

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 21st April 2005

- Present Ian Robertson (Dean of Research, DoR), Doris Alexander (DA), John Fitzpatrick (JF), Marina Lynch (ML), Ailbhe Ni Chasaide (AN), John O'Hagan (Bursar, B), Jane Ohlmeyer (JO), Patrick Prendergast (Dean of Graduate Studies, DoGS), Deirdre Savage (DS), Ryan Sheridan (Pres of Graduate Studies, PoGS)
- Apologies Dermot Kelleher, John Murray (Senior Lecturer)
- In attendance
(ex officio) Valerie Smith

RS/04-05/50 Minutes of meeting held on 24 February 2005

The Minutes were approved and signed.

SECTION A: Policy/Implementation

RS/04-05/51 Reorganisation in relation to research activities, particularly research centres

The Dean of Research summarised a document he had prepared for the meeting on *The Place of Research Centres in TCD*. A long discussion ensued on the Financial Arrangements section. One point of view was that Research Centres could not be expected to cover their own running costs from research and teaching activities, and must have other sources from which to draw funds for these costs, for example from College's Strategic Fund. One of the arguments put forward was that many of the benefits of having a world-class research centre, with top class researchers are not tangible and cannot be measured for purposes of the ARAM. The contrary point of view was that Research Centres should not be treated differently from teaching centres and departments. It was pointed out that college would not agree to take on a new teaching course unless the core costs were being covered by the HEA or other sponsor. However, if this was to be the case, then Research Centres should be put in a position where they can generate their own income, i.e. through their own costs being paid from any overheads they generate before anything else be taken for other purposes. In that instance, centres would also have to be given more flexibility in generating their own income through renting space, etc. It was also pointed out that this was a problem across all of college, not just for centres, but for individual researchers as well. A

consensus was reached that the document should be reworded, with an emphasis on Research Centres at least aiming to be able to cover their own costs from research and teaching activities, and if not, then a strategic plan should be put in place to cover the costs from the three sources listed in the document.

Whatever procedure is decided on, there needs to be a document setting out the relationship between a school and a centre. The wording 'proportional repayments to centres' was seen to be a problem as the 'proportion' needs to be agreed by both the school and the centre.

Finally, it was pointed out that financial arrangements for Centres are not something to be decided by the Research Committee, but rather that the Research Committee would put forward a proposal for consideration by the ARM, Finance Committee and Board.

Action: DoR to draw up and circulate another draft of the document, with a view to sending it to board for approval.

SECTION B

RS/04-05/52 Research Committee Funding – evaluation of Incentive Scheme

A total of 32 applications to this fund were received, requesting a total of €149,588.13. Each proposal was evaluated by two reviewers and provisional results show that twenty-three applications were approved outright. Five were deemed to be 'maybe', and would require a second reading by the reviewers. Five were suggested to be refused funding, although reviewers were given an opportunity to make a final decision on these. Following the discussions at the meeting, reviewers will send their final decisions to the Research Office, with justification of the decisions.

Action: Valerie Smith, Research Office, will get final decisions and justification of these decisions from the reviewers.

RS/04-05/53 Research Committee Funding – Start-up Scheme Evaluation

A total of 21 applications to this fund were received, requesting a total of €321,497. A similar evaluation scheme to that used for the Incentive Scheme should be used, although reviewers should be given more time for the review process. Final decisions will be taken at the next Research Committee Meeting.

Action: Valerie Smith, Research Office, will distribute evaluation questions and proposals to reviewers.

RS/04-05/54 Research Committee Funding – Research Capacity Building Scheme

The Dean of Research summarised this scheme. The scheme was approved by the committee, with an application deadline of 25 May 2005. The deadline for expenditure, however, was extended to end of September 2006. The point was made that all Research Committee Schemes should allow at least one year for expenditure of funding.

There should be a requirement that successful applicants submit a report of how the funding was spent at the end of the funding period.

Action: *DA to launch scheme*

RS/04-05/55 Report back from Sub-Committees

Research Institutes & Schools Research Liaison Committee

John Fitzpatrick, as chair of this Committee convened a meeting of this committee on 18 April 2005. The committee reviewed a document prepared by the Research Centres Forum last year. This document overlaps with the document prepared by the Dean of Research under RS/04-05/51 above, so DoR will amalgamate this into the latter document.

The first remit of this committee will be to ask all centres to reapply for status of Trinity Research Centre, according to the criteria set out in the above-mentioned document. This would apply to all Research Centres and Institutes, with Institutes being asked to apply for Institute status at a later date. In principle, Centres should be approved by the Research Institutes and Schools Research Liaison Committee. However, as this sub-committee should include representation from the centres, the above task needs to be carried out by the Research Committee until such time as the sub-committee is officially formed. In light of this, applications will instead come to the Research Committee for approval at the June meeting.

The Research Institutes and Schools Research Liaison Committee Terms of Reference were approved by the Research Committee.

Action: *JF to identify issues to be addressed in the proposals to be recognised as a Trinity Research Centre, and any documentation to be requested with proposals. He will send this to DA.*

AOB

Minutes of Research Committee Meetings

A motion was proposed and approved that the Research Committee Members be sent a copy of the draft minutes of Research Committee Meetings for comment once they have been drafted, and where possible, before circulation to other groups.

Possible new Research Committee Scheme

DA reported that the Research Committee would have a budget of €1.7 million this year (although some of this is already earmarked for the Research Support System and Technology Transfer Manager). She suggested a new scheme similar to SFI's recently launched *Women in Science and Engineering* scheme, but open to all areas of College.

Action: *DA to ask Anthea Lee, Research Office, to put together a proposal for a possible new scheme.*

Change in June meeting date

The June Research Committee Meeting will now take place at 2.00 p.m. on 20 June 2005.

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 2.00 p.m. on 19 May 2005.

Signed:

Date: