

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 4th May 2010

Present: Professor Patrick Prendergast (*Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair*), Dr Patrick Geoghegan (*Associate Dean of Research*), Professor Michael Marsh (*Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences*), Professor Colm O'Moráin (*Dean of Health Sciences*), Professor Carol O'Sullivan (*Dean of Graduate Studies*), Professor James Wickham, Professor John Boland, Ms Patricia Callaghan (*Academic Secretary*), Professor Shane Allwright, Ronan Hodson (*President of the Graduate Students' Union*), Dr John Walsh (*Chair of the Trinity Research Staff Association (TRSA)*)

Present

(by phone): Dr James Callaghan (*Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation, ADTRI, and Secretary*)

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

Apologies: Professor Dermot Kelleher (*Faculty of Health Science Representative*), Professor Poul Holm, Professor Linda Doyle

Not present: Dr David Lloyd (*Dean of Research, DoR, and Deputy Chair*), Professor Clive Williams (*Dean of Engineering, Mathematics & Science*)

Section A

RS/09-10/43 Minutes of 16th March 2010

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed subject to the following amendments

Item RS/09-10/35

Paragraph 2:

The TRSA requested that the following sentence be inserted:

"The TRSA representative disagreed with the suggestion that contract research posts could be viewed primarily as training posts and suggested that such an approach seriously underestimated the extent of the contribution made by contract researchers to publications and research output, as well as ancillary tasks such as administration."

Item RS/09-10/39

Paragraph 2:

Change wording to

“There was some discussion around assisting staff to meet the criteria for research productivity, and the importance of incentivising people to do so.”

RS/09-10/44 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item RS/09-10/35:

RS/09-10/24: The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair informed the Committee that the Working Group on Career Structures has been established. The Group will have its first meeting mid May. One of the Working Group will be a member of the Personnel & Appointments Committee. The Group will report directly to Council.

RS/09-10/27: A meeting of the Research Ethics Working group took place on 29th March 2010. The minutes of the meeting were circulated to the Committee. The ADTRI requested that the Committee approve the Membership and suggested that the Associate Dean of Research might be the appropriate person to lead the Group.

Item RS/09-10/36:

The Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences spoke to the meeting on the matter of progress with the Social Sciences Working Group. The Dean informed the Committee that little progress has been made to date. He has reported the views of the Research Committee to the Heads of Schools and will ask them to reconvene again to discuss the issue, but it is likely to be the next academic year before that happens.

Item RS/09-10/36:

Another draft of the DOR Annual Report will be ready for circulation by the end of next week.

Action: The ADTRI to circulate the latest draft report to the Committee by week ending 14th May 2010.

Item RS/09-10/38:

The Associate Dean of Research informed the Committee that he has almost concluded his meetings with the Heads/Directors of College's research centres. A report will be ready for circulation two weeks before next meeting on 8th June 2010. Preliminary findings indicate that it might be worthwhile considering a 4th level of grouping, namely a Trinity Research Centre, which would lie just below Trinity Research Institutes in terms of hierarchy.

Action: The Associate Dean of Research to circulate his report by 25th May 2010.

RS/09-10/45 Social Science Working Group (SSWG)

See also See RS/09-10/44. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair questioned whether a Social Sciences Research Institute is actually emerging, and asked whether a Social Sciences 'quarter' (as per the College development plan) would be a more appropriate goal. The Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences argued that the social sciences need the support an institute could provide and that a case could be made to gather social scientists together.

Action: The Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences to reconvene Working Group next academic year.

RS/09-10/46 Contract Academic Staff and Research Funding Proposals

The Committee noted a memorandum from Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation, dated 28th April 2010. The Committee were invited to comment on the proposals therein.

After some discussion on various aspects of the documents, including comments that it should be made clear that these proposals are aimed only at lecturing/professorial staff, and not researchers, the Committee approved the proposals. The Committee suggested that it would be a good idea to lobby some of the national sponsors to start accepting applications from staff whose contract length, at the time of application, may not cover the period of the grant. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair noted that it was important that these policy changes take place prior to the new blood lecturers starting at College.

Action: Doris Alexander to prepare a briefing note outlining which sponsors need to be lobbied and circulate to the Committee

Action: Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair to e-mail Directors of Research to inform them of the change in policy

RS/09-10/47 Startup Funds for New Lecturers for 2010/2011

The ADTRI reminded the Committee that no startup funds were made available for this academic year. If the Committee wish to run a startup scheme for 2010/2011, there is €100K available. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair suggested that the Committee make a decision at a later date.

RS/09-10/48 US Department of Defence (DoD) Funding for Non-Military Purposes

The Committee noted a memorandum from Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation, dated 28th April 2010. The Committee were invited to comment on the proposals therein.

The starting point for the discussion was what the implications of accepting such funding would be for the reputation of College. The

meeting also asked whether it was appropriate to take funds indirectly. It also asked whether there was sufficient information available regarding the various types of DoD funding. One of the Committee noted at this point that that the DoD is the biggest funder of breast cancer research in the world and that it provides a significant amount of money for health research.

On the question of making decisions around which applications would be supported by College, it was noted that it should be a group decision, that it would not be appropriate for one person, for example the DoR, to make the decision alone. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair proposed that it might be appropriate for the DoR and perhaps 2 others from the Research Committee to form a subgroup to make any decisions on applications.

Strong opinions were expressed on both sides of the argument. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair summarized the discussion by noting that as the Committee was unable to come to a decision at this point, it should clarify what should happen next. In response, it was suggested that the Committee look at policies in other European universities and also get clarification on exactly what types of funding are available from the DoD. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair concluded by stating that the majority view was to revisit the issue at the next meeting. Until then, the current policy on US DoD funding would remain in place.

Action: Doris Alexander to provide a summary of policies in other European universities wrt US DoD funding.

Action: Doris Alexander to provide a summary of types of US DoD funding.

RS/09-10/49 Any Other Business

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair circulated a copy of a recently published case study of collaboration between College and some nearby cultural institutions, entitled "Creativity, the City & the University", written by Dr Johanna Archbold. The Committee's attention was drawn to a map on page 4 of the document, which shows a map of Dublin city centre with Trinity and the cultural institutions.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chair noted that proposals for sustainability of the Trinity Research Institutes (CRANN, Long Room Hub, & TCIN) have been presented to the Planning Group. The proposals will now go forward to Council.

The DOR requested that the ADTRI bring to the Committee's notice the intention to review one of College's main research themes, namely Transport, Energy, and Environment.

Section B

RS/09-10/50 Research Ethics Policy Group (REPG)

The Committee noted a copy of the minutes of the first meeting of the REPG, which took place 29th March 2010.

RS/09-10/51 Patent Funding

The Committee noted a memorandum from the ADTRI, dated 26th April 2010, outlining the current situation with respect to patenting costs and funding.

Section C

RS/09-10/52 Innovation Alliance Branded Events

The Committee noted and approved a memorandum from the DoR, dated 26th April 2010.

RS/09-10/53 Centre for Women in Science & Engineering (WiSER)

A copy of the WiSER Strategic Group Terms of Reference and Membership was circulated with papers for the meeting. The Committee approved both.

RS/09-10/54 Items for Discussion at Future Meetings

- (i) Sustainability, governance and funding of Trinity Research Institutes (8th May 2010)
- (ii) Governance and funding of College Centres (8th May 2010)
- (iii) US DoD funding (8th May 2010)
- (iv) Governance structures to support innovation
- (v) Review of Good Research Practice policy (as per BD/09-10/51) (October 2010)
- (vi) More effective communication of College 'stories' (request Communications Office to present at next meeting)
- (vii) Strategic planning

Signed:

Date: