropriate.**

CONUL should consider actively responding to Calls for Submissions, Consultations and Value for Money reviews or responding to major societal initiatives highlighting where Member Organisations or libraries in general are already contributing or collaborating on the issues being considered. This would represent proactive articulation of the collective voice and expertise providing opportunities for CONUL to engage with COUNL Member Organisations on live issues. It would also build awareness across Member Organisations of high-level developments and facilitate very relevant 'horizon-scanning' for Member Organisations, Library leaders and emerging trends and policies of relevance. It may be that these contributions are most usefully coordinated with other Library representative bodies, which would also continue to develop knowledge of shared agendas.

Recent examples at a government level include the *Creative Ireland* government strategy and the in-hand VFM within the HEA Capital Spending team on e-journals. Calls for submissions could be monitored by the Communications Sub-Group and identified to the strategic implementation group for consideration and delegation to appropriate group or a specific temporary group created for the purposes. Another wider example would be the sectoral letter coordinated by SCONUL to reject Taylor & Francis change of contract.

Staff from relevant government or agencies established to manage such initiatives/reviews could be invited to present on their goals/plans to CONUL Board meeting or an invited selection of 'Library Leaders' and CONUL could coordinate calls to Member Organisations to further contribute to the delivery of these initiatives post-launch and facilitate feedback on activities and impacts to support progress reporting and evaluation.

5. **Investigate opportunities for strategic associations with non-library organisations, particularly in areas of mutual interest/advocacy where wider collaboration benefits all.**

CONUL should consider a strategy for developing partnerships outside the Library sector with other collective organisations for major subject areas within libraries and those who use libraries such as Researchers, Teachers, Irish Humanities Alliance, Healthworkers etc. These are organisations with similar areas of interest and influencing agendas where collaboration at the organisation level, developing awareness and establishing staff networks can raise the profiles of all organisations. These relationship-building activities would provide potential for developing new funding streams through collaborative pitches
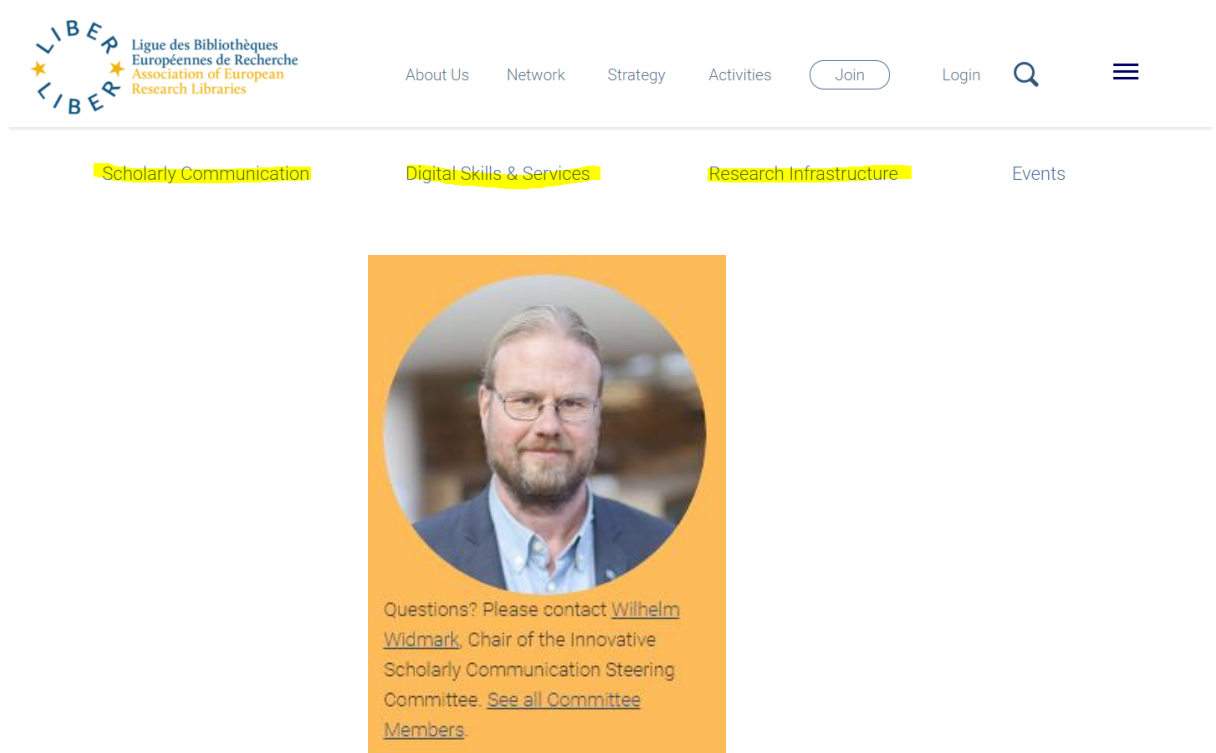
and outreach activities. Valuable avenue for growing awareness and raising profile of library sector, particularly research libraries, expertise and collections.

