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**Research Committee**  
**Minutes of 02 April 2004**

- Present:** Jim Sexton (acting Chair), Doris Alexander, Michael Coey, John Dillon, Michael Dowling, Sheila Greene, Dermot Kelleher, Dermot McAleese, John Saeed, Deirdre Savage
- In Attendance:** Valerie Smith
- Apologies:** Michael Gibney (Dean of Research), Clive Williams, Margaret O'Mahony, David Dickson

**1. Minutes of the meeting of 06 March 04**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

**2. Matters Arising**

**Research Committee Funding Schemes**

Clarification was sought on the latest situation with the Research Committee Funding Schemes.

The call for applications to the **Start-Up Fund** has been launched, with a deadline for applications of 16 April 2004.

The call for applications to the **Emergency Fund** (replacing the Maintenance Fund) has been launched, with a deadline for applications of 16 April 2004. Applications will be routed through the Heads of Department.

The **Berkeley Fund** has been suspended for this year.

The Committee agreed that a selection panel should be set up to review applications following the same procedures used in previous years. The panel should include two people per faculty. These committee members will grade proposals submitted from their own faculties, and will then come together to ensure the homogeneity of the marks awarded. Doris Alexander will distribute the relevant papers after the deadlines, and the grading procedure should go ahead as in previous years.

**3. Research Report**

Doris Alexander gave a presentation of the research report. It was agreed that this report is for internal distribution only. Some comments were recommended for inclusion in the report and the committee expressed a wish that a one-page executive summary be added to the front of the document. The Committee agreed

that the amendments noted here could be processed by the Dean and the Research Office and the report was then to be forwarded directly to Board.

Within the report, section 1.2 mentions the problem of finding funding to meet the true costs of overheads involved in research projects. The overheads situation in College should be more clearly explained, and the shortfall between overheads paid by sponsors and actual overhead costs should be stressed in the executive summary. The fact that some Irish sponsors are starting to increase their payments for overheads should also be mentioned.

Section 2 refers to the Shanghai Jiao Tong Universities Ranking. While this section should remain in the report, it should be made clear that ranking results are always sensitive to the ranking process used. In particular the Shanghai Jiao Tong ranking is focused on engineering science and excludes the Arts.

The Committee noted that a comment should be added to say that while Trinity is doing well in terms of securing funding within Ireland, it needs to be more competitive on both an EU and a worldwide basis.

The committee thanked Donal Lyons and Niamh Brennan for their input in section 2.1 on the Research Support System. However, it was noted that while the RSS is very user-friendly, some of the citations on the system are incorrect and others are missing. The report should state that the RSS is still in the development stage, but that it has excellent potential.

Trinity College's second Bioincubator in St. James Hospital, which is due to be opened next month, should be mentioned in section 3. A sentence should also be included describing what is meant by a 'bioincubator'.

Deirdre Savage will double check the financial figures in the report. Doris Alexander will make the changes discussed by the committee. The report will then be sent by the Dean to the Board.

The committee extended their thanks to the Research Office for their hard work in compiling the report.

#### **4. Proposals for new research centres**

Michael Coey gave a presentation of the proposed CRANN centre. The centre compares favourably in size to similar international centres. A question was raised about how the salaries for the PIs, who are not presently seconded out from College to these grants, will be met once the initial funding has run out. It is presumed that they will reapply to SFI. It was conceded that one PI may have difficulties getting a salary paid. The committee approved this Centre proposal. The proposal should now proceed to the

Finance Committee (as it is proposed as a separate cost centre), the Council and the Board for approval.

Dermot Kelleher gave a presentation of the proposed Institute of Cardiovascular Science. The committee approved this Centre proposal. The proposal should now proceed to the Council and Board (there are no financial implications, so it does not need to go to the Finance Committee).

## **5. Research Element of Strategic Plan – an update**

50-55 expressions of interest were received. A meeting was held on 30 March 2004, and the EoI's have been grouped into four chunks, each of which has a number of strands, as follows:

- Health
  - infection and immunity including inflammation
  - the neurosciences
  - cancer biology
  - genetics and genomics at a cellular and population level
- Humanities
  - creative arts (theatre, arts and technology, film)
  - Irish studies
  - the construction of Europe
- Social Sciences/Policy
  - policy institute
  - IIS
  - social science and social policy
  - political policy research group
- ICT
  - software
  - hardware
  - applications

It was suggested that the development of research schools may be the critical output from this process. The document on Health care has been modified from that circulated at the meeting on 4 October 2003, to take account of all the health related EoI's. The overall document on research strategy will be discussed further at the research committee meeting, and the Committee requested that the document should be circulated well in advance.

## **6. Research Centre Forum**

Three issues have been identified:

### ***Governance of Centres***

Four levels of centre have been identified, as follows:

- i. Interest group
- ii. Research unit (perhaps with resource and space allocation)

- iii. Larger centres (requiring their own administration and space, and possibly a separate cost centre)
- iv. Strategically important centres (such as Crann), long term, with their own cost centre

It is important that the Centres have appropriate reporting and benchmarking structures.

***Benchmarking of Centres***

Benchmarking should flow from the Centre's own mission statement. There should be an on-going process of benchmarking, and it must be relative to the context in which the centre is working.

***Integration of Centre Staff into College***

Centre staff should have all the entitlements of college staff and should feel part of college. Entitlements should include such things as salary scales, pension, leave (maternity etc), health benefits, access to committees and input into the governance of the College in the same way as academics in departments.

It should be noted that the issues identified in this Centres document are discussion items only and that no decision has been made by the Research Committee in this regard.

**7. Any Other Business**

**SFI Young Investigators Scheme**

This is a new scheme launched by SFI, to which each Research Institute can submit five applications. Procedures were agreed for the selection of the Trinity candidates. The Dean will put together a selection committee. This committee will meet after the internal deadline (16 April 2004) has passed.

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 2 p.m. on Friday 21 May 2004.

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

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