The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 18ᵗʰ November 2004

Present   Ian Robertson (Dean of Research), Doris Alexander, John Fitzpatrick, Dermot Kelleher, Marina Lynch, Ailbhe Ni Chasaide, John O'Hagan, Jane Ohlmeyer, Patrick Prendergast, Deirdre Savage, Ryan Sheridan

Apologies   Michael Coey, Philip Lane

In attendance

(ex officio)   Valerie Smith

RS/04-05/18   **Minutes of meeting held on 16 Sept** It was clarified that no vote had been taken on supporting the use of research indicators in the RAM. It was also pointed out that in RS/04-05/03, the fifth line should have read "January 05". The Minutes were approved and signed.

RS/04-05/19   **Callover** Input was requested on the priority of items on the callover list. This will be revised and included with the documentation for the next meeting.

SECTION A: Policy/Implementation

RS/04-05/20   **Committee Procedures, terms of reference (ToR) and sub-committees**

ToR: Some suggestions were made regarding the ToR. There should be a strategic element to the planning and monitoring of research. The remit of the Committee has broadened and the ToR should reflect this. The Dean and Research Development Officers will draw up a draft new ToR, and show to the Committee at the next meeting.

Sub-Committees: It was proposed and agreed that the Business and Industry Committee should become a sub-committee of the Research Committee. Two new Sub-committees were also agreed, as follows: an SFI AOIP Committee and a Research Institutes and Schools Research Liaison Committee (J.Fitzpatrick to chair for an interim term, A.NiChasaide and R.Sheridan as members). A committee to coordinate between graduate studies services was suggested, but it was agreed instead that the minutes of Graduate Studies Committee meetings should be distributed to Research Committee members, and vice-versa.

Chair of Research Committee: The Committee would like to review the possibility of a Member of Board becoming Chair of the Research Committee in a year's time, after election of the new Board. The Dean indicated that a working chairperson devoting a day per week to the role would be essential if this change were to facilitate communication and decision-making, rather than add to the demands for meetings and communication of the Dean and the Research and Innovations Office.

Clarification was given on the classification of agenda items into Sections A, B and C.

SECTION B

RS/04-05/21   **Reorganisation regarding research activities, particularly research Centres**

It was mentioned that some thought needs to be put into how research centres fit into the college restructuring. There also needs to be a better definition of research centres. This will go on the agenda for the next Research Committee meeting, and the Dean will prepare a two-page discussion document on this. With relation to the Research Centres Forum document, it was agreed to view this current document as a starting point and that it cannot be advanced any further until there is more clarification on the college restructuring.

RS/04-05/22   **PRTLI**   It is likely that the HEA PRTLI Cycle 5 will be launched early in January 2005. Prior to this being launched, the Committee decided to come up with some principles which Trinity would like to see its submission to PRTLI encompassing, as follows:

- **Infrastructure.** Proposals should focus on building research infrastructure more than directly funding specific research projects. This includes human infrastructure (eg technicians or technician training; administrative support, equipment and refurbishment. New space may be considered if the PRTLI 4 call allows it.
- **More structured, 4-year, part-taught PhD programmes.**
- **Sustainability -** i.e. building on existing PRTLI investment, while not ruling out new developments.
- **Inter-disciplinarity**
- **Builds on TCD research strategy**

It was suggested that this should be disseminated to the Academic staff, to get them thinking about potential PRTLI bids in advance. The Dean will prepare an e-mail about this, which he will send to committee members first.

RS/04-05/23   **SFI Annual Overheads Investment Plan**   This was submitted and presented to SFI on 8 November. Trinity requested 52% of its 2004 Modified Total Direct Cost activity.

RS/04-05/24   **Resource Allocation Model**   There was a lot of discussion on this topic. Some of the issues raised were as follows:

In relation to the Questions and Answers document, there was a request for emphasis on the sentence regarding an external review process.

It was felt that Research, Teaching and Learning should be reviewed holistically as they are strongly linked. Clarification on the 30/70% divide between Research and Teaching was sought. It was explained that the HEA provides a grant for Teaching and Research, but that until now, this funding has all gone to Teaching. In future, it is proposed that 30% of this will go towards Research.

It is proposed by College that the proxy indicators will be used at the start of the ARAM process (although the Dean of Research indicated that it is planned that an output-based rating be phased in gradually). Some of these proxy indicators caused some concern to committee members. There was a worry that there would be increased pressure on Principal Investigators to take on PhDs, at the expense of PostDocs, despite the fact that PostDocs are essential for many large projects. One suggestion was that for every five PhD students on a project, there should be one Postdoc. Regarding the arts versus science scaling multipliers proposed, it was suggested that 4 was too little. It was also suggested that the distinction between sciences and non-sciences was not enough and that maybe the non-sciences should be further divided up. The point was raised that this weighting does not address the position of a researcher working on his/her own. Issues were raised about the feasibility of comparing publications between subject areas. Another suggestion was that schools should be able to devise their own measures in the future.

The conclusion was that the Research Committee broadly supports, with reservations, the ARAM (and the proxy measures) for its first two years, subject to there being an annual review, with particular attention to the following:

- Sensitivity to difference between departments
- Quality of the PhD students
- Aim of moving from the proxy measures onto more output measures, which wouldn't necessary replace the proxy measures, but would complement them.
- Factoring in Postdocs

RS/04-05/25   **SFI Walton Fellowships**   The committee supported the nominations of the the four candidates proposed. It was agreed that a fifth candidate who had missed the internal deadline could possibly be included, subject to references, space and so forth.

SECTION C

RS/04-05/26   **SFI President of Ireland Young Investigator Awards**   Eight people have been shortlisted from Trinity to apply for this Award.

RS/04-05/27   **SFI Research Frontiers Programme** Some of the problems which arose under this programme were explained to the Committee. Applicants had to have a contract with college for the full period of the proposed grant. SFI agreed to accept letters indicating that a candidate may have their current contract renewed to cover the period of the grant, but College decided not to provide such letters.

AOB

RS/04-05/28   **Technology Transfer Manager**

It was agreed that the position of the Technology Transfer Manager, which is funded from the Research Committee Budget, would be changed to an 'indefinite contract' basis, as long as sufficient funding is available in the Budget.

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 11.30 a.m. on Thursday 16 December 2004.

Signed: ………………………….

Date: ………………………….