6. **Develop dynamic nature of CONUL web presence to facilitate easy identification of key topics and contacts, illustrations of strategy themes, member organisations, and sub-group activities with both internal and external audiences in mind.**

CONUL website should be a 'shop-window' for the collective voice of organisation. This has already started with ongoing news items from individual organisations largely directed to the organisational audience but significant capacity for CONUL to develop collate the collective contributions from Member Organisations.

Related to Recommendation 2, the website should be used to clearly identify strategic directions across the website with clear information on key contacts on these issues. LIBER website does this well and provides a useful example (image below with topics in yellow and an example of how they identify their key contact)

The intended audience for these is of course members of CONUL organisations but also representatives for potential partner organisations or external non-library stakeholders who are looking to navigate and identify relevant information quickly and succinctly.

Along with ongoing updates to the CONUL website, the Communications & Outreach Sub-Group should be tasked with creating engaging profiles of each CONUL member organisation in collaboration with the organisation and developing content illustrating CONULs ongoing work with an internal and external audience in mind.

7. **CONUL should focus resources on maximising current activities to promote the expertise, skills and supports ongoing in CONUL member libraries and highlight the contributions of the profession.**

CONUL should consider how it can maximise or optimise the value of activities that it is already doing very well in terms of collective engagement. The CONUL Conference is a successful brand and event that takes place annually and would be an ideal avenue for running a 'Research Librarian of the Year' & 'Library Assistant of the Year' & 'Library Friend/Ambassador of the Year' (to an external advocate), 'Library Project Team of the Year' type awards with associated promotion of the nominees and final winner. The CONUL Training & Development Group already has the structures and expertise to run this type of process from their experiences with the Research Award and Library Assistant Blog. The process for applying/nominations for this award could be developed to consider the 'content-value' for CONUL and stipulations with the Award could further add to CONULs voice in key areas (guest blogs, videos etc.) with support from the Communications & Outreach Sub-Group. Sponsorship of awards could also be sought to leverage the networks of the sponsor to further promote the achievements. A recent successful example of this is the Irish Research Council's recently established a 'Researcher of the Year' (early researcher and research group).

In a similar vein, the current structures of the Sub-Groups could be leveraged to support the development of position papers. CONUL's Board could consider being more prescriptive to the sub-groups to produce position papers on broad topics of interest (related to recommendation 2) and in support of potential internal CONUL collaborative projects or external CONUL collaborations.

8. **Develop capacity for contributing to collaborative projects nationally and internationally to raise CONULs visibility as a representative organisation for research libraries and build reputation as an expertise-driven partner.**

CONUL might consider how it can develop its reputation and influence on behalf of member organisations based on collaborative projects with non-library sector organisations. By engaging with research projects that are strategically important, not just to members, but to stakeholder organisations that Member organisations wish to reach. Successful project collaboration demonstrates the expertise of the Research Libraries sector to wider audiences and can facilitate further engagement with government, higher education and funding agencies to advance CONULs outreach on behalf of members and the sector that is bigger than the individual member organisations.

LIBER provides a successful example of building reputation through small collaborations leading to larger ones and being viewed as the experts in key areas, particularly Copyright at the European level. They started small as a collaborating partner on projects, built their reputation and then were invited as experts to collaborate and contribute at higher levels as an acknowledgement of special expertise and credibility of membership organisations. They particularly noted that their willingness to take the lead on areas of particular expertise and the integrity they brought to their commitment to the copyright issue was a turning-point for their visibility and cache as a partner organisation and expert to organisations outside the sector.

