**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 01 December 2009

Present: Professor Patrick Prendergast *(Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair)*, Professor Michael Marsh *(Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences)*, Dr James Callaghan *(Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation, and Secretary)*, Professor Carol O'Sullivan *(Dean of Graduate Studies)*, Professor James Wickham, Professor Paul Holm, Professor Linda Doyle, Ms Patricia Callaghan *(Academic Secretary)*, Professor Shane Allwright, Ronan Hodson (*President of the Graduate Students' Union*), Dr Tony McElligott (*Chair of the Trinity Research Staff Association*)

In attendance: Dr Camilla Kelly (*Research Development Office & Minute Secretary to the Committee*), Ms Deirdre Savage (*Nominee of Treasurer*)

Apologies: Ms Doris Alexander (*Research Development Officer*), Dr David Lloyd *(Dean of Research and Deputy Chair)*, Professor Dermot Kelleher *(Faculty of Health Sciences Representative)*

Not present: Professor Clive Williams *(Dean of Engineering, Mathematics & Science)*, Professor Colm O'Moráin *(Dean of Health Sciences)*, Professor John Boland

Section A

RS/09-10/13   **Minutes of 6th October 2009**
Changes were incorporated, and the minutes were approved and signed.

RS/09-10/14   **Matters Arising from the Minutes**
RS/09-10/02: The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer drew attention to the fact that some difficulties are being encountered in developing a model of funding that would be applicable to all four Trinity Research Institutes.

RS/09-10/06: The Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation (ADTRI) was asked to comment on the status of the Research Proposal and Award Management System (RPAMS).   The Committee was informed that RPAMS was ready to go to tender in October. He

1

added that all the actions that the Information Policy Committee (IPC) recommended had been completed. These included process mapping of the appropriate parts of Trinity Research & Innovation (TR&I), consultations with the academic community, discussions at Research Committee, liaison with Research Directors, a session to demonstrate candidate systems, workshops to discuss how the processes in TR&I would change as a result of the implementation and a final workshop to 'walk-through' the 'to-be' process following the implementation. All of these workshops involved representatives from the academic community, representatives of the Treasurer's Office and members of TR&I. However, due to issues of how RPAMS would relate to College's E-strategy, a request was made for clarification on this issue. On foot of this concern, and until clarification was made, the Interim Chief Operating Officer (COO) has asked that plans to go out to tender be put on hold. The DoR has also requested that any plans to implement RPAMS should also involve a documented change management process.   The IPC is aware of the current situation regarding RPAMS.

RS/09-10/15   **Research Quality Metrics (RQM)**
The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed the Committee that the Working Group is currently developing a new model as per the request of the College Board.

Proposals relating to resource allocations in the future are: 1) Number of research active staff funded from core grant and self-funding; 2) Research expenditure, weighted as in the old ARAM model; 3) Qualitative measures for the whole school, which will be negotiated between the Dean of Research, Head of School, and the Faculty Dean. These qualitative measures may also include publications, but each School will propose the most appropriate criteria. In the start-up phase of this new resource allocation model, it will be assumed that every School meets the third metric.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited comments from the Committee to take back to the Working Group.

The Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences noted that the RQM may be difficult to apply in the case of multidisciplinary schools. In response, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer commented that it will be more of an issue with some criteria than others, but will be best dealt with via the third criterion i.e. the negotiable qualitative measures.

The issue of benchmarking against other institutions was also raised. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer responded that the Working

Group had decided benchmarking might not be an easy process given that there would not be automatic comparators for some Schools. However, some Heads of School might decide this to be an appropriate measure and would be at liberty to suggest it as a measure under criterion 3 of the RQM.

The meeting queried whether, as a result of the new model, there would be a huge shift in how funds are allocated. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer responded that this was indeed possible. Those that did well under the old model might not fare as well under the new scheme.

The President of the Graduate Students' Union asked how PhD students fitted into the new model. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer responded that in contrast to the old model, PhD student numbers did not form part of the RQM but did drive resource allocation on the student number criterion.

In response to a query on weightings for Research Expenditure, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that the weightings would not change i.e. a multiplier of six will be applied to humanities, and multiplier of one applied to science.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed the Committee that Heads of School will shortly be getting lists of research active staff in their respective Schools, taken from the Research Support System, and will be asked to validate the lists.

