

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 17th April 2012

Present: Professor Vinny Cahill (*Dean of Research, DOR, and Chair*)
Associate Professor Derek Sullivan (*Associate Dean of Research, ADoR*)
Professor John Horne (*Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities*)
Assistant Professor Aidan Seery (*Director of Research, School of Education*)
Assistant Professor Clemens Ruthner (*Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies*)
Associate Professor Crawford Gribben (*Director of Research, School of English*)
Professor Ailbhe Ni Chasaide (*Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences*)
Professor Malcolm MacLachlan (*Director of Research, School of Psychology*)
Associate Professor Suzanne Cahill (*Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy*)
Assistant Professor Ed Lavelle (*Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology*)
Professor Georg Duesberg (*Director of Research, School of Chemistry*)
Associate Professor Carl Vogel (*Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics*)
Associate Professor Anthony Quinn (*Director of Research, School of Engineering*)
Associate Professor Sinead Ryan (*Director of Research, School of Mathematics*)
Professor Martin Hegner (*Director of Research, School of Physics*)
Assistant Professor Gary Moran (*Director of Research, School of Dental Science*)
Professor Catherine Comiskey (*Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery*)
Associate Professor Carsten Ehrhardt (*Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences*)
Assistant Professor Gaia Narciso (*Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy*)
Assistant Professor Caoimhin MacMaolain (*Director of Research, School of Law*)
Professor Frank Barry (*Director of Research, School of Business*)
Professor Kevin Rockett (*Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music*)
Professor Pádraic Fallon (*Director of Research, School of Medicine*)
Associate Professor Norbert Hintersteiner (*Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics*)
Professor Seamus Martin (*Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology*)
Professor John Boland (*Director of Research, CRANN*)

Professor Louis Brennan (*Director of Research, IIS*)
Prof. Shane O'Mara (*Director of Research, TCIN*)
Dr Dermot Frost (*Vice-Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association*) in
place of Dr Erika Doyle (*Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association*)
Mary O'Connor (*President of the Graduate Students' Union*)
Dr James Callaghan (*Associate Director of Trinity Research &
Innovation, ADTRI, and Secretary*)

In attendance: Ms Deirdre Savage (*Research Acc. Manager, Treasurer's Office*)
Dr Geoffrey Bradley (*CSG Manager, ISS*)
Dr Camilla Kelly (*Research Projects Officer, Trinity Research &
Innovation and Minute Secretary to the Committee*)
Ms Niamh Brennan (*Assistant Librarian, Library*) for RS/11-12/56
Mr Ken O'Doherty (*Staff Relations Manager, Human Resources*) for
RS/11-12/60

Apologies: Professor Veronica Campbell (*Dean of Graduate Studies*)
Assistant Professor Andrew Jackson (*Director of Research, School of
Natural Sciences*)
Ms Doris Alexander (*Research Development Officer, Trinity Research
& Innovation*)

Section A

RS/11-12/53 Introduction

The DoR welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the new
Director of Research for Dental Science, Assistant Professor Gary
Moran.

RS/11-12/54 Minutes of 6th March 2012

The minutes of the meeting were approved by the Committee.

RS/11-12/55 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item RS/11-12/41 (referring to item RS/11-12/28): Research Ethics
Policy Group. The Chair informed the Committee that the ADoR is in
the process of reconvening the group and hopes to have held the
first meeting before the next Research Committee meeting takes
place on May 29th.

Item RS/11-12/41 (referring to item RS/11-12/32): Research Quality
Metrics. See item RS/11-12/57.

Item RS/11-12/41 (referring to item RS/11-12/33): Provost's Award
for Research. See item RS/11-12/59.

Item RS/11-12/43: Research Project Officers - Call for Proposals.
The Chair informed the Committee that the proposal was approved
by the Planning Group at its last meeting. Once Board and Council
give their approvals, the intention is to launch the scheme as soon as

possible, likely early May. Proposals will be welcomed from individual Schools/TRIs or groups of Schools/TRIs.