CONUL's ERAMSUS Library Staff Mobility Week is an example of a current project in this space that demonstrates international reputation-building for Irish research libraries within the library sector. The week long event, coordinated by CONUL's Training and Development Group, sees participants engage in a dynamic and engaging programme of events in Ireland, jointly hosted by CONUL Libraries. The target group for this event is other professional library staff with varied backgrounds working in universities or other research orientated libraries with an interest in sharing ideas and networking with colleagues.

This programme for participants includes presentations by library staff in the organising institutions, presentation from the selected participants, joint group work exercises, other interactive tasks and visits to CONUL libraries. Overall this programme is a proactive and

collaborative effort to build international relationships between staff members in libraries across Europe and also nationally as the participating CONUL libraries staff fully engage on the programme. This initiative could be considered a template for similar initiatives to develop other international networks.

9. **Consider how CONUL promotes itself to staff of Member Organisations for the purposes of awareness, engagement with strategic themes and developing a pipeline for the internal 'voice'.**

With the developments ongoing to the CONUL website and recent development of an email subscription to the CONUL newsfeed, there is further opportunity to activate greater awareness among staff about the organisation through the work of the Communications & Outreach Sub-Group. SCONUL identified the value of the representative organisation facilitating face-to-face visits to Member Organisations to continue the socialisation of staff to the ongoing strategic and operational activities of the representative organisation. The new Communications & Outreach Sub-Group could be tasked with being that front-face for orientation of staff to CONUL and promoting engagement opportunities, particularly with online platforms and collaboration opportunities.

10. **Develop a 'Library Leaders Programme' to promote CONUL's voice from within Member Organisations for direct benefit to CONUL staff and internal and external benefit to the organisation.**

CONUL should consider its capacity to develop a Leadership Programme for CONUL member organisations to identify and build capacity for strong voices within the organisation to develop. This might also be considered as an area for cross-organisational collaboration so that it is not just future library leaders developing together but future leaders in related sectors developing together. At present Irish librarians need to travel to the UK for these development opportunities.

LIBER's experience has been that their Leadership Development Programme grows leaders from within and creates ambassadors for their organisation, values and strategic voice through the Alumni of these programmes. If such a programme was developed, LIBER's observation of looking to activate their Alumni is instructive. At the development stage,

Training & Development

programme Alumni should be considered an asset to CONUL and built into future strategic planning.

Conclusion

As CONUL heads towards its 50th anniversary representing research libraries, its progress charts a remarkable change in the information, education, research and library landscape in which it operates and the world in which its users, staff and stakeholders live. While representation has always been part of its mandate, the pressure to deliver efficiently and effectively on this in an outwardly way with a coherent collective voice has never been so forward in its thinking or its needs as evidenced by the focus on communication, representation and advocacy at national and international levels in the 2016-2019 strategy, *Ireland's Memory, Ireland's Discovery.*

For all library organisations in this study, this external focus of representation and the idea of projecting a 'voice' on behalf of the sector the organisation is representing is new and not something any of the organisations feel they have fully cracked. Direct engagement with the press or on social media, what might be considered the most 'external' organisations can be with their messaging, was not overly prioritised; relationship-building and reputation building on behalf of the organisation and by extension the sector was viewed as most critical and important, but difficult to define, quantify and articulate. It is a longer game that grows and matures, but its foundations are on finding common language and landscapes to converse with external stakeholders.

The most striking aspect of the project for the researchers (as librarians) was the view from interviewees at senior levels of the peer organisations who came themselves from outside the sector. There was consistent and genuine expression of the wealth of expertise and skills in the sector which those from the sector were unwilling or too modest to articulate outwards. A tendency towards conservatism in the sector, or humbleness, was consistently identified suggesting that there is much in the representative voices to be leveraged and heard.