The Committee was further informed that the Working Group was also considering a 'banding' system of four different bands for Research Expenditure rather than using absolute Euro numbers.

There are also plans to have a meeting with the Directors of Research on the issue of RQM.

RS/09-10/16 **Trinity Research & Innovation (TR&I) Annual Report and Annual Research Report**
A copy of the draft TR&I Annual Report and the content of the Annual Research Report were circulated with papers for the meeting.

The ADTRI asked for clarification on what material should appear in each report. The TR&I Annual Report currently details all the activities of TR&I, while the Annual Research Report features data pooled from the Research Support System (RSS). The suggestion was made that the Annual Research Report should be called the DoR Report to make more of a distinction between the two reports.

3

Referring to the Annual Research Report, the question was asked as to how the 'collaboration data by country' was collated. The ADTRI responded that it was based around information taken from published articles as entered into the RSS. It was also suggested that it would be helpful if this report had a note on how data was sourced and how it should be interpreted. A further suggestion was for a list of international collaborations in funded research projects to be included in the report. It was also proposed that it would be more useful to include data over a number of years than data for a single year.

With reference to the section on Contracts in the TR&I Annual Report, it was noted that the report only included information for this year. As with the Annual Research Report, year-on-year statistics would be more informative. It was also noted that it would be useful to circulate this report to Heads of School. The ADTRI informed the Committee that Contracts information is already circulated on a quarterly basis to the Faculty Deans.

It was noted that the TR&I Annual Report would make interesting reading for all College members as it identifies key trends in funding etc; however, some of the data relating to Technology Transfer is confidential. For example, information on potential patent applications and information on some research collaborations should not be circulated outside College. The Annual Research Report could incorporate non-sensitive information from the TR&I Annual Report, and could be made freely available.

The ADTRI highlighted the issue of late applications, which is also discussed in TR&I Annual Report. In response to a point on FP7 raised by the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair, the ADTRI pointed out that 47% of applicants missed the internal deadlines. This left little, if any, scope for grantsmanship and impeded the ability to increase our success rates. He also gave the example of one application, not specifically an FP7 one, where the application arrived in TR&I ten minutes before the external deadline.

It was suggested that College could improve grant application success rates if sufficient time was given to review applications and if applicants adhered to internal deadlines set by TR&I.

The ADTRI also pointed out that TR&I currently handle many service/non-research contracts and that it may not be appropriate for TR&I to continue to handle this type of contract. Service contracts might be better dealt with by Faculty Offices so that TR&I can focus its efforts on research and research-related activities. The Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences commented that the Faculty Offices are

already busy and do not have the resources to manage additional work. It was suggested that it might be beneficial to have meetings with Directors of Research to highlight the existing pressure points in TR&I.

The ADTRI pointed out that the issue of how best to manage non-research contracts has been passed around College for several years and that there is no proper process in place to address these. Because of the lack of a defined procedure there is a higher level of risk associated with these contracts. In the interests of discussing and agreeing a proper process, the ADTRI informed the meeting that he is preparing a memo highlighting these issues and proposing a way forward. He acknowledged the input to this memo given by the Treasurer's Office. The memo will be submitted initially to the COO. Professor James Wickham noted that all research-active staff should be made aware of the exact process of application/contracts etc in TR&I.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer concluded this part of the meeting by stating that the TR&I Annual Report and Annual Research Report (DoR Report) are very useful documents, and noted that these should now be completed for the next meeting of the Research Committee.

Action: The ADTRI to finalize the draft TR&I Annual Report.

Action: The ADTRI to have a draft of the Annual Research Report (DoR Report) ready for the next Research Committee meeting. This report will feature a combination of information from the TR&I Annual Report and information from the RSS.

Action: The ADTRI will work with the DoR who will identify a list of actions on foot of the TR&I Annual Report.

RS/09-10/17   **Research Committee Budget**
A copy of a memo relating to the Research Committee Budget was circulated with papers for the meeting.

The ADTRI pointed out that the budget available to be allocated by the Research Committee was net of relevant salaries. The budget now takes account of what was agreed at the PAC meeting of 19th Dec 2006 (minute PAC 2006-07/56).

