About SCONUL

SCONUL promotes awareness of the role of academic libraries in supporting research excellence and student achievement. It represents the views and interests of academic librarians to government, regulators and other stakeholders. We help academic libraries collaborate to share knowledge and best practice and deliver services efficiently, including through above-campus solutions and services.

SCONUL represents all universities in the UK and Ireland, irrespective of mission group, as well as national libraries and many of the UK's colleges of higher education.

SCONUL members are the libraries themselves, with the heads of library service making up the Executive Board, which is responsible for governance and for setting the strategy for the organisation. SCONUL also has a number of groups supporting the strategy and ensuring that the academic library community is informed about, and engaged with, the major issues and challenges facing the library sector. An Executive Director and office, engaged in policy development, lobbying and coordination and support, support them.
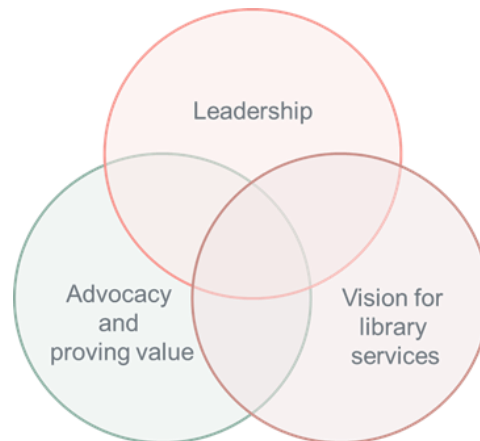
The Board

Formally, SCONUL is a charity and a company limited by guarantee, with heads of library service making up the Executive Board. The Board is responsible for governance and for setting the strategy for the organisation. A full listing of Board members is on our website: http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/executive-board. The officers of the current Board are:

- **Chair**: Caroline Taylor, University Librarian, University of Leicester (ct219@leicester.ac.uk)
- **Vice-Chair**: Pete Ryan, Director of Library and Learning Resources, Canterbury Christ Church University (pete.ryan@canterbury.ac.uk)
- **Treasurer**: Robert Hall, Director of Academic Services, Royal Holloway, University of London (r.hall@rhul.ac.uk)

Positions on the Board are by election, which takes place at the SCONUL AGM, held during the Summer Conference. We actively encourage members to get involved in running SCONUL and are keen to make sure that the Board and other groups represent the broad range of SCONUL members.

The SCONUL Strategy 2016-2019

The latest strategy was approved by members at the AGM in July 2105 and provides a vision for six programmes of work under three cross-cutting themes:

More information about the strategy is available on the website.

SCONUL Services

SCONUL provides a range of services for its members. We review and evaluate these services regularly to ensure they remain relevant and useful to members:

- **The SCONUL Access Scheme**

    This is a reciprocal access scheme open only to members of SCONUL. There is no fee for institutions to join and the scheme provides free borrowing and reference access for many staff and students of participating institutions. For more information and how staff and students apply for the scheme, click here.

- **Advocacy and lobbying**

    One of SCONUL's main objectives is to represent the interests and views of academic libraries to national and regional governments, assemblies and other bodies. SCONUL monitors political, policy and regulatory developments and ensures that the community's voice is heard when issues of interest to members are being considered, for example by responding to formal consultations.

    To ensure that we are operating effectively, SCONUL works closely with a range of partners including other library consortia such as RLUK, WHELF, SCURL and CONUL; with other professional associations such as UCISA, AMOSSHE and BUFDG; with international bodies and with other organisations interested in shaping policy such as CILIP and Jisc.

- **Briefings and toolkits for members**

    SCONUL, through the work of its Strategy Groups, produces briefings and resources to inform and support library directors. Some recent publications and toolkits on our website are:

- Analyses drawn from the SCONUL Annual Statistics: http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/sconul-statistics-reports
- Research Data Management Briefing: http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SCONUL%20RDM%20briefing.pdf.
- Changes to UK Copyright Law Special Briefing: http://www.sconul.ac.uk/news/special-briefing-changes-to-uk-copyright-law.
- Employability Toolkit, including a literature review and case studies: http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/employability.
- Toolkit for Library Collaboration: http://www.sconul.ac.uk/news/toolkit-for-library-collaboration

- **Events programme**

  - We run a number of events throughout the year, including a summer residential conference. In 2017, this event will take place in Newcastle on 6-7 June, and will include a keynote speech from Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of Universities UK. The theme of the conference is the future of academic libraries and Nicola will speak about the challenges the next five years might hold for the HE sector.

