

IFLA Green Library Award 2019

“Love our Library”

Organisational Background

[UCC Library](#) is a contemporary university Library containing rich collections and archives, multi-media, archive, information and knowledge management systems. It provides competency in answering all questions concerning information and media literacy, media provisioning and brokerage, and providing information services using modern technology. It is a meeting place for students and staff members alike and offers a diverse range of study and research environments, including a Creative Zone, Exhibition Area, Skills Centre and Library studio as well as an Assistive Technology Lab.



The Library is core to the mission of the University which is ‘creating, understanding and sharing knowledge and applying it for the good of all.’ The Library actively supports and provides the information resources, high quality spaces, services and capability necessary in delivering this mission.

UCC Library building accommodates approx. 17,000 m² over 5 floors. UCC Library has a staff of 74 and there are 2,500 staff members in the University and a student population of 21,000. There are on average 1.5 million visitors to the Library each year.

The Green Team

University College Cork, like all Public-Sector Organisations in Ireland, is obliged under the Public-Sector Energy Efficiency Programme to improve energy efficiency by 33% by 2020 (2009 baseline). In 2016, a review of buildings in UCC found that 87% of energy consumption was occurring in just 13 buildings. UCC Library is at the heart of the campus both geographically and functionally and is one of the most energy intensive buildings. The Library which was one of the biggest users of electricity was chosen to pilot a “Saver Saves” scheme which would ensure that any monetary savings made from improving efficiency would remain within the Library, to be reinvested in future environmental projects.

As a result a sustainability campaign “Love Our Library” began. The campaign is a collaboration with the University Energy team and Library staff. A Green Team was formed to - create a template which if successful could then be rolled out across campus. The team works on how best to address issues in the Library and how to communicate with all

IFLA Green Library Award 2019 “Love our Library”

stakeholders. They work on monitoring and evaluating the progress of the sustainability project and are constantly looking at ideas and new ways to move the project on.

The first step in the campaign was the establishment of the Green Team in the Library, with representation from across the different Library units, and with the Energy Management team in UCC’s Buildings and Estates Department. The initial remit was to monitor energy usage and identify areas for improvement. Regular meetings occurred to assess progress and decide on the best actions to continually improve environmental performance, while also making the Library a more comfortable place for employees and students. The Library building, having one of the highest footfalls of any building in UCC, combined with one entrance and exit, provided a unique opportunity to capture a large audience and truly influence students and staff to behave in a more environmentally friendly manner. It quickly became apparent that focusing on energy alone was not enough and the team broadened its remit to look at all areas of library life and to see how we could reduce our environmental footprint.

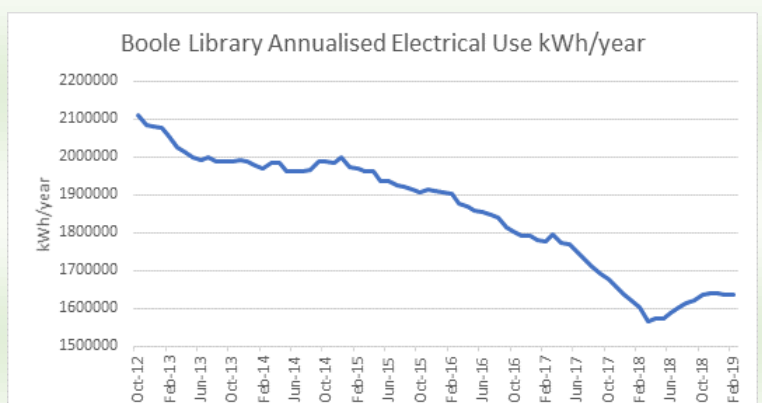
Tackling Energy / Water Use

A number of issues were highlighted in discussions with Buildings & Estates which led to a number of changes:

- Re-balanced air ventilation and heating systems to improve the office and reading room environmental conditions.
- Reduced operating times of building services to suit the library occupancy profile.
- Turned off lights centrally in low occupancy areas during the summer months.



By implementing these changes (at minimum costs) since 2016 we have saved approx. 613,376 kWh. This constitutes enough energy to power a light bulb for 2,300 years or travel around the world 66 times in an electric car! The library was able to extend opening hours during this period without incurring any extra lighting costs.



IFLA Green Library Award 2019 “Love our Library”

In the first year monies saved were reinvested in an air curtain at the entrance to the Library, which reduces the amount of cold air entering the building in the winter, and warm air in the summer, thereby reducing the need for heating and ventilation. This addresses longstanding issues in relation to comfort of Library staff and also has the potential to make energy savings equating to a further €8,000 per annum.

In 2018 monies saved were used to install a Living Wall consisting of air purifying indoor plants, funded by savings, in the Library’s 24 hour reading room. This wall will help eliminate toxins from the air, increase mood & productivity, reduce odours, enhance concentration and memory, and reduce stress and fatigue.



Water fountains in the library have been upgraded over the last year. Students are encouraged to refill their water bottles at the fountains. Clear directional signage to the fountains has been put in place. Posters at the fountains provide information on the problems caused by plastic bottle usage and the general health benefits of drinking plenty of water. The new bins make it very easy for people to dispose of their bottles correctly. The team sourced water bottles made from sugar cane which are sold along with bamboo mugs at the library desk.



IFLA Green Library Award 2019

“Love our Library”

Waste & Recycling

Members of the Library team felt passionately about the way in which “single-use” items, in particular plastic, have become prolific in our culture and are creating vast amounts of waste. The Library team wanted to tackle the culture of using an item once, throwing it away, and to influence what has now become an international debate. Supported by the cleaning contractors, an audit of bins in the Library was carried out which revealed a number of things:

- There were 167 individual small bins across the building, each with a plastic bag that was being changed by cleaning staff a number of times a day regardless of how full it was.
- The level of contamination within those bins was high, meaning that the overall recycling rate of the building was extremely low.
- One of the biggest contaminants was coffee cups that were disposed of while still containing liquid.

The decision was made to take a two-pronged approach to reducing waste in the Library:

- 1) due to Library policies around the consumption of food and drink, a complete ban on disposable coffee cups was possible. This was complemented by giving away a number of reusable bamboo mugs and negotiating a discount for the use of these mugs at all campus coffee outlets. Students were asked to pledge their support of the new system, with over 1,000 signing up in the first 24 hours.
- 2) Introduction of a “binless” office system – all small bins were removed from all offices and public spaces within the Library. Two waste recycling stations were established on the ground floor. Both staff and students must now take their waste from their desks upon leaving the Library, and dispose of it in at the waste stations. This means that there are no more confusing single small bins dotted around the building. When people take their waste to the stations, they are greeted with a well laid out system, with clear labelling, informing them of what goes into which bin.



The team organised staff training, wherein the university’s waste management contractor visited offices to talk to staff members about what can be recycled or not. The cleaning services contractor provided training to their staff on implementing the new system. The team also hold regular information stands for students in the Library foyer. The new bin stations each have a clipboard attached and cleaning staff record number of bags collected, fill rate, and contamination rate at each collection time.

IFLA Green Library Award 2019

“Love our Library”

Results show recycling levels have increased significantly (from negligible to >70%). In addition, through centralised waste disposal, we estimate that 10,000 plastic bin liners will be saved every year. The degree of planning, communications and hard-work on the part of the team was evident on the first day and roll-out of the campaign, when over 1,000 students signed a pledge to support the changes.

The team has worked with the university’s catering contractors, to look at the way in which food and beverages are served at meetings and conferences held in the Library. A dishwasher has been installed and all events no longer use paper cups and plates. This has made savings of up to 1,000 paper cups & plates per month. This is again a first step at introducing “green conferencing” guidelines that can be rolled out university-wide.

Public Outreach

A key achievement is the collaboration channels that the team have opened up, throughout the University for example with Buildings and Estates and the Student’s Union, but also more broadly through groups such as Cork Environmental Forum and the Conscious Cup Campaign. The Library Green Team won the “Best Public Sector” category in the Cork Environmental Forum Annual Awards Ceremony in December 2017. The judges commented that the campaign was “inspiring” and the award represented “an outstanding contribution to sustainability in Cork City and County through partnership and participation in the promotion of environmental care.” This recognition, coming from a group that campaigns for better environmental management throughout the region, really proves that the campaign has had genuine impact. The team also won the Best Library Team at the Education Awards ceremony in April 2018. These awards recognise excellence in the third level education sector in Ireland. The Library was also shortlisted for the Packman Awards – Innovation Waste Management October 2018. The campaign was also shortlisted for the Sustainability Team of the Year at the Irish Green Awards 2019.



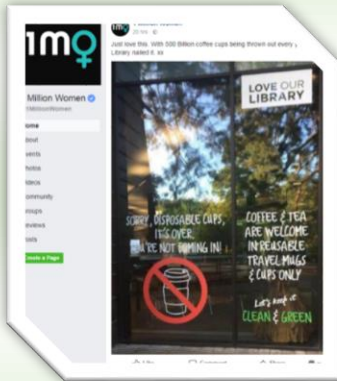
Communication

The implementation of the programme was preceded by months of research on the part of the team and the combination of a “carrot” (incentives) and “stick” (disposable cup ban) approach ensured success. A major element of the campaign is communications, with large posters, pull-ups and banners across the library and in key locations, everyone is exposed to the message that the library is going “green”. As our target audience is so diverse comprising University staff, students, library staff and cleaning staff the challenge to keep everyone on board is one of which the team are keenly aware and it informs our progress.

Consistent communications as well as a strong team ethos that believes in the cause and has support from key individuals is important in driving the campaign. Measuring impact and highlighting the global reach of these issues also ensures buy-in.

IFLA Green Library Award 2019 “Love our Library”

The team actively engages on social media, Twitter and Facebook and receives lots of comments and encouragement.



A large notice board on the ground floor encourages students to give feedback.



FOR 2 DAYS OUR RUBBISH FAIRY HAS HAD THE DAY OFF

THIS MORNING OUR CLEANING STAFF WERE JOINED BY LIBRARY STAFF AND THE STUDENTS UNION TO COLLECT THE WASTE LEFT ON THE FLOORS

THANKFULLY WE ONLY COLLECTED 1 BAG OF GENERAL WASTE BUT 7 BAGS OF RECYCLABLE MATERIAL WERE COLLECTED

THANK YOU FOR RECYCLING YOUR WASTE IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Keeping the message fresh and engaging has been very important for the campaign. The Library Team recently came in at 7am to work alongside the Students Union and the Library cleaning staff to highlight the amount of waste which was being accumulated each day by students.

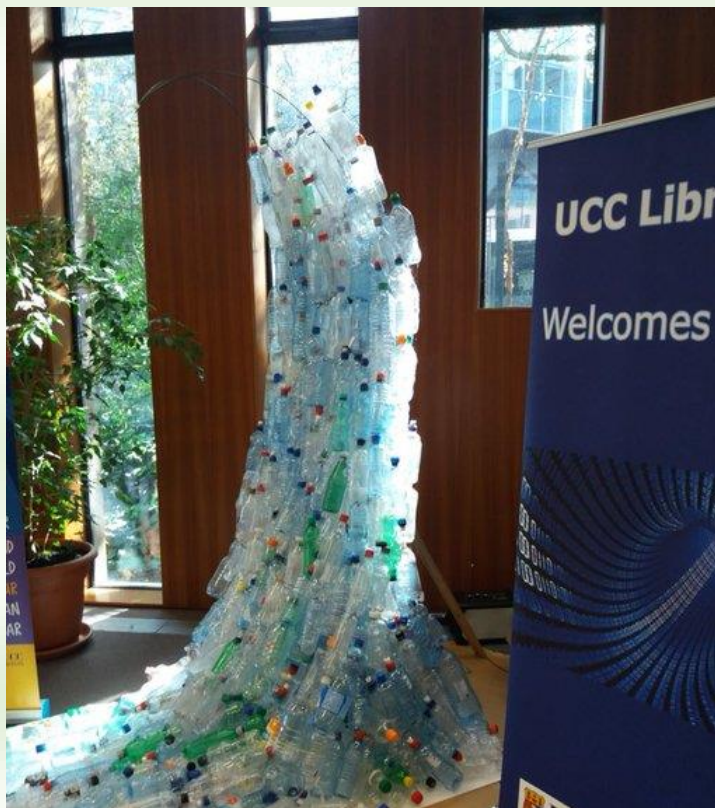
Work is ongoing on a UCC Library LibGuide ([an online guide](#)) which is updated regularly with information on the project and useful material relating to sustainability.

IFLA Green Library Award 2019 “Love our Library”

Community Effects

This commitment and the positive response that the “Love Our Library” campaign has received has sent a powerful message across the university. Three other major UCC campus sites are now signing up to the “Saver Saves” scheme. This includes the university’s main quad, which is the base for UCC’s senior management team. Having watched the success of the Library campaign, these sites are putting together their own teams to drive action in their locale. Influencing people’s behaviour has been a major challenge of the campaign.

Since the single use cup ban was introduced in the Library, the Students’ Union secured funding from Cork City Council and the Southern Region Waste Management Office. This funding was used to give every incoming first year student in the academic year 2018 a reusable cup at orientation. This demonstrates the reach and impact that the campaign has had.



Over a thousand plastic bottles were collected in one week in our recycling bins. A staff member created a plastic wave and student were asked to guess the number of bottles in the wave. This created a lot of conversation and led to an increase in the sale of our reusable sugar cane bottles!!

The campaign, in no small way, contributed to UCC being named the 9th “greenest” university globally in the UI Green Metric World University Rankings in December 2017.

In September 2018 UCC was awarded a Gold rating under the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s (AASHE) STARS programme. UCC is the only institution outside of the US and Canada to be awarded a Gold rating. The work done by the Library Green Team featured strongly in the application for this award.

<https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/university-college-cork-national-university-of-ireland-cork-co-corcaigh/report/2018-07-20/EN/campus-engagement/EN-5/>

IFLA Green Library Award 2019 “Love our Library”

Also featured for this award was CORA, UCC Library’s online, open access repository established by UCC Library to collect, store and disseminate the digital research output of the UCC scholarly community. UCC library is committed to the SDG’s Access to information – Goal 16.10. CORA <https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/university-college-cork-national-university-of-ireland-cork-co-corcaigh/report/2018-07-20/AC/research/AC-11/>

The ethos of the Sustainable Development Goals to “think globally: act locally,” is demonstrated in the commitment of every member of the “Love Our Library” team. This had led to the library adopting sustainability as a core value in their strategic plan...”Become an exemplar for UCC’s commitment to the sustainability agenda”

“The “Love our Library” led by the green library team is an inspiring action amongst our students and staff, as well as the wider community. This campaign has been instrumental in broadening participation in the Green Campus programme across UCC, and speaks directly to the university’s strategic aim to embed sustainability into all aspects of our operations” John O’Halloran, Deputy President & Registrar, University College Cork.

