

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 31 March 2015

Present:

Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research (DoR) and Chair
Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation (TR&I) and Secretary
Professor Paul Coughlan, Director of Research, School of Business
Professor Lorraine Leeson, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Daniela Zister, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Carl Vogel, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Aoife McLysaght, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Mike Peardon, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Jane Stout, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics
Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Gabrielle McKee, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Shane O'Mara, Director of TCIN
Professor Orla Hardiman, Director Designate of TBSI
Dr Michael Cooke, Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association (TRSA)

In attendance:

Professor Martina Hennessy, Associate Dean of Research (ADoR)
Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation
Mr David O'Shea, Acting Research Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
Mr John Murphy, Director of Information Systems Services
Mr Tony Flaherty, International Research Projects Officer, (item RS/14-15/57 only)
Dr Fiona Killard, Trinity Research & Innovations, Rapporteur to the Committee and (item RS/14-15/60)

Apologies:

Professor Andrew Pierce, Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Professor Paul Scanlon, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Wolfgang Schmitt, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Professor Andrew Loxley, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor James O'Donnell, Director of Research, School of Medicine

Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Not present:

Professor Martin Adams, Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music

Professor Aileen Douglas, Director of Research, School of English

Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities

Professor Balazs Apor, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies

Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law

Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology

Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of Research, CRANN

Professor Juergen Barkhoff, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub

Professor John Walsh, Director of Research, School of Education

Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies

Ms Megan Lee, President, Graduate Students Union

RS/14-15/53 Minutes of 24 February 2015

The minutes of last meeting were accepted.

RS/14-15/54 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The DoR reported meeting apologies.

The ADoR informed the committee that the Research Ethics Policy Committee was scheduled to meet on April 2nd and would consider the two working groups being convened to address stem cell research and biobanking & data retention. She noted that several Schools had proposed that it may be appropriate to put in place local policies on lone working that address specific local issues, information is being collated on this and an amended policy will be reviewed by the REPC before being brought back to the RC. She also advised the Committee that public seminars were being organised on stem cell research and biobanking & data retention in order to provide fora for discussion of relevant issues within the College community prior to the working groups meeting. She invited members to attend (RS/14-15/46).

The DoR informed members that the policy on dual use research would be reconsidered during this meeting (RS/14-15/17).

The DoR noted that a number of nominees and volunteers had been put forward by members for the Academic Focus Group on rankings (RS/14-15/36).

The members were informed that a consensus meeting on the Pathfinder 2015 results would take place on the 1st of April. The final results are due to be announced shortly after this meeting (RS/14-15/40).

The DoR informed members that the 'Call for Dreams' had been launched as part of the review of infrastructures being carried out on behalf of DJEI. The call has apparently been sent directly to Institutes

and Centres rather than the College and the DoR asked that members provide him with a copy of any response from their areas (RS/14-15/50).

ACTION: Members to provide copies of relevant submissions to the DoR.

The DoR noted that no feedback was received from members on the Knowledge Development Box for the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and this is now closed (RS/14-15/52)

RS/14-15/55 Dean of Research Update (DoR)

The DoR noted that substantial work had been undertaken on the College's response to the SSTI consultation and this would be considered later in the agenda.

RS/14-15/56 The Impact of Maternity Leave on Research Productive Status

The Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology presented a memo to Research Committee on the impact of maternity leave and administrative leave on "research productive" status. Members were informed that while these issues are mentioned in the current policy, they are not sufficiently addressed. Prof. McLysaght proposed that an ERC-like model be applied in such circumstances, whereby, in the case of maternity leave, anyone who has had a child and taken leave within the last ten years is allowed an extra 18 months per child in the eligibility window. A similar approach could be applied to periods spent in significant administrative roles providing an allowance of 18 months for every three years spent in the role of College Officer, Faculty Dean or Head of School, in the preceding 10 years. Part-time staff might also have the eligibility window adjusted in proportion to their time commitment. The committee supported these proposals noting that as the load associated with the role of Head of Discipline varies across Schools, application to have the same model applied to holders of this role could be made on a case-by-case basis to the DoR.

The impact of co-authored publications on "research productive" status was also raised where a score of 0.5 is allocated for joint publications. It was noted that where co-authorship was the norm that this had resulted in a number of researchers being classed as 'unproductive' although they are very active and publishing papers in high-impact fora. Members also noted that this seemed to militate against College's commitment to multidisciplinary research. The DoR also noted that it might be leading to an unintended trend towards publishing in lower impact fora reinforcing the potential fall in College's impact and hence rankings position.

It was suggested that an alternative approach might be to credit first and last authors with 1 point and middle authors with 0.5 or, more generally, to credit designated 'senior' authors with a full point. However, it was noted that this is not appropriate to all disciplines including those that do not have a notion of senior authorship and/or where alphabetical listing of authors is used. Another member suggested, that as per the UK 'REF', asking collaborators for letters

stating what each author contributed to a paper might be a means of distinguishing levels of contribution.

Members noted that, fundamentally, the Research Productivity Metrics did not consider the quality of the research and that generally a strategy based only on counting outputs militates against quality. The DoR noted that the research productivity metrics seem to be driving an increase in the volume of papers published, which is good, but this does not ensure quality and so impacts on our citation impact across the College.

It was noted that the Committee might recommend a minor amendment to the criteria to address the weighting given to co-authored papers or initiate the definition of quality metrics to encourage publication in high-impact fora appropriate to each discipline (i.e., research excellence criteria). Under rankings strategy there is a proposal that such 'research excellence criteria' be available during recruitment and promotion. This would need engagement of Directors of Research within schools.

The Committee supported the proposal to explore the definition of research excellence criteria and the DoR will bring forward a suggested approach to a future meeting.

RS/14-15/57 Clarification on International Policy

Following previous consideration by the Research Committee (RS/14-15/17) and subsequent consultation with a number of members of the Committee, the International Research Projects Officer (IRPO) introduced a memo (circulated previously) proposing a clarification to the College's policy on applications for funding for dual-use research (RS/14-15/17).

He proposed that applications to defence research funding agencies, regardless of whether a military relevance statement is needed or not, must seek College approval prior to submission. The guiding principal for approval is that the research must also have a significant potential benefit to mankind. He noted that a standing exemption to the current policy applies to applications to the Congressionally-Directed Medical Research Programme that do not require a statement of military relevance and proposed that this exemption be retained.

He proposed that applications to any other organisations as defined in the current Ethics Policy (i.e. whose activities include practices which directly pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups or whose activities are inconsistent with the mission and values of the College) and that fund research that has both defence and civilian (life-enhancing) aims, must seek College approval prior to submission. The guiding principal for approval again being that the research must have a significant potential benefit to mankind.

The interpretation of the policy should be based on the intent of the research project, rather than the funding agency. The defence-related intent should be weighed against the potential of the research to benefit mankind, society and the College, as well as its conformance with the College's Mission and Values.

The decision on whether College will support the proposal should be made in a timely manner and will rest with a sub-committee of the Research Committee, comprising the DoR (or nominee) and two Directors of Research, who may request additional external expertise if required to assess a particular proposal. All approvals of the subcommittee will be required to be unanimous and all decisions will be reported to the Research Committee at its next meeting.

To assist with this evaluation and allow transparency in the evaluation, a template has been developed which researchers will be requested to complete describing both the benefits of the research.

He proposed to implement this process on a pilot basis for 12 months, after which the Research Committee will evaluate the process and decide whether it needs revision.

The Committee approved the proposals as presented.

RS/14-15/58 Any Other Urgent Business

No other urgent business was discussed.

RS/14-15/59 Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation

The DoR reported that College's submission to the consultation on the National Strategy for Science and Technology and Innovation had been submitted to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. He noted that although he had not received any input from members of the Committee following his request at the previous meeting (RS/14-15/49), he had consulted with and received input from a number of members of the committee including the Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub, the Director Designate of the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute, the Associate Dean of Research, Prof. Mike Peardon and Prof. Lorraine O'Driscoll as representatives of areas that had been specifically impacted by recent National strategy. He asked members to inform him if any of their areas had made their own responses to the consultation.

The DoR reported that the College's submission focused on the critical role of Universities in supporting research and its role in enhancing Ireland's international reputation, and in underpinning the economic and social development of Ireland and its third-level education system. He noted that the strategy should underpin the creation of a generation of academics, researchers and graduates empowered to participate in the discovery of new knowledge as well as its translation to industry innovation. Such talent will support new foreign direct investment and indigenous company innovation, leading to increased job creation and high value exports as well as an international reputation for excellence in education, research and innovation, and a more sustainable society. Topics addressed in the submission included the need to support broadly-based research activities covering the full range of disciplines as well as the spectrum from fundamental to applied research, to support PhD funding through structured PhD programmes, to provide programmatic funding available to researchers at all career stages as well as continuing to fund large-scale awards. He noted that College officers are and will continue to engage with Government bodies as the strategy is developed.

One member of the committee noted that there did not appear to be significant public support for fundamental research or the role of the Universities. The DoR noted that it was important that we are not seen to be self-serving but to be serving wider society and the national interest in the short term as well as in the longer term.

ACTION: DoR to circulate College response to the SSTI consultation

ACTION: Members to forward local responses, if any, to the DoR

RS/14-15/60 ERC Advanced Grant 2015

The College's Research Strategy Officer provided a briefing to the Committee on the 2015 call for proposals for ERC Advanced Grants and encouraged members to identify and encourage applications from suitable candidates for awards to be hosted in College. The DoR reminded the Committee that these grants are available to colleagues from all disciplines but that in addition to an excellent track record of achievement in research, applicants should make proposals that, as described on the ERC website, "rise to pioneering and far-reaching challenges at the frontiers of the field(s) addressed". Applicants will also need to be prepared to devote significant effort to the preparation of their proposals.

ACTION: Members to identify and encourage applicants to the 2015 ERC Advanced Grant call for proposals.

RS/14-15/61 Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub

The Director of Trinity Research and Innovation provided a briefing to the committee on the Trinity Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub (working title) which is a key component of the College's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Strategy and whose establishment has recently been approved by EOG and Finance Committee. As described, the I&E Hub will incorporate existing and new activities addressing education, acceleration and incubation of new companies, and outreach. This will include the Innovation Academy, LaunchBox and the TTEC Tower.

The DoR noted that a Director will be appointed to the I&E Hub in the near future and a competition launched among the students to name the I&E Hub (which will not be called the 'Hub' to avoid confusion with the Trinity Long Room Hub).

The DoR noted that there will be lots of ways for Schools and Institutes to engage with the I&E Hub including participating in the I&E Forum, hosting Entrepreneurs in Residence and developing joint programmes in innovation and entrepreneurship in collaboration with the Innovation Academy.

RS/14-15/62 Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.