Our recommendations here aim to support this continued development of CONUL's voice from within so that it can be projected and amplified on behalf of the research library sector.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the following people for their support throughout this project. Individually and collectively, they enabled this research:

Appendix 1

Interview Questions used with each of the representative organisations

Intro Questions

- Tell us about your role in xxx organisation.
- Is it a full or part time role, how many hours a week?
- Were you hired on a contract, specific purpose basis?
  For how long?
- Are you seconded from somewhere else?
- What has your pathway into this role?
- *If they have another role in a Library,* could you tell us about your day-to-day role?
- *If they are a Librarian,* why did you want to become a Librarian? (just curious!)

Organisational Context

- In your own words, what are the key goals of xxxx organisation, with member organisations in mind?
- What is the size of the team that you work with in xxxx organisation? (looking to understand the layers, tease this out a bit)
- What did you know about xxxx organisation before you joined/what was your perception of it and how has that changed since you have been working for xxxx organisation?
- What services/supports are provided by xxxx organisation from within staff, from member organisations or from third parties?
- What training has been provided to the staff of xxxx organisation in recent years with strategy/member engagement/stakeholder engagement in mind?
- Does xxxx organisation feed into training for member organisations?
- Where does budget for xxxx organisation come from?
- *If you have another role,* how does your xxxx organisation role related to your day-to-day role, any cross-over or learnings that work from one to the other that you were not expecting?

Membership Context *With member organisations*

- How do you feel about being a representative body for Librarians/Information Professionals/how is this manifested within the culture of the organisation?
- What structures does xxxx organisation have in place to engage with members? At senior level (Directors/proxy reps) and more broadly?
- How are organisational members represented across the committees/groups of the organisation?
- How does the staff of xxxx organisation communicate with members?

- How are new member organisations/new staff representatives from member organisations 'orientated' into xxxx organisation?
- What documentation/support literature does xxxx organisation share with members to articulate goals etc?

Organisational Strategy

- What role do you play in the development of strategy?
- How involved were you in the development of this strategy?
- What role do you think you COULD have played?
- Had you been involved in previous strategies with xxxx organisation/with other organisations? How has the process changed from one strategy to another?
- What sort of member organisation engagement did you do for this? What worked well?
- How was the strategy communicated to key stakeholders at the planning and preparation stage and the promotion stage?
- Were the services of third parties employed during the generation/promotion of the strategy?

Shared Agenda Building/Position Papers

- Does this phrase resonate with you in the context of xxxx organisation?
- Do you feel this is something that the organisation does well, at all levels, at particular levels? Any examples of recent successes/areas where this has been successful?
- What are the subject/topic areas where you feel this is most relevant to you member organisations? i.e. open access, information literacy, advocacy How are these sourced and teased out at the xxxx organisational level? *Role of their annual meetings/conferences*
- Who do you look to for examples of where this has been done well?
- How can xxxx organisation support their member organisations to help surface opinions/topics for shared agenda building?
- What are the ideal outputs for shared agenda building? i.e. campaigns, lobbying, position papers etc.
- Do the other affiliations of member organisations impact on the work of xxxx organisation?

Press Engagement

- How are press/PR activities handled by xxxx organisation? What is outsourced v what is shared across member organisations v third parties?
- Does xxxx organisation seek/find press engagement outside of key launches/activities?
- Does communications planning happen alongside other activities/within the planning process or somewhat removed? i.e. how are briefs prepared for PR companies?
- Who maintains the 'corporate knowledge' of xxxx organisation in terms of press/PR contacts, networks and engagement? Is this shared with member organisations?
- How does xxxx organisation coordinate press/PR activities with member organisations?
- How does perss/PR engagement support advocacy more generally for xxxx organisation?

Representation on behalf of xxxx organisation, national & international contexts

- How does xxxx organisation plan for their voice being head in national and international contexts? Is this considered important?
- How do member organisations related to/feed into this? Is there a shared agreement on who is representing goals of organisation and how they are presented?
- How do speakers at such events feed back their activities/perspectives from these events? How does it inform further activities/actions?
- How are opportunities sourced and decisions made on attendance on behalf of the organisation?

XXXX Organisational Voice

- Do you feel it is well represented among membership organisations?
- Do you have advocates within the profession/outside the profession? How have these been developed?
- Has consideration been made for how xxxx organisational goals related to individual national contexts? Are you aware of different messaging needs in different national contexts?
- How do you measure how successful you are being in getting you key messages to key/important stakeholders?