The University Computer Club Inc.

Tenancy Reallocation Application

The University Computer Club Inc. (UCC) is the current tenant of Cameron Hall room 182a. We are reapplying with the goal of remaining the sole tenant of our current room. In the event remaining in the room is not possible, we would prefer a room that can meet the unique technical needs of the club, as detailed in this reapplication.

UCC was established in 1974 with the purpose of “the advancement of computer science and technologies” in the University community. It provides opportunities to work with and learn about many technologies, some of which are rare in a university setting and applicable to industry. In addition, it has long served to bring together people with a shared set of interests. UCC gives them a space to study, work on projects, learn from those with more experience, and socialise.

As of 7 February 2020, the club has 268 financial members. Of those members, 214 (80%) are current UWA students. The remaining 54 (20%) are non-students, most of who are long-term members and part of the UWA community, as staff or alumni.

The UCC clubroom is very active, open on most days of the year and nearly every day during the semester. Its facilities are regularly used by many of our members. In the month of January, 66 different members logged on to our computers (some remotely), and we estimate that at least 40 different members spent time in our clubroom. This is aided by the after-hours access available in Cameron Hall.

Together with nearby clubs (in particular, Unigames and Unisfa), UCC contributes to an important part of club culture for those with stereotypically ‘nerdy’ hobbies and interests. This activity and proximity to other clubs with a significant overlap in member base has helped build a strong community within Cameron Hall and allowed it to become a valuable social space.

While our clubroom is large, the space is fully used by our club. It is split between permanent fixtures that are important to our club’s objectives, and seating that is often fully used during the busier parts of semester. A loss of space in either of those areas would cause people to miss out on participating in the club when it is busy.

We currently have 12 desktop computers, placed in two rows along the room’s walls and made available to all members. They are far more versatile than the other computers students have access to at UWA: members are able to (with supervision) install any software they may need for a project, or might otherwise want to use. In line with our objectives, we have rules that ensure work and education are prioritised over other activities like gaming. As these take up a large area of the room, and are often busy, any reduction in available space would directly impact our provision of this service to members.

Additionally, we have two racks of servers providing many other services for our members. For example, members can create “virtual machines” to experiment on safely, or use a server to run calculations for an assignment. These services would cost more than $1000 per year per person using commercial providers. They would either be prohibitively expensive or impossible for the club to provide without a safe, physical location on campus.

UCC’s servers are also unique, in that they are operated by members for members. These servers give students unique access to technology usually confined to private networks of large organisations, providing an invaluable opportunity for students to learn skills which are often difficult to obtain.

We also have two internet-connected vending machines for use by our members, which provide a source of revenue to help with the upkeep of our infrastructure. These machines were modified for their current use using the club’s tools and equipment, and the skills learned by those who worked on the project demonstrate the educational value that the club provides.

Without a clubroom, UCC would not be able to provide almost any of these services to members. If the club was required to move, a large amount of effort would be required and there would likely be a substantial cost involved. We need close access to the University’s network, and the capacity to power a large number of devices. Both of those are provided to us generously by the University and the Guild, but would have a substantial installation cost in another location.

In addition, we also hold tech talks and workshops in the clubroom. These could be held elsewhere if required, but the access to a room allows us to run them in addition to other events, without requiring more booking time than is available from the Guild and the University.

We intend to continue to use the clubroom in the same manner as currently used. If we are allocated a different room, we would have to adapt our operation to suit the space. The intention would be to continue to provide as many services as possible within the available area and with the available facilities.

The club has held a Guild tenancy continuously since 1978, when it moved into the old Guild Building. It has held its current tenancy in Cameron Hall since 1991. Aside from a mailbox, the club has neither held nor applied for any other Guild tenancies or storage spaces.

We are signatories to the current Tenancy agreement, which expired at the commencement of the reallocation process. We have not been sanctioned for non-attendance as far as our records indicate, and attended all Societies Council and Tenancy Sub-committee meetings in 2019. We consistently provide a significant number of volunteers to Tenancy Busy Bees, and have a beneficial arrangement with neighbouring clubs and Tenancy to ensure the common spaces of Cameron Hall are maintained.

UCC endeavours to uphold the Tenancy rules and regulations, and to the best of our knowledge has not been sanctioned for a breach. In the one instance of a breach in 2017, where a member was discovered to be drinking in the clubroom, that member was disciplined by the club and had their access to the room revoked. The Tenancy committee at the time considered our handling of the incident and decided that no sanction or further action was necessary.

We also have a strong tradition of running joint events with the surrounding clubs in Cameron Hall, in particular, our ‘sister clubs’ of UniSFA and Unigames. Recently the 2019 Charity Vigil event raised $1184.60 for the Guild Food Pantry. Run this year by the Programming Competition Society (PCS), UCC, Unisfa and Unigames, it is a continuation of the regular Charity Vigil event which occurs each year and raises money for a charity that matters to our members and the student community.

Due to this ongoing association, in the event that UCC and other Cameron Hall tenants are moved, we would prefer to be placed as near to them as is reasonably possible. However, it is a higher priority to remain in a place that suitably supports the needs of our club in line with our primary technical-based objectives.