Item RS/11-12/44: Innovation Task Force IPIP/IPIG Developments. The Chair noted that there have been no further updates on the new IP policy. The new policy is to be launched on May 18th by the Minister; until then the exact content is unknown.

Item RS/11-12/46: Redundancy - Risks and Issues. See item RS/11-12/60.

Item RS/11-12/50: Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Research Committee. See item RS/11-12/58.

RS/11-12/56 Research Support System (RSS) Focus Group

Ms Niamh Brennan, Assistant Librarian, briefed the Committee on potential developments in the RSS.

Ms Brennan started the discussion by summarizing the history of the RSS and its focus group. The RSS was started in 2002, with the goal of managing research information at a time when more research funding was becoming available. The RSS Focus Group drove development of the RSS, for example, the inclusion of CVs and publications. The focus group had wide representation, and the system was designed by academics for academics. One of the guiding principles was that it would eliminate duplication of information.

College now wants to expand the functionality of the RSS, particularly in relation to the types of publications and other research outputs captured, and Ms Brennan proposed to reconstitute the focus group to inform that process. A number of other areas where changes have been sought include:

- The look and feel of the RSS (profiles etc.)
- Usability - how easy it is to update and find information
- Quantitative metrics/measures of impact/esteem

The reporting requirements for the system are also important; these need to be defined at College, School, and Centre level.

The Committee was then invited to make comments.

One of the Members asked for examples of measures of societal impact other than publications. In response, Ms Brennan gave the example of reports to government that have an impact on legislation.

Another Member noted that the current categories/classification fields for humanities were not very well defined in the RSS and perhaps the reconstituted focus group could look at refining these. Ms Brennan noted that HS is a key area for the RSS, as many outputs from HS are not covered by traditional methodologies.

Other comments from Members included the importance of recognizing the time lag between reports and impact; and methods for including activities such as international conference organization & workshops, training videos etc.

The Chair concluded the discussion by proposing that the focus group be reconvened, and the reconvened group be asked to review its terms of reference/work plan to be circulated to the committee for approval. The Committee agreed.

Action: Directors of Research are asked to nominate members to the RSS Focus Group.

Action: The DoR to reconvene the RSS Focus Group.

RS/11-12/57 Research Quality Metrics (RQM) Update

The Chair commenced the briefing by noting that the level of staff satisfying the criteria for research activity is still too low. It was noted that while future resource allocation may not be based on the existing RPM model, it would likely still take account of research excellence. Moreover, the Research Committee should play a stronger role in assessing research across the College and hence there is still a requirement to have appropriate metrics in place. The Chair asked the Committee to consider what form the metrics might take.

Following some discussion, the Chair noted that it may not be appropriate to have a single/common model to measure research quality. A number of Committee members agreed; different models for different disciplines might be more appropriate.

A number of Committee members noted that that weighed competitive research expenditure (criterion 2) does not necessarily relate to research quality, and should be reconsidered. In particular, it was noted that relatively little funding is available to researchers in the Arts & Humanities. It was also noted that a researcher's ability to raise research funds should somehow be factored into resource allocation. However, any assessment of research quality might examine how effectively inputs are converted to outputs.

Members also asked about how School metrics fit in with the RQM and queried the status of the RQM document written in 2010.

The Chair also reported that the Committee's proposal to remove the weighting of multi-authored papers within the RQM was raised at Council. Council decided that a change to the RQM should not be made, as without the current weighting, the bar to satisfying the research productivity criteria would be too low. One of the Committee asked whether this Council decision could be revisited at any time. In response, the Chair stated that since this factor does not currently affect resource allocation, the Committee should focus on appropriate measures to assess research quality.

RS/11-12/58 Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Research Committee

The Committee noted the results of the survey, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. The Chair spoke to the document.

One of the main points made clear by the survey is that there is a lack of understanding of the relationship between the Research Committee and other College committees. The Research Committee is essentially a subcommittee of Council; normally Council takes Research Committee advice on policies etc.

