

Research Committee

Minutes of 4th July 2003

Present: Michael Gibney (Dean of Research), Deirdre Savage, John Dillon, David Dickson, Sheila Greene, Margaret O'Mahony, Dylan Scammell, John Saeed

In Attendance: Maria Treanor

Apologies: Doris Alexander, Jim Sexton, Michael Coey, Clive Williams, Dermot Kelleher

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 6th June 2003

Minutes approved and signed by Chairman.

2. Matters Arising

Administration

The Chairman apologised for the fact that some papers were late. He said that this was inevitable as Research and Innovation Services were down two staff members since early February 2003, and they had still not been replaced. Members of the Committee noted their concern about this matter.

Terms and Conditions of Travel Grants

Deferred until September 2003.

Representation on Deans' Committee

There are now two Dean representatives on all the principal College committees. The Research Committee agreed that M Gibney should ask the Deans' Committee to nominate a faculty dean as a representative on the Research Committee. S Greene will be the second representative.

BESS Representative

M Gibney will write to the Dean of BESS regarding Hilary Tovey's replacement as the BESS faculty representative on the Research Committee.

3. Implementation of the Research Plan

M Gibney will send out a draft letter next week which should be read across all the faculties. He should be advised of any changes or recommendations as soon as possible.

4. Progress on Centres

Research and Innovation Services are preparing to make live a new website which includes a separate section on Research Centres. The introduction will be by the Dean of Research, and all centres will be listed. Each centre will have a summary explanation and a link to its own home page.

Following on from the Forum on Research Centres, three groups will be set up on: governance; benchmarking; and the relationship between centre employees and departments / teaching. J Saeed, as Dean of Graduate Studies, would like to be kept informed.

5. Submission of Electronic Grant Applications

Some electronic grant application submissions are not being submitted through the Research Office prior to submission to the sponsor which may lead to discrepancies at contract negotiation or contract stage. A mechanism is required to ensure that all applications / submissions are administered correctly and that appropriate institutional sign-off is achieved even when it is not a requirement of the sponsor.

To ensure compliance with College policy on submission of research grant applications, the Research Committee has recommended that a penalty be applied to incorrectly submitted grant applications.

A recommendation will be made to the Finance Committee that, in instances of non-compliance, the College will withhold a percentage of departmental overheads. The Dean of Research indicated that as a result of the imminent overhead sectoral report, a review of the College's overhead policies and procedures would be required in the next academic year.

6. Part-funding Research and Teaching Initiatives

Most research grants and contracts awarded to the College use the "Additional Cost" model, which has a fixed overhead. However, certain non-Framework EU Programmes now operate a "Full Cost" contract model where funding is provided conditionally, with limited overhead provided only where overheads can be directly traced on the basis of individual transactions. TCD's track record with this model is poor. The issue is that in most full cost contracts, the sponsor generally contributes between approximately 50% and 75% of the total contract value with College having to provide the balance by using

the value of the time of the Principal Investigator where paid by College, and on overheads on the total personnel costs claimed.

Previous audits have resulted in disallowed expenditure which resulted in unfunded costs or deficits for the Principal Investigator, and in some cases TCD was asked to refund the sponsor for disallowed costs.

M Gibney and D Savage will prepare a document advising the academic community of the onerous terms as well as the risks and exposures associated with partially-funded grants. It will be presented to the Finance Committee with a recommendation that if individuals are unable to contribute the required matched sum from another source, only grants requiring proof of time / labour costs as the matched funding contribution will be administered by College.

It was agreed that the Dean of Research would ask the Academic Affairs Committee to place the issue of “partially-funded teaching initiatives” on their agenda for discussion.

7. Dates for Meetings 2003/2004

The dates have been arranged for Research Committee meetings in the next academic year.

8. Proposals for new Centres in Health Science

The Haughton Institute has agreed that centres created by its staff members should be governed by College, subject to the rules and remit being agreed by the relevant faculty. Two new institutes are being proposed: Cancer Prevention Institute and Institute of Cardiovascular Science. The Haughton will provide back-up and facilitate the development of these institutes. They must be accepted by the Faculty of Health Sciences before being considered by the Research Committee. If they are able to meet the Research Committee’s requirements, they will be given approval early in September 2003. A decision on requirements will be deferred until the next meeting of the Research Committee.

The Dean of Health Sciences will be a bridge between the hospital consultants and the College. M Gibney will invite him to attend the next meeting on 5th September 2003.

The Research Committee welcomes the arrival of new institutes especially since they deal with two of the principal diseases in Ireland. However, clarity is needed regarding the precise role of the Haughton, given that they are currently renegotiating their terms with the College.

9. AOB (chaired by S Greene)

Institute of European Food Studies (IEFS)

As M Gibney is involved with IEFS, he stepped down as chair.

IEFS was established in 1994 with co-funding from the government, industry and the EU. The donors requested that it be set up as a non-profit company outside the university but with all research done in the College. When the research programme ended in 1999, some of the partners agreed to continue for another five years at a lower level of funding. IEFS went on to compete successfully for €2.25m in EU funding, and partnered UCC in another successful bid. As IEFS is not part of the traditional university structure, they are only eligible for full-costs funding i.e. 80% overheads on labour and 50% of total costs. They were able to continue by handing over some of their research to the College. However, they will not be able to compete in FP6 programmes unless they can use the additional costs model.

In order to do this, they need to close down as a campus company (while keeping the IEFS brand) and be reabsorbed into College as a centre. The Board of IEFS has agreed that they may do this, and IEFS has been frozen as a legal entity until the EU makes its final payment. This process will take about four months to achieve. The relevant Dean of Faculty and Head of Department are in agreement. In future, there will be an IEFS Board of Management, and UCC and UU will have an advisory role on scientific opportunities and directions.

The Research Committee agreed that the IEFS proposal may go to Board with the following three provisos: firm guidelines must be drawn up e.g. the Director, and not the Management Board, is ultimately responsible for the Centre; the management structure should follow whatever directives are laid down by the Research Committee in due course; and IEFS non-profit company must be wound up in the next six months.

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 2 p.m. on Friday 5th September 2003.

Signed: _____

Date: _____