

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11:00, Tuesday 18 February 2020
Arts Building Conference Room

MINUTES

Attendees

Professor Linda Doyle, Dean of Research (Chair)

Professor Andrew Bowie, Associate Dean of Research

Professor Lorraine Leeson, Associate Dean of Research

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Ann Devitt, Director of Research, School of Education

Professor David O'Shaughnessy, Director of Research, School of English

Professor Ahuvia Kahane, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities

Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law

Professor Redmond O'Connell, Director of Research, School of Psychology

Professor Daniele Pevarello, Director of Research, School of Religion

Faculty of Engineering, Maths and Science

Professor Emma Creagh, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Declan O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Caitríona Lally, Director of Research, School of Engineering

Professor Adrian Bracken, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology

Faculty of Health Sciences

Professor Louise Gallagher, Director of Research, School of Medicine

Professor Joan Lalor, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Lidia Tajber, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Trinity Research Institutes

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub

In Attendance

Dr Darren Fayne, Trinity Research Staff Association

Shaz Oye, President, Graduate Students Union

Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director for European Engagement

Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services, Innovation and Digital Platforms, IT Services

Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist

Mr Ciarán McEvoy, Research Projects Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation

Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research

Apologies

Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business

Professor Orla Flanagan, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts

Professor Irene Walsh, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Studies

Professor Peter Stone, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Professor Stefan Sint, Director of Research, School of Mathematics

Professor Jeff O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science

Professor Aideen Long, Director, Trinity Translational Medicine Institute

Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director, Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience

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| Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval | |
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| A.1 | <p>Minutes Minutes of the meeting of January 14th were circulated in advance and accepted as read.</p> |
| A.2 | <p>Matters Arising from the Minutes Any matters arising addressed in the Dean’s update.</p> |
| A.3 | <p>Update from the Dean of Research</p> <p>The Dean of Research provided the committee with an update on recent activities. DOR noted that the strategy to replace Innovation 2020, which ends this year, is currently being prepared. DOR has had meetings at Dept of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and Dept of Education and Skills. Stressed the importance of universities engaging in this process to ensure the sector is represented. It was also noted that research needs to be driven by more than just DBEI.</p> <p>Trinity is chair of the Irish Universities Association for 2020. Three areas have been identified for special focus this year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Irish research funding landscape 2. Making Ireland ready for Horizon Europe 3. Open scholarship agenda, with a specific focus on infrastructure that needs to be made nationally available. <p>DOR noted that the Horizon Europe budget has not yet been agreed, and there is concern that the budget for research could be reduced.</p> <p>RS/18-19/10 DOR noted that the Open Scholarship taskforce will be winding up soon, but some Unboxing Open Scholarship events may continue. Taskforce will then prepare a report which will be sent to the Vice Provost. This report will outline the taskforce’s findings from the last year and will encourage the formalising of Trinity’s approach to open scholarship. DOR noted that it has been a very valuable learning experience. It was also noted that there is an open scholarship dimension to follow-funding calls for networks like CHARM-EU, and that leading on open scholarship is explicitly stated in the university’s own strategy.</p> <p>DOR updated the committee in relation to vacant Chairs. A new, streamlined process will be brought in. DOR also noted that research must be central in discussions to fill these posts.</p> <p>DOR congratulated the Trinity Long Room Hub on its 10th anniversary. Prof. Jane Ohlmeyer noted that a year-long programme of events has been prepared to mark the anniversary.</p> <p>RS/19-20/14 DOR noted that the Living Research Excellence Strategy articulates the goal for Trinity to be more systematic about how it contributes to public policy and this will be a focus during the next year. DOR stressed that this is not to take the place of excellent public policy work that already happens in Trinity, but is to bring greater attention to the work that is done here (such as Sláintecare), provide new opportunities for people to engage with policy development, work better with existing networks, and hopefully enable the Irish public sector to be better equipped to accept input from researchers. The committee noted that it would also be worthwhile identifying Trinity</p> |

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| | <p>alumni in policy development positions and establishing working relationships with them.</p> <p>RS/19-20/3 DOR had hoped to have an update for the committee in relation to the postdoc contracts issue. A meeting with HR will be taking place soon and DOR will update committee as soon as possible. It was noted as part of the committee's discussions that Trinity is now the only Irish university that is not compliant with HRS4R which will begin to have ramifications for research and funding very soon.</p> |
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Section B - Items for Discussion Only

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| B.1 | <p>Old Library Redevelopment Project (RS/19-20/13) Helen Shenton</p> <p>Helen Shenton presented an overview of the Old Library Redevelopment Project to the committee. It was noted that the Library is the greatest asset of the university, attracting approximately 1 million visitors each year, hosts foreign dignitaries, and could be considered the "front room" of the nation. The committee were advised of the substantial risk that the Library currently faces both in terms of stewarding the collections and also safeguarding the building itself. To address the extreme fire risk in the Treasury everything combustible has been removed, and a new state of the art case for the Book of Kells is being installed. It was also noted that the "quiet disaster" of the current status of the Old Library is that 350,000 volumes are not being stewarded correctly owing to pollution and incorrect humidity and temperature. The committee were also advised of the Programme Steering Group working on the project.</p> <p>The committee were informed of the new designs and how this will improve the experience for visitors to and users of the Library while also meeting Trinity's responsibility to safeguard the Library and its collections. Details of the proposed new Research Collections Centre were also shared. It was noted that other famous libraries around the world such as the New York Public Library, the Bodleian etc have undertaken similar projects. It was noted that projects like this are more complicated than new builds as the existing building has to be preserved. It was also noted that although the Library is a quasi-national cultural institution and is regularly used by the Dept of Foreign Affairs during state visits, the Library does not receive any funding from the State for what is arguably one of the country's most important historic sites.</p> <p>The committee was advised that the current estimate for closure during the works is 3 years. It is intended that all collections will be available and usable throughout the construction phase.</p> <p>The committee discussed the project and posed a number of questions. The possibility of the project receiving any funding from the government was discussed. It was noted that all Project 2040 funding has been disbursed to NCIs and it is uncertain whether any funding would be forthcoming but approaches have been made. The committee asked about public access and outreach, and whether the library has a civic responsibility to be more accessible to the general public in the vein of the British Library etc. It was noted that the Library has to strike a balance between access for the public and ensuring that staff and students are able to access space and resources as needed. Capacity would be a significant issue if general access was provided. It was also noted that the Library would like to be in a position to do more outreach activities. The committee discussed some financial issues and noted the added complication of the lost income that will be incurred during the closure.</p> |
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| | <p>ACTION Helen Shenton to present on the Virtual Trinity Library</p> |
| <p>B.2</p> | <p>Spotlight: School of Education Ann Devitt</p> <p>Ann Devitt presented an overview of the research activity in the School of Education. The school has 25 FTEs, 4 postdocs, and the oldest Chair in Education in Ireland. The school is mainly a graduate school, focused on professionals in the education sector, and has 75 doctoral students. A Masters in Education with a range of strands is offered, as is a Professional Master of Education for post-primary teachers, and BMusEd with RIA and DIT. The school is currently working on its overall strategy and research strategy. Its aims are high quality, inclusive, equitable education for all, and to instigate positive change in society.</p> <p>The school is 100% research active, with activity spanning the full life cycle of education. AD noted that most researchers in the school work across a number of different areas giving the school a strong interdisciplinary approach. Particular strength in inclusion and society. The school has funding from a variety of sources including IRC, SFI, European Science Foundation, a number of Erasmus+ projects, some UNESCO, and an EIT KIC. Tendered and commissioned research is also a notable strong point. There is a strong policy focus in the research of the school but it can be difficult to capture that work and make it visible.</p> <p>AD noted that most doctoral students in the school are self- funding, and are very committed and excellent students. The school runs a monthly research seminar, and students run a day-long conference each year. The school is the only Education school in Ireland to appear in the top 100 in the international rankings, but this position is precarious. It performs well on employer reputation and international outlook and relatively high in citations. It was noted that a number of staff and students have received awards for engagement, innovation, and work on equality.</p> <p>AD noted that the major threat to the school’s activity is external policy. In the last 10 years the HEA, DES, and the Teaching Council have all imposed non-overlapping teaching requirements which have had a huge impact on the workload in a relatively small school.</p> <p>The committee discussed a number of points raised during the presentation, including the breakdown of PhD students, and the school’s focus on developing evidence-based policy and practice.</p> |
| <p>B.3</p> | <p>Research Ethics Forms (RS/18-19/11) Lorraine Leeson and Evelyn Fox (Deputy DPO for Research)</p> <p>Dean of Research noted that major concerns were raised at the previous meeting of the Research Committee. In preparation for the meeting, other issues were subsequently discovered which prompted today’s discussion. Thanks were noted to Engineering, Nursing & Midwifery, Education and Business provided examples of the kinds of issues that have arisen.</p> <p>Lorraine Leeson and Evelyn Fox presented on behalf of the REPC and apologised for the issues that had arisen. They gave the committee an overview of the REPC’s process, and identified where they believed the problems began. It was noted that many of the</p> |

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| | <p>issues had only recently come to their attention as a result of the item discussed at the last meeting of the Research Committee. It was noted that communication in relation to the ethics forms has been poor and urgently needs to be improved. LL and EF confirmed that the templates that were developed by the REPC were not intended to be seen as mandatory, but were supposed to be guidelines to aid schools in developing their own forms. It was also noted that there is no admin resource to support the work of the REPC which is currently relying on the goodwill of Ciarán McEvoy in Trinity Research & Innovation to assist it. The committee noted that support roles of this kind are becoming increasingly important and necessary, but the resources are not being put in place.</p> <p>The committee discussed the issues in detail with LL and EF, and a number of actions were identified for urgent attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy DPO agreed to email all Directors of Research to clarify the position in relation to the correct templates that should be in use; • It was agreed that an interim chair should be appointed to the REPC while the current Chair is away; • It was agreed that Directors of Research should be involved in all of the REPC's communications and that greater oversight of the activities of, and communications from, the REPC was required; • It was agreed that the structures used for ethics approvals in the university need to be revisited; • It was noted that the criteria for Level 1 and 2 committees dates from 2014 and need to be updated in light of GDPR, new health research regulations etc; • It was agreed that the REPC urgently needs to review its Terms of Reference, criteria for membership, and conduct a review to establish how many ethics committees are currently in place <p>The Deputy DPO noted that she was willing to work with each school to develop their forms. DOR noted apologies to the committee for all of the work that this problem had triggered for schools. The committee noted that problems regarding ethics has been an ongoing issue for some time and this was an opportunity to correct that.</p> |
| Section C – Items for Noting | |
| C.1 | Items for Noting |
| C.2 | Items for future discussion |
| C.3 | <p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellcome Trust ISSF start-up funding for new tenure-track Assistant Professors <p>An ISSF (Institutional Strategic Support Fund) grant from the Wellcome Trust to Trinity will provide start-up funds for Assistant Professors in Biomedical Sciences (or Medical Humanities) who have permanent or tenure-track appointments in Trinity. It will award between 20,000 and 40,000 to each successful applicant, with half the funds coming from the Wellcome Grant with necessary matched funding from school (or College) sources. Heads of school should submit applications signing off on the matching funds. The grant is managed by Mani in TCIN and questions can be addressed to Aisling Hume ahume@tcd.ie</p> |