

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 15th April 2014

Present: Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research (DoR) and Chair
Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation (TR&I) and Secretary
Professor Derek Sullivan, Associate Dean of Research (ADoR)
Professor Colette Murphy, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor John Horne, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law
Associate Professor Irene Walsh, acting Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Science
Professor Malcolm MacLachlan, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Gaia Narciso, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Andrew Jackson, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Carl Vogel, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor James O'Donnell, Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor John Donegan in place of Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of Research, CRANN
Professor Shane O'Mara, Director of Research, TCIN
Dermot Frost, Acting Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association (TRSA)
Ryan Kenny, President, Graduate Students Union

In attendance: Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation
Mr David O'Shea, Acting Research Acc. Manager, Financial Services Division
Dr Camilla Kelly, Research Projects Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation and Minute Secretary to the Committee

Apologies: Professor Paul Coughlan, Director of Research, School of Business
Professor Aileen Douglas, Director of Research, School of English
Professor David Tombs, Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Professor Daniela Zisterer, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Georg S. Duesberg, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Professor Mike Peardon, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Frank Boland, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Seamus Martin, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics

Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Mr John Murphy, Director of Information Systems Services

Not present: Professor Martin Adams, Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music
Professor Clemens Ruthner, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Robert Gilligan, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Gabrielle McKee, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Luke O'Neill, Director of Research, TBSI
Professor Juergen Barkhoff, Director of Research, Trinity Long Room Hub
Director of Research, IIS
Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies

RS/13-14/53 Introduction

The Dean of Research welcomed everyone to the meeting.

RS/13-14/54 Minutes of 4th March 2014

The minutes of the meeting were approved by the Committee.

RS/13-14/55 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item RS/13-14/46 (referring to Items RS/13-14/29 & RS/13-14/37):
Policy Update: Broadening Participation in EU Framework Programmes. The DoR noted that HR has been consulted on the question of Contracts of Indefinite Duration and research staff applying to EU Framework Programmes. HR will provide a briefing paper in due course.

Item RS/13-14/46 (referring to Items RS/13-14/32 & RS/13-14/37):
Research Support System (RSS). The Vice Provost's Office has completed the process of collating information on research activity, to feed into the Annual Budgetary Cycle. RSS data currently indicate that 63% of staff across College are research active. This percentage drops to as low as 25% in some Schools and reaches 100% in others. One of the Committee suggested that in some instances, the figures may not be accurate - the cohort of staff being used to calculate research activity may not be correct. Another member noted that some of his staff had encountered an error where new data entries were not saved. The DoR consequently asked that the Directors of Research check that the correct cohort of staff is being used for calculations, and inform staff of the importance of checking that their RSS profiles up to date.

Item RS/13-14/46 (referring to Item RS/13-14/42): Brokerage Event for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS): Following on from discussions between Trinity Research & Innovation, Professor Paul

Coughlan, and Dr Jennifer Edmond, a series of events is planned for September.

The DoR finished by noting that Items RS/13-14/48 (Charging PI time to Horizon 2020 Awards); RS/13-14/49 (Research Ethics); RS/13-14/50 (Dean of Research Initiative); RS/13-14/52 (College Strategic Plan 2014-2019) are on the agenda for today's meeting.

RS/13-14/56 DoR Update

The DoR advised the Committee that the levels of research activity across College are still of some concern, and that this topic will be on the agenda for the next (last) meeting of this academic year. Specifically the discussion will centre on ideas for promoting and encouraging staff to become more research active.

The Committee were informed that it is rankings 'season', and staff were asked to refer to the DoR's recent e-mail on the topic of Trinity's Academic Reputation and the Rankings, which was sent to all staff on the 2nd April. Small increases in the number of votes in these reputation surveys can have a significant impact on rankings.

The SFI Research Centres call closes on April 17th. Trinity is leading two of the applications (CONNECT: The Centre for Future Networks & Communication; and ADAPT: Centre for Digital Content Platform Research), and is partnering in another six. A total of ten applications are expected to be submitted nationally by the closing date.

The Irish Cancer Society & SFI have jointly released another Centres call: the Irish Cancer Society - SFI Collaborative Cancer Research Centre (CCRC) Programme 2014. The Call document notes that "this Centre will build on the substantial national investment in biomedical research to date, and will be expected to become a world-leading Research Centre that delivers excellence with impact. The CCRC will consolidate research activities across higher education institutions and teaching hospitals by bringing together translational, clinical and population health researchers from the field of cancer with researchers from areas such as engineering and ICT to leverage powerful interdisciplinary synergies to develop new insights into cancer and deliver new approaches to treatment". The DoR expects that Trinity will lead an application to this call.

RS/13-14/57 Make-up and Distribution of Indirect Costs on Research Awards

The Committee noted a memo, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr David O'Shea, Acting Research Acc. Manager, Financial Services Division, spoke briefly to the document.

The current Indirect Cost Policy, approved by Research Committee (RS/09-10/65) and Council (CL/09-10/212) requires a minimum allocation to Central Services of 10% of direct costs as well as the general principle of a 50:50 split between Central Services and the Academic area in which the research activity is housed.

The Full Economic Costing (FEC) Project commenced in 2007 with the objective of providing decision makers with the full economic cost of all activities carried out by College (including research). The FEC project assigned all of the College's costs based on the activity being supported. Figures showing the split of FEC indirect costs a) if PI time is excluded and treated instead as a direct cost (as is allowed under Horizon 2020) and b) if PI time is included as an indirect cost, indicate that the current policy on the allocation of indirect costs does not reflect where the costs actually arise.

There was some further discussion on College's Indirect Cost Policy from the floor. The DoR noted that the issue of the % divide of the value of the PI time might be better dealt with by the Finance Committee.

In response to a question on charging PI time to Horizon 2020 grants, the DoR noted that the principle of including the cost of PI had been accepted, as permitted by the H2020 programme, by the Research Committee.

RS/13-14/58 Dean of Research Initiative

The Committee noted a memo, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. The DoR spoke briefly to the document.

At the meeting of 4th of March 2014, the Committee considered a number of ways in which the Research Committee budget might be used to promote research in College.

Five suggestions emerged from the ensuing discussion:

1. Funding 'Pathfinder' (short, potential high-impact) projects;
2. Funding to cover shortfalls in postgraduate tuition fees (i.e. in situations where funding sponsors set limits on fee levels);
3. Funding for some level of teaching buyout in order to allow time to drive the application process of some types of large research applications;
4. Funding to reward research excellence in the form of a Fellowship;
5. Continuing the Innovation Bursaries.

With the possible exception of the Innovation Bursaries, the proposals could be accommodated within a common framework that would allow colleagues to make competitive applications to a Research Committee fund. Such a programme would be overseen by a subcommittee of the Research Committee.

The Committee approved the development of such a programme for a minimum of one year.

Action: The DoR to constitute a subcommittee to oversee the development of the programme.

RS/13-14/59 Report from the Working Group on Trinity Research Centres

The Committee noted a draft policy document, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. The ADoR spoke briefly to the document.

The draft policy covers the following: criteria for a Trinity Research Centre (TRC); governance of a TRC; oversight of a TRC; and procedures for the formation of a TRC.

A member of the Committee suggested that the document should include a clarification on the differences between groups and centers, and also clarity around multidisciplinary TRCs in terms of governance etc.

The issue of emeritus staff acting as director of a TRC was also discussed.

The Committee approved the policy subject to some minor modifications that addressed the points raised.

The modified version of the document will go straight to Council for approval.

RS/13-14/60 Research Ethics Policy Matters

The Committee noted a draft Policy on Access to Trinity College Staff and Students for Research Purposes by External Organisations, and the Minutes of the REPC meeting of 27th March 2014, which were circulated in advance of the meeting.

With respect to the draft policy document, members suggested that the language around certain points should be clarified: there should be less ambiguity around the sequence in which the external researcher should contact the relevant Head of School and the College Secretary for permission.

Action: The REPC to consider amending the policy to address the Research Committee's observation and a revised policy to be brought to the Research Committee for approval.

The ADoR noted that, at the last meeting of the REPC, seven RECs were approved by the members, namely: the Animal Research Ethics Committee, the School of Computer Science Research Ethics Committee, the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (subject to having legal expertise available to it prior to the commencement of the 2014-2015 academic year), the School of Linguistics, Speech and Communication Sciences Research Ethics Committee (subject to having legal expertise available to it prior to the commencement of the 2014-2015 academic year), and the School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics Research Ethics Committee. A number of Schools have yet to make/finalise arrangements for ethical approval. This year's deadline for receipt of applications to establish new RECs is April 9th. It was also noted that for projects that receive ethical approval, end-of-project reporting is required.

The ADoR finished by informing the Committee that the national policy on Research Integrity (Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland) will be formally launched on 4th June 2014.

RS/12-13/61 AOB

The DoR noted that a web-link to a self-evaluation survey of the Committee would be circulated to Committee members post meeting.

Action: Dr Camilla Kelly to circulate the Committee self-evaluation survey to all members.

Professor John Horne raised the issue of the Library budget. Electronic resources do not fall under UK copyright. The budget for non-copyright material was completely cut for 2013/2014, decimating resources for research and students. Professor Horne asked that the concern of the Faculty of AHSS be formally noted, and requested that the Research Committee endorse a request to reinstate the budget for non-copyright material. In response, the DoR noted that the Library's budget has recently been restored to previous levels - at Planning Group on 4th of March 2014, it was agreed to approve a budgetary request of €1.8M for 2013/2014 and for 2014/2015. Professor Horne noted that he would still like his concern over the budget for non-copyright material be communicated to the Acting Librarian documented. The Committee agreed that the Library is a critical resource, with a particular vulnerability in relation to non-copyright materials.

RS/13-14/62 College Strategic Plan 2014-2019

The Committee noted a Reference Document on Research & Innovation, and a document outlining the Process for Review College Research Themes (V2.5), which were circulated in advance of the meeting. The DoR spoke briefly to the documents.

The reference document, which was agreed by the Working Group, considers the challenges, opportunities, objectives, goals, and priorities that might underpin the College's Research and Innovation Strategy by considering four overarching objectives:

- Maximising Trinity's research impact
- Making Trinity the best place in the world to do research
- Making Trinity a research and innovation collaborator of choice
- Identifying areas in which Trinity will offer thought leadership that makes it a world reference point

The DoR noted that he was happy to take comments from the floor, or later by e-mail.

Documents from each pillar, including the Research & Innovation pillar, will undergo a process of filtering and refinement to develop the College Strategic Plan.

The DoR also commented on the draft document describing the process for reviewing the current College themes. The process will be two-phase. There will be an initial review of each theme by a

panel of external scholars of international standing relevant to that theme. Reports from these initial reviews will subsequently be evaluated by an over-arching panel of experts. The review is expected to identify opportunities in the short- to medium-term to strengthen those research themes in College that have sufficient critical mass, impact and/or potential to be world reference points; and (ii) simultaneously identify medium- to long-term interventions required by College if themes which are currently emergent are to be enabled to grow in significance over time. Such areas can be expected to benefit from prioritised access to strategic staffing programmes, strategic funding, space, and other resources available to the College.