Some of the Committee also noted a lack of clarity on the role of the committee in terms of communication between Schools and TRIs, and other College committees. The Chair noted that the Directors of Research have an important role to play in promoting research culture in College.

The Chair stated that he is always open to suggestions for improvements to the effectiveness of the Committee.

A number of Committee members noted that a better meeting room would be preferable; the acoustics and size of the O'Reilly Large Conference Room were unsuitable for this Committee.

Action: The DoR to investigate the possibility of holding the next meeting in a more suitable venue.

RS/11-12/59 Provost's Award for Research

The Committee noted a copy of a memo from the Chair to Council, which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Chair noted that Council welcomed the notion of a research award, but commented that the proposed process should be more rigorous in its execution, in line with the Provost's Teaching Award Scheme. Council requested that a revised proposal should be submitted for consideration. In discussion it was noted that any new award schemes should also be cognizant of other awards or recognitions currently in place in College e.g. Fellowships. It was agreed that there would be merit in considering the full set of such awards in their totality before furthering the current proposal.

Action: The DoR to consider redrafting the proposal following assessment of the full range of awards made by College.

RS/11-12/60 Draft Policy on Redundancy - Issues and Payments

The Committee noted a draft policy document, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Ms Deirdre Savage (Research Acc. Manager, Treasurer's Office) also provided a document summarising which funding agencies will cover redundancy costs.

The Chair requested the Committee's advice on how provision for such costs on research contracts should be made, noting that one solution would be to charge these costs to overheads where not chargeable as direct costs.

The Members asked what the actual redundancy exposure/level of liability is currently. In response, the Committee was informed that the potential liability is quite high, with every person with a contract longer than 2 years potentially being entitled to a redundancy payment when that contract ends. In terms of actual costs, for example, a person on a 4 year contract of employment may be entitled to a payment of €5.4K (2 weeks per year of service up to €600 per week and then one additional week).

Following a discussion of circumstances in which such payments may not need to be made, the Chair reminded the members that redundancy laws as they currently stand relate to the post and not the post holder and that College policy was to fully comply with relevant legislation. The Chair ended the discussion by proposing that he work with the Treasurer's Office to bring forward a specific proposal on how such provision could be made at the next meeting.

Action: The DoR and Research Accounting Manager to bring forward a specific proposal on how provision for redundancy payments might be accommodated for relevant research accounts.

RS/11-12/61 Any Other Urgent Business
None

Section B

RS/11-12/62 Draft of Annual Dean of Research
The Committee noted the draft Annual Dean of Research Report, circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Chair commented that in its current format, the report focuses heavily on statistical information around proposals submitted, contracts, awards, publications etc. There is little or no element of actual research achievement reported. The Chair suggested that the report should also include a one page summary of research achievements from each School and TRI, and that the statistical information be streamlined & summarised.

The Committee agreed to the proposal.

Action: All Directors of Research to submit to the DoR, a one page summary of key research achievements during 2010/2011 for inclusion in the Annual Dean of Research Report as soon as possible.

RS/11-12/62 Any Other Urgent Business
1. SFI Research Centres Programme 2012: This scheme calls for a cash contribution from industry to the total budget. TCD would normally charge an overhead on this industry cash contribution;

however for this call, College has decided that proposers may avail of a derogation from this policy allowing the full amount of any industry contribution to be made available to cover direct costs.

One of the Committee noted that he considered this move to be a retrograde one as College has consistently argued the need for full overheads on research to be paid.

2. HEA Large items of equipment survey: The Chair requested that responses be returned as a matter of urgency.
3. SFI Research Infrastructure Call 2012: The Chair noted that responses to this new call from SFI will be submitted on an institutional basis. Individual proposals from TCD groups will be prioritized, with the Deans most probably making the final decisions on what equipment will be requested as part of the final bid.

Section C

RS/11-12/63 Items for Discussion at Future Meetings

None

RS/11-12/64 Any Other Urgent Business

None

Signed:

Date: