

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 13 December 2007

Present: John Kelly (Chair); David Lloyd (Dean of Research, DoR and Acting Director of Trinity Research & Innovation, DoTRI), Alessio Frenda, Alison Donnelly, Philip Lane, Carol O'Sullivan (Dean of Graduate Studies), Bursar

Apologies: Brian Sweeney, Dermot Kelleher, Jane Ohlmeyer, Senior Lecturer

In attendance: Maria Treanor, Doris Alexander, Jennifer Edmond, Deirdre Savage, Tony McMahon

Section A: Policy/Implementation Issues

RS/07-08/12 Minutes of meeting held on 25 October 2007
The Minutes were approved and signed.

RS/07-08/13 Callover
RS/07-08/08 Draft Terms of Reference for Trinity Research Institute Directors: The next review will be in Social Sciences and P Lane will report on this as it goes along. The Heads of School in the relevant areas have met and aim to have the review finished by mid-March 2008. The Committee approved funding of €35k for management and administration of the review.

Action: P Lane to report on the Review of Social Sciences

RS/07-08/14 Report from Dean of Research
The Business and Industry Committee met on 30 November 2007 and discussed some policy issues.
The HEA Equipment Grant to College is valued at €6.088 million, and all outstanding issues have been resolved. The majority of requests from the College community to this scheme were successful. However, it is not clear how much value was received in terms of scale. The tendering procurement process will be reviewed with regard to making savings for the College. The Procurement Officer may be invited to attend a future meeting of the Research Committee to report on the process.
College was very successful in the recent IRCHSS project awards.

Action: J Edmond to request a report from the Procurement Office on the tendering procurement process for the HEA Equipment Grant.

RS/07-08/15 Researchers-related Employment Issues

Tony McMahon, Staff Secretary, made a presentation to the Committee in which he addressed grading/salary scales and salary determination; funding and social costs; pensions; and research careers. He identified salary structures and salary-determination issues as areas of concern, and noted that they are sectoral and not unique to the College. Salaries are often determined by the size of a grant rather than by a salary decisionmaker for the whole of College. The Committee agreed that it is essential that contracts are well-managed and that staff are paid properly and on time.

The College must comply with legislation but there are issues regarding redundancy, pensions, sick leave, etc. where the rules set by the funding agencies are creating a funding shortfall for College. The Staff Secretary is going to bring a proposal on funding of sick leave benefit to the Personnel and Appointments Committee (PAC).

As part of implementation of the Fixed Term Workers Act (FTWA), non-standard grades, mainly researchers, have now entered the appropriate pension scheme. Work on arrears' calculation and collection is the next phase of this project.

A discussion ensued about career structure and the fit between researcher and academic. A salary scale is needed which matches all academic titles at all levels. In addition, a clear profile is essential for each title to allow consistency in the recruitment process. This would include the setting and review of salary scales. It was noted that the Irish Universities Association (IUA) salary scales are currently being used at the pre-award stage of applications from TCD to funding agencies. However, each agency has different rules regarding the salary costs which they will provide. There is currently no common approach across the university sector but the IUA is going to make a presentation to the Government via the Higher Education Research Group. In addition, a joint Research Committee/PAC sub-group will examine and report on the career and salary issues in College.

The Committee noted that there is currently a multiplicity of 'scales' and an inconsistency of treatment of social costs among funders. There is also a need for clarity of definition of postgraduate students, postdoctoral fellows and employees.

Action: Staff Secretary to bring proposals on sick leave funding to PAC.

Action: Joint Research Committee/PAC sub-group to examine and report on the career and salary issues in College.

Section B: Implementation Decisions

RS/07-08/16 Research Committee Budget

From 2008 onwards, the College allocation to the Research Committee will be approximately €100k plus €250k from the IONA fund, giving a total operating budget next year of approximately €400k. It was suggested that the funding for Research Committee awards should be validated by the Committee but held and administered by the Research Development Office in Trinity Research & Innovation. DoR will discuss this with the Acting Treasurer.

The Research Support System (RSS) will also need continued funding in 2008. This will be discussed at the next meeting of the Research Committee.

Action: DoR to discuss the administration of Research Committee award funding with the Acting Treasurer.

Action: DoR to discuss funding for the Research Support System with the Acting Treasurer, and to invite a representative from RSS to attend the next meeting of the Research Committee.