As the budget now stands, the Committee has ca. €630K to allocate to the promotion of research activities across College. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer asked the Committee for proposals on

how the funds should be disbursed. Suggestions included: PhD studentships; PhDs oriented around innovation; innovation events; sustainability funds for staff still in a start up phase at College; small grants to initiate a new activity. The meeting heard that students funded by IRCSET (Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering & Technology) currently are funded for only three years, and it was suggested that the Research Committee funds be used to assist these students in their fourth year. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer responded by stating that College awards could provide any additional funds.

It was proposed that there should be some scheme to incentivise the convergent theme identified in the strategic plan – "Sustainable Society"; as its stands, this theme currently has no 'owner'. It was also suggested that innovation should be made central to the scheme. The Dean of Graduate Studies was asked to develop a proposal around funding a four-year studentship starting 2011/12. It was suggested that €200K could be rolled over from this year to add to next year's research funds to enable the funding of a coherent group of students. The Committee agreed to support the funding of studentships.

The Committee agreed that in light of the moratorium on staffing, no funds would be allocated for Start Up Grants this year.

The question was raised as to whether some funds could be allocated for post-docs. In response, it was suggested that there could be a tie in to the proposed postgraduate scheme on innovation & sustainability.

Action: The Dean of Graduate Studies to develop a proposal around funding a four-year studentships and small 'micro-funds' available to Research Fellows in the area of Innovation & the Sustainable Society, starting 2011/12.

Section B

RS/09-10/18   **Strategic Plan Research Implementation**
A copy of Section 3 of the Strategic Plan 2009-2014, Knowledge Generation and Transfer, was circulated with papers for the meeting.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer updated the Committee on each of the actions outlined in this section of the plan.

3.1 Attract and develop world-class principal investigators.
The 'new blood' scheme is about to be launched with the aim of recruiting 20 new staff during 2010 and 2011, and criteria are about to be circulated. Schools will be allocated posts and can go ahead and advertise/fill them.
3.2 Diversify research funding sources
See item RS/09-10/16.
3.3 Strengthen Trinity Research Institutes and Centres
The governance of Trinity Research Institutes was already discussed – see item RS/09-10/14. A future ambition is to develop a new institute that maps onto energy, transport & environment.
3.4 Further promote research quality
There are plans in progress to develop a mentoring scheme for academic staff.
3.5 Foster multi-disciplinary research consortia
The Long Room Hub is a good example of a multi-disciplinary consortium – different disciplines brought together under the common banner of culture and performing arts.
3.6 Develop a new model for intellectual property management
Currently in process. See item RS/09-10/19.

RS/09-10/19   **Update on Innovation**
The ADTRI updated the Committee on innovation activities in College.
The draft TR&I report mentions the setup of four companies this year (to September). An additional five companies have been formed since then. Out of those five, three have been formed with the help of external interim CEOs. This new approach is being facilitated and driven by TR&I and allows the academic founder to focus on the science/technology/intellectual property at the core of the potential company rather than being diverted onto issues such as business plans, management teams and raising finance.

The Vice Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that the formation of nine campus companies under the new approach to innovation was very good news and that this should be publicised. The ADTRI added that he was planning a publicity event towards the end of the year to announce this.

The ADTRI informed the meeting that the Trinity Enterprise Network (TEN) was launched on the 24th November. This network will provide information and act as a discussion forum for companies and potential companies associated with College as well as individuals who wish to get involved. This includes campus companies, "spin-in" companies, tenants at TTEC in Pearse Street and potential interim CEOs to help with the formation of new campus companies. It will

also provide opportunities for students to engage with campus companies as possible interns. The web site for TEN is www.trinityenterprisenetwork.ie

Section C

RS/09-10/20 **Items for Discussion at Future Meetings**
   i.   Sustainability, governance, and funding of Trinity Research Institutes – in progress, see item RS/09-10/14.
   ii. Governance and funding of College Centres.
   iii. Governance structures to support innovation.
   iv. Research staff career structures. It was noted that the Irish Universities Association is developing a position paper on career structures for research staff. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, in response to a query, proposed that in light of the fact that Trinity College has many research staff, that it might be prudent to address this issue at College level as a matter of priority. Current advice from the Staff Office is that College should wait for a sector decision.

Action: Research staff career structures to go on the agenda for next meeting.

RS/09-10/21 **Any Other Business**
The Chair of the Trinity Research Staff Association, Dr Tony McElligott, informed the Committee that this meeting would be his last. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair and Committee thanked Tony for his efforts and wished him success in future endeavours.

Signed: ………………………….

Date: ………………………….