

**The University of Dublin  
Trinity College**

**Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 19 May 2005**

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

**RS/04-05/56 Minutes of meeting held on 21 April 2005**

The Minutes were approved and signed.

**SECTION A: Policy/Implementation**

**RS/04-05/57 Reorganisation in relation to research activities, particularly research centres**

DoR presented his revised document *The place of Research Grouping in TCD (fifth draft): Report prepared by the Research Committee*. The Senior Lecturer started the discussion by stressing the importance of having such a document in place. DGS pointed out that the development of Graduate Schools is being discussed at present, and that this document would have to be taken in conjunction with these. He made the point that in certain cases, a graduate school could be a better vehicle for some of the research currently being done in Research Centres.

A long discussion ensued about the relationship between a large Centre/Institute and the schools to which it belongs. One of the issues is regarding lines of reporting. The present document notes the director reporting to the Board of the Institute and then to the Dean of Research. However, if an Institute draws its staff from one or more school, should the director of the Institute then report to the Head(s) of School? In this case, would the Head of School, rather than the director, have the final say on how the space in the Research Institute is used? Another issue discussed was the accrual of costs and benefits to the school. Under the current document, all funding goes to the school, in proportion to their involvement in the Institute. However,

would this mean that the Head(s) of School are then liable for any deficits accrued by the Research Institute? More specifically, the issue of overheads was raised, which was then discussed at great length. Under the current draft of the document, all overheads go directly to the school, to then be redistributed to the Research Institute using a pre-agreed, non-negotiable formula, which in effect means that the institute does get the overhead, but it is channelled through the school for accounting purposes. Some at the meeting felt that this was an entirely unworkable arrangement, which would cause untold tension between the schools and institutes. The alternative suggestion was that the overheads be given directly to the Institutes.

The point was made that some centres get a lot of funding from sponsors who don't provide any overheads, and these centres could not be expected to cover all their own costs. The Bursar strengthened this argument by saying that even in the case of grants where overheads are given, this is rarely enough to cover all costs. A situation should not be allowed to arise whereby the Head of School can forbid researchers in that school to apply to those sponsors who provide little or no overheads. The benefit to the school via ARAM should be sufficient for the school to be willing to pick up the tab.

There was agreement that this debate about how the relationship between a research centre and the schools involved only relates to two or three large institutes in college, as it would clearly be in the benefit of most of the smaller Research Centres that they be linked to one or more school as outlined in the document.

During the debate, it became clear that the issues involved were too complex to be resolved through the Research Committee meeting. The Dean of Research decided, with the agreement of the research committee, to convene a small working group of interested parties, to discuss the issues in more detail. The working group should include Heads of Schools, Centres/Institutes, the Bursar and the DoR. Based on the outcome of this working group, the Dean will produce a revised version of the document.

*Action: DoR to convene working group, and based on this, prepare another draft of the document.*

## **SECTION B: Implementation Decisions**

### **RS/04-05/58 Research Committee Funding – Start-up funding – evaluation**

22 applications were received for the Start-up Fund for New Lecturers. Each application was reviewed by two reviewers. It was recommended that one applicant be given slightly less than requested, on the grounds that the software she requested is already available in college. It was further recommended that all remaining ELIGIBLE applicants receive the full amount requested.

*Action: Valerie Smith, Research Office will get confirmation of eligibility and inform the applicants of the results.*

**RS/04-05/59** Research Committee Funding – Research Incentive Scheme – Special Call  
Due to the long discussion under RS/04-05/57 above, and given that the proposed launch date for this scheme is September 05, this item will be held over until the next meeting.

Action: *This item to be included in agenda for next meeting.*

**RS/04-05/60 Report back from Sub-Committees**

**Research Institutes & Schools Research Liaison Committee**

John Fitzpatrick, as chair of this Committee, should provide criteria for applying for the status of a group or centre in college. He should then write to all centres asking them to reapply for recognition as Trinity College Research Centre.

Action: *JF to identify issues to be addressed in the proposals to be recognised as a Trinity Research Centre, and write to centres.*

**Section C: Items for Noting**

**RS/04-05/61 Research Capacity Building Scheme**

The Research Capacity Building Scheme was launched on Friday 6 May 2005. It was agreed that the maximum period for which funding for research assistance personnel may be sought should be changed from ‘four’ to ‘up to twelve’ months. In view of this change, the deadline will also be extended to Friday 3 June 2005.

**AOB**

**Associate Dean of Research**

Due to his increasing workload, the Dean of Research has requested that an Associate Dean of Research, with particular responsibility for Innovation, be appointed. This person would also Chair the Business and Industry Committee, a sub-committee of the Research Committee. The position has been approved by board, and the actual nominated appointee will be put to the next board meeting for approval. However, funding will be needed to pay for a postdoctoral research assistant to relieve the Associate Dean of his/her current research obligations. The Research Committee approved an allocation of €30,000 from its budget to pay for this assistant (with a further €30,000 to come from the SFI AOIP).

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 2.00 p.m. on 20 June 2005.

Signed: .....

Date: .....