RS/07-08/17 CRANN and Other Institutes

The Bursar reported that the funding mechanism for CRANN is shortly to be finalised and brought to Board for approval. It was noted that postdoctoral fellowships must be approved via the relevant School, and postgraduate students must be registered with a School. Overspending will not be permitted.

The same model is proposed for TCIN. If this mechanism is accepted then College would propose to fund the shortfall associated with the MRI scanner until 2009 when it is expected to be self-funding. The model for IIIS will be finalised when the current review ends.

Section C: Items for Noting

RS/07-08/18 Meeting with Directors of Research

The Committee agreed that it is important to have the involvement of the College Directors of Research. They will try to meet two or three times a year to see what joint actions can be taken.

DoR welcomed the Directors of Research to this part of the meeting. He summarised the current funding pressures and some of the funding opportunities coming up in the next few months.

PRTL15: The HEA is meeting the Vice-Presidents/Deans of Research in mid-January 2008, and the call for PRTL15 may follow. It is expected to be a five-year programme with a heavy emphasis on capital. GREPs may also be delivered through the programme. A banded cap structure based on research activity will be suggested so that everyone has to bring in matching funds. Principal Investigators should start the planning process before the call which is expected to map to institutional strategies and national objectives. DoR will circulate to the Research Directors and Committee members his letter to the HEA about the programmatic element of PRTL1.

The capital development plan for the College was developed over the last three years, and aims to free up more space for Arts and Humanities. Planning permission has been granted for the Pearse Street corridor, and is underway for the An Post site. Permission will also be requested to increase space in Foster Place.

Stokes and other SFI Programmes: The SFI Director General has presented the SFI Programme for 2008. They cannot go outside their ICT/BIO brief but will support ICT which supports energy, financial modelling, engineering initiatives, etc. The Principal Investigator Award structure will change to two calls per year with only 50 awards in 2008 and about 30 in 2009. Applications for Strategic Research Clusters should have cash contributions from industry partners. DoR will circulate a weblink to a presentation on the above.

The next call for the Stokes Professorship and Lectureship Awards will be towards the end of 2008. Schools should be considering the areas they wish to build up. Postdoctoral fellows should be getting to a position where then can apply for academic awards. The resulting space requirements will have an impact on their Schools.

IRCHSS: College has been very successful in recent awards. In feedback from the IRCHSS, applications would be welcomed from Psychology, and wet-lab work may be included. DoR will communicate to the IRCHSS any views from the Social Sciences in College about what they would like to see in IRCHSS calls.

Relations between HEA and Research Councils: IRCHSS was only able to afford one GREP this year, and the HEA is now going to take responsibility for delivering graduate programmes.

Overheads Distribution: One possibility for distribution of College overheads is for all overheads to go to Schools and then *Cista Communis* charges Schools for services. Alternatively, it could be a 50/50 distribution between the two. At the moment, College needs an average of about 45% of overheads to cover costs. If all overheads go

to Schools, then all costs must go to Schools as well. In addition, College is moving towards full economic costing for EU FP7. More people will be drawn into this costing exercise as College tries to accumulate information on its teaching and research costs. Mechanisms for costing the time of individual academics will also be included.

College-based Research Ethics Committee: College is unique amongst the top-class universities in the world in not having an institution-based ethics committee. Work has been done on this but is on hold until the new faculty structure is in place. The Committee agreed that this process should be expedited.

Any Other Business: College will be able to map its software system for monitoring grant applications to the system currently awaiting approval by the Information Policy Committee.

The Research Contracts Manager is currently working out notice and will be full-time in Trinity Research & Innovation by the end of February 2008. Significant headway has been made with the interview process for the Director of Trinity Research & Innovation.

Action: DoR will circulate to the Research Committee and Directors of Research his letter to the HEA about the programmatic element of PRTLII.

Action: DoR will circulate a weblink to a presentation about the SFI Programme for 2008.

Action: DoR to communicate to IRCHSS views from Social Sciences in College about what they would like to see in IRCHSS calls.

Action: DoR to call another meeting with the Directors of Research during next term.

Action: DoR to ensure that work on the creation of a College Ethics Committee is expedited.

The next meeting of the Research Committee will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 11.00 on Thursday 17 January 2008.

Signed:

Date: