

Research Committee

Minutes of 1st March 2002

Present: Michael Gibney (Dean of Research), Doris Alexander, Deirdre Savage, John Saeed, Elizabeth Drew (GSU), Clive Williams, David Dickson, John Dillon, John Fitzpatrick, Jim Sexton, Sheila Greene, Dermot Kelleher

In attendance: Anthea Lees

Apologies: Margaret O'Mahony, Hilary Tovey

1. Apologies

Apologies noted.

2. Minutes of meeting 24th January 2002

Minutes approved and signed by Chairperson.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Research Centres

The College has received an external review of the Children's Centre. This will be examined to see what implications the recommendations and outcomes have, and which are particularly for Centres in College. A copy of the Excel spreadsheet listing all the research centres was requested by the Senior Lecturer. Research Centres require further support and need to be more visible in College. The Deans are meeting in two weeks and will be discussing the issue of Teaching Centres, some of which have a research component. The Senior lecturer said she would ask the Deans if they would include Research centres in their brief if they so wished and if not to let the Research Committee know and they would deal with it.

3.2 Research Strategy

College needs to communicate its strengths in research to the external community. A suggestion of organizing weekend seminars and talks on topical issues and inviting external audiences from, for example, industry to attend was proposed. Research strategy issues need to be addressed from the departmental level. For the next Research meeting, there is a need to look at ways of promoting college research and communicating it to the public arena. Each member of the Research Committee is to consider what sort of research strategies they would like to see covered in the document.

4. Berkeley Fellowships

It was agreed that the Committee would like to fund nine Berkeley Fellowships and that a subcommittee (one from each Faculty) would be set up to moderate the top contenders for 2002. The Dean of Research will arrange a meeting in three weeks time and will also organise the sub-committee members.

The Year One Berkeley Fellows will be giving their presentations in Trinity term and it was suggested that the Dean of Research would organise a dinner and invite these Fellows and members of the Research Committee to attend.

The need to follow up on the present Berkeley Fellows and encourage them to submit 12 or 24 monthly reports after successfully obtaining their fellowships was also recommended.

Future Berkeley Fellows will be encouraged to meet together throughout the year, elect a Chair for the group and report back to the Research Committee.

5. Good Research Practice

The sub-committee, set up to investigate this issue, has produced a document, which eventually will be available to the College community and accessible via the Internet. Issues addressed in the document included; ethics, research integrity, conflicts of interest, and academic freedom. The document will be discussed at the next Research Committee meeting.

6. Research Committee budget

The Committee considered the research budget and alternative approaches to dispersing the monies available. A handout from the Dean of Research was circulated at the meeting.

It was agreed that the Maintenance grant scheme should fund those researchers most in need of funding and priority would be given to those research areas in which there was little funding to be obtained externally. Researchers who already have outside funding would not be expected to apply.

Start-up funding was also discussed and it was recognised that this scheme also requires fine-tuning and better evaluation criteria for applicants and evaluators. It was suggested that the people who have previously received Start-up funding should be asked for a report on how they have spent their monies. It was also suggested that those who are successful in obtaining Start-up funding in the future (i.e. next academic year) may perhaps become ineligible for Maintenance grant funding.

7. Research information database

The Dean of Research, Doris Alexander, Eoin O'Neill and I.S. Services had a meeting regarding the package InfoEd. InfoEd have a product, which will interface with

existing systems, but College must ensure it is suitable for all the faculties. UCD are currently testing the system in three departments.

8. Status of Postdoctoral students

In a recent review of the Genetics Department, the reviewers were worried about the status of postdoctoral fellows. They do most of the research but have no career ladder or recognition for their work. The status, wages and lack of pensions for postdoctoral fellows were some of the queries listed. College has a large number of postdoctoral employees, and the Dean of Research suggested setting up a working group including representatives from postdoctoral fellows, the Finance Committee, Staff Office, Graduate Studies, Graduate Students Union and Research Centres to look at issues directly related to them.

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College Green at 2 p.m. on Friday 5th April 2002.

Signed: _____

Date: _____