  - Every three years we run the SCONUL Library Design Awards and Showcase. At the most recent awards ceremony in December 2016 the winner in the under 2,000 square meters category was Heritage Quay, University of Huddersfield and the winner in the over 2,000 square meters category was The Hive, University of Worcester. Delegates heard presentations from all of the shortlisted libraries and were provided with the opportunity to meet with a variety of suppliers.
    http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/library-design-awards-2016

  - We also hold a series of ad-hoc workshops and seminars over the course of the year for library leaders and their senior management teams on major policy and practice issues of the day. Recent examples include a one-day meeting on e-textbooks organised jointly with RLUK and Jisc, and a conference on changes to the HE sector, including the TEF (presentations are available here): http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/measuring-excellence-conference-presentations.

- **Networking and peer support**

  SCONUL also supports Deputy Directors and New Directors Groups. Many members have found these groups invaluable for providing peer support and networking opportunities. They are largely self-organised and operate autonomously.

- **Supporting regional and national consortia**

  SCONUL provides at-cost back office support to a number of partner library consortia, such as The Northern Collaboration and The Mercian Collaboration. Services may include:

  - Support with financial administration
  - Annual conference support
  - Website infrastructure
  - Employment of staff
  - Administrative support, e.g. for document storage.

- **Leadership and representation**

  SCONUL supports members to act as representatives on a wide range of national and regional policy and delivery bodies. These representatives provide feedback to the Board and act as SCONUL's voice in a wide range of debates.

  SCONUL also works with the Leadership Foundation on its "Future Professional Directors" programme which is designed to help experienced professional library, ICT and related services staff with proven management experience to develop a more strategic approach in preparation for a greater leadership contribution. We are currently engaged in further work in building leadership capacity throughout the sector as part of the 2016-19 Strategy.

- **Communications**

  Our primary means for circulating intelligence and briefings of interest to members is via the SCONUL mailing list, which is open to anyone with an interest in the issues. All SCONUL representatives are signed up to this list. A number of other mailing lists exist for members.

  Our practitioner journal, SCONUL Focus, is produced three times a year and provides an excellent source of information on innovation and best practice. It is available online here: http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/sconul-focus.

  We also circulate a monthly newsletter which details recent announcements and forthcoming events, both our own and from other organisations.

  SCONUL is active on twitter where we help circulate news and information relevant to the sector and promote SCONUL events and activities. Follow us @SCONUL.

- **SCONUL Statistics**

  The SCONUL Statistics are unique in the higher education environment in providing a detailed picture of the workings of a core university function, allowing institutions to benchmark their performance against their peers. This data has proved invaluable to

library leaders in strategic planning of their own services, and for the sector in identifying trends and developments in the provision of library services nationally. For more information about how the statistics are collected, and how to access to the final reports, please contact Ruth Stubbings, Deputy Director, Services. (Ruth.Stubbings@sconul.ac.uk)

- **Virtual Enquiry Service**

  SCONUL has negotiated an agreement with OCLC, which enables libraries to access their Virtual Enquiry Service. The service covers periods when local library staff are not available to answer queries and allows members to offer their users access to support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with librarians in other time zones helping students with questions. The preferential terms of the scheme are not available outside of the SCONUL agreement. Full details are available at http://www.sconul.ac.uk/tags/virtual-enquiry-service

Engaging with SCONUL

Engagement with SCONUL provides opportunities for heads of library service to network with direct peers and brings members closer to those activities happening at a national level that impact on their services and institutions. Formally, there are the following opportunities for members to be involved:

- **Standing for election to the Executive Board**. Elections take place at the SCONUL AGM, held during the Summer Conference. Each year we issue a call for expressions of interest from members in standing for election.

- **Becoming member of a Strategy Group or Task & Finish Group**. The new SCONUL Strategy 2016-2019 created a number of opportunities for directors to have a direct influence and impact on the policies and other developments that affect the academic library community.

- **Attending events**. Members are invited to attend conferences, which provide opportunities to network and explore issues of strategic importance to the library. There are also smaller events throughout the year that address specific challenges.

- **Connect with peers.** The new directors and deputies groups are autonomous, self-organising groups for sharing experiences and developing professionally with colleagues in the SCONUL community.

The SCONUL Office

The office currently has four members of staff, led by the Executive Director, Ann Rossiter, who also sits on the Executive Board. The other staff are:

- Ruth Stubbings, Deputy Director, Services
- SitMui Ng, SCONUL Co-ordinator
- Sia Tehfeh, Team Administrator
- Kim Hardingham, Finance Assistant (2 days per week)