

## **Research Committee**

### **Minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

- Present:** Michael Gibney (Dean of Research), David Dickson, Clive Williams, Doris Alexander, John Saeed, Deirdre Savage, Margaret O'Mahony, Jim Sexton
- In Attendance:** Cyril Smyth, Maria Treanor
- Apologies:** Sheila Greene, Dermot Kelleher, Michael Coey
- Not Present:** Dylan Scammell, John Dillon

#### **1. Minutes of the meeting of 04 July 03**

Minutes amended, approved and signed by Chairman. Under Section 5 "Submission of Electronic Grant Applications", C Williams expressed concern regarding how the penalty system would actually work in reality.

#### **2. Matters Arising**

##### **Deans' Representative**

Prof. Dermot McAleese has been elected as the Deans' Representative.

#### **3. Research Centres in Health Sciences and the Role of the Haughton Institute**

As the representative from the Faculty of Health Sciences was not present, this item will be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **4. Research Committee Budget and implications for the various funding schemes**

D Savage will have more exact budget figures available after the estimates later in the month. The Research Committee should then be able to plan its funding activities for 2003/04.

#### **5. Overview of activities for 2003-2004**

##### **5.1 Research Centres**

The Research Centres' Forum are making good progress, and have set up three working parties on governance,

benchmarking and integration. M Gibney, with a group from the Forum, will draw up terms of reference for the College Calendar.

## **5.2 Good Research Practice (Whistle-blowing & Investigation of Allegations of Malpractice)**

Research sponsors are now requiring TCD to state that a system is in place to support whistle-blowing in relation to the investigation of allegations of malpractice. The Senior Dean summarised the current situation for the Research Committee: The Junior Dean deals with allegations concerning the students while the Senior Dean deals with allegations concerning members of the academic staff. Other members of staff, e.g. technicians, are represented by their unions, and allegations are dealt with by the Staff Office.

The first step is for the Junior or Senior Dean to hold an initial enquiry in order to prove that there is a basis for an allegation. Once satisfied that the allegation was made in good faith and that it is believed that there is a basis for an enquiry, there is a process of investigation right up to a decision and reporting procedure, and an appeals process. The Senior Dean can instantly suspend a member of the academic staff if he believes that this will enable the investigation. He may also confiscate computers and files. This decision must then be ratified by Board. The Senior Dean can also appoint three skilled internal people to assist him, for example, to make assessments in a particular area of research. This panel would have to be chaired by the Senior Dean.

The report on the findings of the investigation is shown only to the accused who can either accept or reject them. If the accused rejects the findings, the investigation is taken over by a panel chaired by a retired High Court judge (Visitor). The investigation starts again and is conducted like a court case. If the accused is found guilty, he / she can still take a case to court.

Students found guilty can be sent down by the Junior Dean, and given whatever justice is deemed to be appropriate.

All disciplinary aspects of cases for both students and staff are covered by the statutes, and no deviation is legally permitted. All newly-appointed students and staff need to be told that, if they become aware of research misconduct, they have a duty to report it to the Senior Dean.

C Smyth will send D Alexander a statement more fully outlining the system in place in TCD.

M Gibney will write to the Staff Secretary to find out whether new staff members should sign a statement that they have understood the good research practice process and how allegations of malpractice are handled.

J Saeed will raise the issue with the Graduate Studies Committee, and ensure that the most up-to-date information is included in the College Calendar.

### **5.3 Research Implementation Plan**

The ICT meeting to discuss the research implementation plan will take place next Tuesday. M Gibney has an organisation chart of a model of governance for each of the strategic areas, and will send it to the deans before bringing it to the Research Committee.

### **5.4 Research Information Database**

The person working on the Research Information Database who left College has now been replaced. The library is also in the process of appointing someone, so population of the database will start shortly.

A number of people around the College will be invited to attend an IS Services tutorial on how to use the database. Their advice will be taken into account when deciding on the final structure for the database.

The official launch of the all-Ireland portal is expected to take place during the Irish Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2004. Some research sponsors are keen to have a presence on the portal, and may make it a pre-requisite for applications for funding that successful applicants have their details on the portal (through their relevant third-level institute).

### **5.5 Research & Innovations Annual Report**

The Research and Innovation Services Annual Report will not be available until February / March 2004.

## **6. Profile of the Research Committee**

After due consideration, it was agreed that the Research Committee's profile is secondary to the development of its work programme. The Committee will pursue its work programme as a primary objective, and should be seen to be supporting the College Research Implementation Plan.

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **College Strategic Plan**

There is a commitment in the Strategic Plan to have strategic resource allocation based on performance and, in order to develop this, a measure of research output is needed. It should be possible to compare academics in a department and also to compare relative departments. Income and output need to be measured. Output measurement should show consistent brilliance. It should also show the reverse.

It was suggested that metrics are being developed for academic promotions. M Gibney will check with the Senior Lecturer to see if this is the case or if anyone else in College is already doing this.

M Gibney, M O'Mahony, C Williams and J Saeed will then meet to discuss.

### **Trinity Centre for High Performance Computing**

John Corish wrote to the Dean of Research on behalf of the High Performance Computing (HPC) Development Committee. College has recently implemented a new College-wide Information Systems Security Policy to protect its core systems and data. This policy does not allow normal implementation of network-based research and development activity directly on the College network because this activity can potentially damage critical data and network services in College. The policy instead requires that all such research activity be carried on networks independent of the main College network.

Although Computer Science and Mathematics are running computer subnets, the Trinity Centre for High Performance Computing (TCHPC) has not received such an exemption. It is imperative that the TCD computer network serves the whole research community, and that no one group is given an advantage over another. The HPC Development Committee is trying to find a solution with IS Services and the Bursar. They suggest that one solution would be to have an independent research capacity network which is separate from general network activity.

J Sexton, Director of TCHPC, told the Research Committee that the Centre works in partnership with groups around Europe, and that it has to be funded out of its own income. Because it is experimental, the research has to be done externally to TCD but access is needed to the TCD network. The system they have bought remains unused because of the current computer systems security policy in TCD. A possible interim solution is for TCHPC to immediately acquire an external service for one year, and

recoup the cost from College at a later date. However, this is firefighting and does not represent a viable permanent solution.

The Committee noted that it is currently concerned about the contents of the letter from Prof. Corish and, in the longterm, with TCD's contractual obligations to sponsors such as the EU, EI and the HEA unless TCHPC has the same network rights as Computer Science and Mathematics. In this event, monies would have to be paid back to the sponsors, and this represents a significant amount.

J Sexton will report at the next meeting on what other universities and institutes of technology on the island of Ireland are doing with regard to computer network security. He will also try to find out what level of funding would be needed to pay for an external network.

M Gibney will write to the Bursar, who is also Chair of the Information Policy Committee, and report the views of the Research Committee: while fully respecting the situation regarding security for College networks, research must be also be facilitated.

M Gibney will write to the Treasurer to let her know that a risk to College has been identified, and that certain contractual obligations cannot currently be met as things stand.

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

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_